



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

University of the Highlands and Islands Corporate Parenting Plan

2016-2018

Introduction

The University of the Highlands and Islands is identified as a corporate parent under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. At present, many looked after children and care leavers experience some of the poorest personal outcomes of any group in Scotland. Low levels of educational engagement and achievement feed into high levels of poverty, homelessness and poor mental health.¹ Barriers to education which care experienced young people face include lack of funding, disrupted schooling, an unstable home environment, and accessing further and higher education at a later age than their non-looked after peers.

The university is a collegiate institution based on a partnership of 11 colleges, 2 research institutions, and 50 learning centres spread across the Highlands and Islands, Moray, and Perthshire. The university plan specifically focuses on collaborative work across the partnership and the coordination of actions which will encourage care experienced young people to apply to the university and enhance the support available to them as our students. Each college and research institution will also have its own individual Corporate Parenting Plan, reflecting its distinctive, local context, working in junction with the overarching university plan.

The university and locally specific plans will therefore form the totality of the partnership's approach to meeting the duties, and as part of this the university will be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of care experienced young people.

Corporate Parenting

The definition of corporate parenting is "An organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted."²

The Act places a duty on the university to produce a plan which outlines how we will support care leavers and looked after children and young people, and deliver on our corporate parenting responsibilities. For the purposes of the Act, a care leaver is an individual who was 'looked after' up to their 16th birthday before leaving care. Under the new legislation, an individual can now be considered a care leaver up to their 26th birthday.

In addition, the university will produce detailed reports based on the actions and outcomes of the plan, collaborate with other corporate parents, and provide relevant information to Scottish Ministers.

¹ Scottish Government (published annually) *Children's Social Work Statistics*, Edinburgh; Meltzer, H, et al (2004) *The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in Scotland*, London: TSO.

² Definition from Statutory Guidance on Corporate Parenting (2015), p.7

It is noted that under the Act the whole organisation is responsible for fulfilling corporate parenting duties, not just specific individuals or teams.

The University Vision

The university are committed to ensuring care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us, to enable them to successfully complete their course and undergo a worthwhile experience throughout their student journey. This support also extends past graduation with further assistance offered, for a fixed period, to enhance their career development and ambitions.

In addition to supporting care experienced students, the university will also ensure staff across the partnership are provided with training opportunities and materials which will both raise awareness of the difficulties these students may face, and enable them to provide direct practical support.

To achieve our objectives the university will continue to work closely with relevant external agencies as well as our academic partners.

University of the Highlands & Islands - Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Area	Criteria	Current Activities	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Projected Outcomes	Corporate Parenting duty	Progress
Management and Delivery of plan/outcomes	Continuous enhancement of provision for care experienced students	The university is working to improve services for care experienced learners through the establishment of a cross partnership Corporate Parenting Plan. This will contribute to a wider review and enhancement of processes. Additionally, the university will liaise with external agencies, including Who Cares? Scotland, CELCIS, and the College Development Network, to ensure we are kept up to date with current best practice and training.	1. Coordination of the cross-partnership Care Leavers Group and associated activities. This includes sharing of best practice, discussion of issues affecting care experienced students, and relevant staff training. The group meet on a bi-annual basis.	Student Support Manager	Sep-16	Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students	58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent	Aug-16
			2. Sharing of best practice across the partnership	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Ongoing	Improved cross partnership working and communication to ensure equivalence for care experienced students	58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent 60:2 (a,b,c) to share information, provide advice or assistance, and coordinate activities	Ongoing
			3. Consider care experienced students during strategic and operational planning	Dean of Students Senior Management Team (SMT)	Sep-16	Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students	58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies	Aug-16
			4. Creation of internal reporting system and procedures to analyse data for care experienced students regarding recruitment, retention, and outcomes	Dean of Students MIS Manager	Jun-17	Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students	58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent	Ongoing
			5. Organisation of relevant training for university and academic partner staff	Student Support Manager	Mar-17	Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students through greater awareness amongst all staff	58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent	Ongoing
Raising aspirations and pre-entry out reach	Raising awareness of the support services available for care experienced students	The university have created a Care Leavers section on the main website, which provides full details of the support offered to care experienced students both centrally and at academic partner level, along with contact details. Also listed are links to relevant external agencies.	6. Maintain information available to ensure it remains current. Promote the existence of the webpages	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Aug-16	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and increased awareness of the services and support available to them	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	Aug-16

Application	Establish admissions processes that offer increased opportunities for care leavers to enter HE	Students who declare care experience at time of application are flagged on the data management system and application form marked. This alerts interviewer/decision maker of the student's situation to enable them to take this into consideration.	7. A representative from the university Admissions team is a member of the Care Leavers Group to assist with refining the HE admissions process in relation to care experienced young people	Admissions Manager	Feb-16	Admissions processes that are designed to support widening access	58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies	Agreement across the network re contextualised admissions Feb 2016. To go through committee before acceptance and publication
Pre-entry	Provide timely information re funding for courses (HE).	The university maintains a funding section on the main website, which provides full details of the financial support available to all students, including those who are care experienced.	8. Maintain information available to ensure it remains current. Promote the existence of the webpages, and individual bursary schemes as required	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Sep-16	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses	58:1 (d) to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing	Aug-16
	Ensure that care experienced students have access to useful materials to provide help and guidance prior to enrolment	The university have created an online resource, Essential Student Skills, which includes a module designed to be accessed prior to enrolment. This provides information on the university, thinking about learning, collaborative learning, and new to blended learning, which are all specific to pre-entry.	9. Maintain information available to ensure it remains relevant and useful.	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Sep-16	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and improved retention rates following commencement of studies	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	Aug-16
	Help to ensure that care experienced students have access to appropriate accommodation	The university is undertaking an ongoing project in collaboration with Cityheart Living (Scotland) Ltd, which aims to eventually provide student residences at all main campuses across the network.	10. Agreement with providers of halls of residence to ensure 365 day accommodation is available for care experienced students. The university have also agreed to act as guarantor for care experienced students if their local authority is unable to do so	Dean of Students	Ongoing	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses	58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this part applies 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	Ongoing
On course support	Provide academic support for care experienced students	The university have created an online resource, Essential Student Skills, which has been designed to be accessed by students at all stages of their journey, using timescales which best suit their needs. The modules on offer include using technologies, becoming an effective learner, core skills, assessment, and preparing for work.	11. Maintain information available to ensure it remains relevant and useful. Promote these resources through academic partners	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Sep-16	Improved retention rates for care experienced students	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	Aug-16

	Provision of a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) to provide additional support for care experienced students	The university coordinates the support and training available for Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) who are based across the network. The PATs are a single point of contact for care experienced students and can provide academic support as well as signposting for additional support services.	12. Maintain online resources for PATs to ensure they remain current and useful. Organise training and development days. Share good practice, disseminate relevant information, and provide a point of contact. Advisory input into the management of the PAT role	Student Support Manager Student Support Assistant	Sep-16	Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience	58:1 (b) to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	Aug-16
	Access to an online counselling service	The university have facilitated the creation of an online counselling service, which may be accessed by students from across the partnership. This provides additional support for care experienced students, wherever they are located.	13. Coordinate online counselling service, including staff training. Increase awareness of the service to all students and staff across the network	Student Support Manager	Jan-17	Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience	58:1 (b) to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides 58:1 (d) to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing	Aug-16
Communication	Raise awareness of the duties in relation to Corporate Parenting and arrange staff training	The university are working with external agencies to provide an online training module for all staff in respect of Corporate Parenting.	14. Coordinate staff training via online module developed by Who Cares? Scotland	Student Support Manager	Mar-17	Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students through greater awareness amongst all staff.	58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent	Ongoing
Monitoring of plan/outcomes	Meet Government requirements for reporting on Corporate Parenting Plans/Actions	The university will produce a report every three years which will provide information regarding the Corporate Parenting Plan and the actions within it.	15. Establish a monitoring and reporting system to comply with legislative requirements	Student Support Manager	Apr-18	Adherence to legislative requirements	59:1 to prepare, and keep plan under review 59:3 to publish plan	Ongoing