

## West Highland College UHI Corporate Parenting Plan

***“Our ambition is to be the education provider of choice in the West Highlands of Scotland, delivering excellence in learning, training and support for all students, businesses and rural communities”***

### Introduction

West Highland College UHI was created in 2010 as a result of merger of two legacy colleges in order to provide enhanced access to, and a more coherent provision of, tertiary education for the communities of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross. This area covers a sixth of Scotland’s landmass, with a population of approximately 40,000 people, and contains some areas of very high rurality. The college was created to meet the needs of learners, communities and businesses. In doing so, it seeks to address the very considerable historic gap in access to and opportunities for post-16 education in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross and aspires to reach and exceed the national average for participation in further education.

The college finds itself in an historic context of under provision of tertiary education where participation in further education is around 55% below national average. West Highland College UHI is a significant contributor in addressing this shortfall, not least through its membership of the University of the Highlands and Islands Having been granted fundable body status in 2012 by the Scottish Government, West Highland College UHI is now a single organisation which fundamentally changes the 16+ education landscape in this geographic area by vastly improving access to further and higher education. The college has a major function in contributing to strengthen the communities it serves, by helping to tackle inequality and helping individuals out of the poverty spiral by opening up many new opportunities.

The college has 10 centres equipped with some of the most advanced online learning technologies, bringing access to further and higher education to the entire area and population of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross - from Ullapool in the north, to the Isle of Skye and the extremely remote Ardnamurchan peninsula in the west, Fort William and Kinlochleven in the south.

## Our Curriculum Ambitions

The college has developed its portfolio of further and higher education courses significantly since merger in 2010. The college works in partnership with employers, local community planners, skills and employment agencies, schools and communities to ensure that its provision is accessible, demand-led, and sustainable. The present curriculum offers access to a broad range of relevant further education courses, which provide foundation skills to work, or progression to further and higher study. The flagship degree programme of Adventure Tourism Management has been consolidated, with student numbers rising year on year. The college seeks to build on its early success to ensure an even broader curriculum which facilitates access and progression in further education, and to build further capacity for higher education up to postgraduate level over the next few years.

The college's curriculum seeks to meet the needs of individual learners, communities and businesses and offers opportunities to study across a range of disciplines:

- Tourism and Hospitality, Leisure Industries
- Public Sector
- Transport and communications
- Energy (in particular Renewables), Water and Manufacturing
- Construction & Environment
- Maritime
- Agriculture and Aquaculture
- Creative Industries

***It is in this context that West Highland College UHI will fulfil its duty as a 'corporate parent' under section 56 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The College has a duty to produce a plan, to show how we are going to deliver on our corporate parenting responsibilities for care-experienced people. We are committed to our looked after young people/care leavers and have developed this as a 3 year plan.***

## What is Corporate Parenting?

**Corporate Parenting** is defined as:

*“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.”*

Part 9 of the Act requires Corporate Parents to show how they are meeting the requirements outlined in Sections 58 to 61 and how they will report on their performance in relation to meeting those requirements. This plan indicates how we will achieve this.

The focus of our corporate parenting commitment will be on individuals who are:

1. ‘looked after’ in local authority care, and
2. care leavers.

The term **‘looked after’** includes any young person provided with accommodation by a council or local authority under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, or who is subject to relevant legal orders (such as a Compulsory Supervision Order) passed by a Children’s Hearing or Court.

A **care leaver** is an individual who was ‘looked after’ up to their 16th birthday, but who has subsequently left care. An individual can be considered a ‘care leaver’ until their 26th birthday.

*(Further information on the definition of ‘looked after children’ and ‘care leaver’ is found in the ‘Definition of terms’ section of the Statutory Guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting), issued by the Scottish Government)*

Corporate Parenting is not a task which can be delegated to an individual or team. The whole organisation is responsible for fulfilling the corporate parenting duties regardless of the specific job role of the individual member of staff. Colleges have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the rights and wellbeing of students who are care-experienced.

The term **care-experienced** is being used in this plan to include “looked after children’ and ‘care leavers’ up to their 26th birthday. It also includes those in kinship arrangements subject to local authority support.

Care-experienced people often have low levels of educational engagement and attainment, leading to poorer life experience, impacting on health and wellbeing. This is often caused by factors outside of their control, such as lack of stability in their care arrangements. Furthermore, ‘looked after’ school leavers are less likely to go into positive destinations after they leave school and although the gap is narrowing it is still far wider than is desirable.

## West Highland College Vision

The college is committed to ensuring that care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us, to enable them to successfully complete their course and to prepare them for the future by developing skills to ensure they leave us as:



For a young person to become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor, the 8 wellbeing indicators as outlined in the Scottish Governments National Approach - Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) need to be met. These indicators are referred to as SHANARRI and are identified as: *safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included*. This framework aims to support a holistic view of each young person, identifying their strengths and well as the barriers to their growth and development.

College will take its role in ensuring that the services that we provide will contribute to the young person's sense of wellbeing and achievement seriously and will commit to monitoring progress through its self-evaluation and review processes.

To achieve this West Highland College will work with other partners and agencies and continue to develop effective networks to support positive outcomes for our care experienced students. The college has a strong collaborative partnership with Highlands Council's Resource Manager for Looked After Children and with Barnardos Scotland, Lifestyles and Action for Children and SDS. The college is also committed to providing training opportunities and materials for staff across the organisation to raise awareness of the difficulties and particular barriers that care experienced young people may face in accessing and sustaining a course of study and developing the skills and relationships required to be a successful student.

West Highland College was awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark for supporting care experienced students in March 2016 and aims to build on this by working in partnership with our students to sign up to the 'Who Cares? Scotland' Pledge. The college is part of UHI Care Leavers Forum. The College has a single point of contact at all its Learning Centres for all care experienced young people in the College and the Student Services Team are all trained to offer assistance across Admissions, Learning Support, Careers Guidance and Advice and Funding.

### Summary of Actions

Corporate Parent Plan Actions November 2016		
No	Action	Date
1	Membership of the cross-partnership Care Leavers Group and associated activities. The group meets on a bi-annual basis.	Dec -16
2	Share best practice across the partnership by actively seeking feedback from partners in relation to the development of literature and services.	Ongoing
3	Ensure care experienced students are considered during strategic and operational planning and that the impact of decisions on this student cohort are considered and mitigated where possible.	Ongoing
4	Create an internal reporting system and procedures to analyse data for care experienced students regarding recruitment, retention, and outcomes	Jun-17
5	Organise relevant training for West Highland College Board of Management and staff in relation to the college duty as corporate parents	Jun-17

6	Review all published information available to care experienced students to ensure it remains current.	Feb-17
7	Improve signposting to information on the website and in the prospectus on the support available for care experienced applicants by all frontline enquiry staff	Feb-17
8	Notify curriculum staff of the need for special consideration for care experienced students during interviews and the need for early decisions and notification	Feb-17
9	Admissions officer will review and monitor the system for arranging early interview dates for care experienced applicants to allow additional planning time.	Feb-17
10	Review published information in relation to student funding to ensure it remains current.	Jun- 17
11	Arrange to meet with partner colleges in relation to bursary allocation and to examine the proposal to ring fence discretionary funding to support emergency situations with regard to care experienced students.	Apr-17
12	Develop a new leaflet to outline services and supports available for care experienced students which will encourage disclosure.	Jan-17
13	WHC will support named care experienced residents by giving them a named person in relation to support for their tenancy.	Dec -16
14	Maintain information available to ensure it remains relevant and useful and train frontline staff to ensure appropriate signposting	Jun-17
15	Provide a named person to support all care experienced applicants and students	Sept -17
16	Increase awareness of the UHI on line counselling service to all students and staff across WHC.	Jan -17
17	Ensure that information on the WHC counselling service is included in the care leaver leaflet and that staff and students are aware of the referral process	Jun -17
18	Engage with Who Cares Scotland to devise and coordinate Board of Management and staff training via online module developed by Who Cares? Scotland	Jun-17
19	Establish a monitoring and reporting system to comply with legislative requirements	Apr-18

## West Highland College - Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Area	Criteria	Current Activities	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Projected Outcomes	Corporate Parenting duty	Progress 12 month Review
Management and Delivery of plan/outcomes	Continuous enhancement of provision for care experienced students	West Highland College will work with partners in UHI to develop and implement the University Corporate Parent Plan as it applies to HE students while developing a local West Highland College Corporate Parent Plan to apply to all other WHC students. WHC will contribute to a wider review and enhancement of processes across the Partnership. Additionally, the College will liaise with external agencies, including Who Cares? Scotland, CELCIS, College Development Network(CDN), and appropriate local agencies to ensure we keep up to date with current best practice and training.	1. Membership of the cross-partnership Care Leavers Group and associated activities. The group meets on a bi-annual basis.	Head of Student Support	Dec-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	
			2.Share best practice across the partnership by actively seeking feedback from partners in relation to the development of literature and services.	Head of Student Support	Ongoing	Improved cross partnership working and communication to ensure equivalence for care experienced students across the UHI Partnership	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	
			3. Ensure care experienced students are considered during strategic and operational planning and that the impact of decisions on this student cohort are considered and mitigated where possible.	Senior Management Team (ELT) College Management Group Head of Student Support	Ongoing	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	
			4. Create an internal reporting system and procedures to analyse data for care experienced students regarding recruitment, retention, and outcomes	Head of Student Support AP Quality	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	
			5.Organise relevant training for West Highland College Board of Management and staff in relation to the college duty as corporate parents	Head of Student Support AP Quality	Jun-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	

Raising aspirations and improving pre-entry guidance	Raising awareness of the support services available for care experienced students applying to study at West Highland College	<p>Information about student support, including that for care leavers, is currently available on the WHC website at <a href="http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/students/student-support">http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/students/student-support</a></p> <p>WHC UHI have established contacts within the Highland Council, Action for Children, Barnardos Scotland and SDS as well as excellent school links with the local secondary schools through the Schools College Partnership. The Student Services Team has regular informal contact with them.</p> <p>Students declaring that they are care experienced are given priority interview dates and responses</p>	<p>6. Review all published information available to care experienced students to ensure it remains current.</p> <p>7. Improve signposting to information on the website and in the prospectus on the support available for care experienced applicants by all frontline enquiry staff</p>	Head of Student Support Student Services Team Leader	Feb-17	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and increase the number of students taking up the support services available to them	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	
Application	Establish admissions processes that offer increased opportunities for care leavers across all our college courses and levels	<p>The College has adapted our Application Form, Enrolment Form and Learning Support Checklist to give the care experienced applicant the opportunity to disclose their cared for background. The student can also disclose their background during interview with the lecturing staff.</p>	<p>8. Notify curriculum staff of the need for special consideration for care experienced students during interviews and the need for early decisions and notification.</p> <p>9. Admissions officer will review and monitor the system for arranging early interview dates for care experienced applicants to allow additional planning time.</p>	Admissions Officer	Feb-17	Admissions processes that allow us to track and identify care experienced applicants at the earliest opportunity and to offer support through out the application and interview process.	58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies	

Pre-entry	Provide timely information re funding for HE and FE courses.	Funding leaflets are available in hard copy and information is also available on our website at <a href="http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/studying-at-whc/fees-funding">http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/studying-at-whc/fees-funding</a>	10. Review published information in relation to student funding to ensure it remains current. 11. Arrange to meet with partner colleges in relation to bursary allocation and to examine the proposal to ring fence discretionary funding to support emergency situations with regard to care experienced students.	Head of Student Services Director of Finance	Jun-17	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	
	Ensure that care experienced students have access to useful materials to provide help and guidance prior to enrolment	Currently the college has information in the prospectus which encourages students to disclose and to make an appointment to see an advisor. A more proactive approach will be adopted to raise the profile of support services in relation to care experienced students	12. Develop a new leaflet to outline services and supports available for care experienced students which will encourage disclosure.	Student Services Team Leader	Feb-17	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and improved early retention rates	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	
	Help to ensure that care experienced students have access to appropriate accommodation	The college is part of the first phase of the UHI project in collaboration with Cityheart Living (Scotland) Ltd, which provides student residences at our Fort William campus. These residencies opened to students for session 16/17. In addition the college works with local landlords/lords to acquire accommodation for our students. We also work with the local Housing Authority for students who have their own tenancy to ensure that the student and the authoiry have a named contact in college There is an agreement in place with CityHeart Living through UHI 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.	13. WHC will support named care experienced residents by giving them a named person in relation to support for their tenancy.	Head of Student Support	Ongoing	Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and improved early retention rates	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	

On course support	Provide impartial progression guidance relating to further study (e.g. FE to HE), or progression routes into employment and where relevant to support transition to higher education or employment.	FE students wishing to progress to a higher level of education are supported by the Guidance and Information Officer and HE students are supported by either their PAT or by WHC's Careers Officer. For students wishing to move into employment they are introduced to the college's Employability Team who work very closely with Job Centre+ and SDS. Students from a care background are given priority and scheduled appointments to whichever department is deemed appropriate.	14. Maintain information available to ensure it remains relevant and useful and train frontline staff to ensure appropriate signposting	Head of Student Support Employability Team Manager	Apr-17	Improved retention rates for care experienced students	58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	
	Provision of a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) at HE level study and the allocation of a course leader at FE level to provide additional support for care experienced students.	FE students currently undertake a Personal Development Plan while studying in conjunction with tutor reviews.	15. Provide a named person to support all care experienced applicants and students	Head of Student Support Student Services Team Leader	Sep-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 (e) access opportunities and make use of services	
	Access to a 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. In addition to this WHC has ringfenced a small amount of funds to allow referral to a local counselling agency. Care experienced students are considered for priority referral.	16. Increase awareness of the UHI online counselling service to all students and staff across WHC. 17. Ensure that information on the WHC counselling service is included in the care leaver leaflet and that staff and students are aware of the referral process	Student Services Team Leader	Jan-17 June -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	

Communication	Raise awareness of the duties in relation to Corporate Parenting and arrange staff training	Training has been delivered to staff across the college	18. Engage with Who Cares Scotland to devise and coordinate Board of Management and staff training via online module developed by Who Cares? Scotland	Head of Student Services	Jun-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	
Monitoring of Plan and Outcomes	Meet Government requirements for reporting on Corporate Parenting Plans/Actions	The college will produce a report every three years which will provide information regarding the Corporate Parenting Plan and the actions within it.	19. Establish a monitoring and reporting system to comply with legislative requirements	Head of Student Support	Apr-18	Adherence to legislative requirements	59:1 to prepare, and keep plan under review 59:3 to publish plan	