

CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT 2015-2018 & PLAN 2018-2021

MARCH 2018

1. Introduction

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, came into effect on the 1st of April 2015. **Part 9** of the 2014 Act names 24 public bodies and groups of bodies, including universities, as **corporate parents**. The Statutory Guidance on Corporate Parenting defines it 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.”
(Scottish Government, 2015)

Under the Act, corporate parents have duties to deliver on to care experienced people. Overall, they have a responsibility to **promote the wellbeing** of care experienced people. To do so they must understand the lives of Scotland’s looked after young people and care leavers and respond to their needs **as any parent should**.

2. Corporate parenting responsibilities

Section 58 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 states that it is the duty of every corporate parent, in so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its other functions, to:

- (a) be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies,
- (b) assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,
- (c) promote the interests of those children and young people,
- (d) seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,
- (e) take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people:
 - (i) to access opportunities it provides in pursuance of paragraph (d), and

- (ii) to make use of services, and access support, which it provides, and
- (f) take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those children and young people.

3. Abertay University and care experienced young people

The University remains committed to supporting students with experience in care throughout their studies. Much of the support originally intended for care leavers is good practice for all students and has been mainstreamed since the University gained the Buttle UK Quality Mark in 2007 - one of the first in Scotland to receive the Mark (which is now no longer offered).

In addition to recognising in our admissions process the context in which care-experienced applicants have achieved their qualifications, the University remains committed to supporting students from care backgrounds throughout their studies.

A comprehensive programme of support is in place to support all students through the admissions and entry phases, and throughout their period of study. In addition to this, our support team proactively engage with students disclosing looked-after status on their application or on registration. Routine contact is made with students from looked-after backgrounds in their first semester to check on their early progress and to remind them of assistance available.

The University

- Encourages applicants to share with us whether they are or have been in care, since this allows us to contact them to make sure that they are aware of the support that we provide and can provide the applicant with advice.
- Welcomes visits to the University at Applicant Days and Open Days.
- Provides a Named Contact for all care experienced students studying at the University, even if they have not indicated on their application form that they are care experienced. The Named Contact is based in our Student Services team and can answer queries and provide regular support regarding all issues relating to a care background, the student journey and personal needs.
- Offers a guaranteed place on two specialist programmes for new students preparing for University ('UP' and 'ACT') both designed to help with the transition to university study.
- Offers year-round accommodation contracts in University residences.
- Liaises with local authorities to ensure access to funding for care experienced students

- Works or has worked with relevant organisations including Who Cares? Scotland, Buttle UK, Aberlour Childcare Trust, the Care Inspectorate and CELCIS to access relevant resources.

4. Report on outcomes achieved in period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018

Applicants

Since entry for 2014/15, the University has offered 'contextual admissions' meaning that as well as school qualifications, we also take contextual factors into consideration. These may include whether you attend a school where a relatively small proportion of students progress to higher education, have spent significant time in care or live in an area of deprivation.

During the period since the Act was introduced, the University has offered a place to study for 81% of those applicants who self-reported that they had experience of being in care. Of those offered a place on a course, 23% have registered as students.

Session	Number of Applicants who answered 'Yes' to have been in care	Number of these applicants given an Offer	Number of Applicants who Registered
2014/15	20	17	3
2015/16	16	14	5
2016/17	15	12	3
2017/18	29	22	4
Grand Total	80	65	15

Total Registered Students

Session	Total number of registered students up to age 25 who indicated that they have been in care	Of the total number of registered students up to age 25 who indicated they have been in care – the number who were <u>Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate entrants (National Measure)</u>
2014/15	8	4
2015/16	12	6
2016/17	7	4
2017/18	9	7

- During the reporting period, students with care experience up to the age of 25 studied a range of courses across most academic Schools in the University.
- 3 studied on the AHEAD access course.
- 2 articulated into the third year of a degree on a validated University programme delivered at a partner college
- 4 articulated with advanced standing on to a University programme delivered at the University.
- The majority of those who completed their studies (13) during the reporting period achieved an honours degree or degree; 1 achieved a Diploma of Higher Education and one a Certificate of Higher Education and one student failed to achieve any academic credits.
- In addition, six students studied at the University during the reporting period who had experience of care, but were 25 or older on initial registration.

Collaboration with external agencies

The University has previously worked with the Aberlour Childcare Trust and the Care Inspectorate to produce a computer game designed to support young people with experience of being in care (see annex).

In addition to the external organisations mentioned above, the University has made contact with a new charity based in Dundee called *Breakthrough Dundee*, which supports young people including care experienced young people by providing one-to-one mentoring and group sessions (including sessions with universities for school pupils from S3 onwards). The organisation was launched in 2017 and to date there are 3 members of staff at the University who have applied and been accepted to mentor a young person.

5. Plan for period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021

Objective	Action	Timescale/Responsibility
Promote information about the support that care experienced young people can expect from the University.	We will review the information we provide on our website in consultation with care experienced young people.	During session 2018/19. / Student Services
Raise staff awareness of needs of care experienced young people	<p>(a) We will introduce a series of talks for staff by and about care experienced young people and their needs - in collaboration with relevant external organisations.</p> <p>(b) We will ensure that the corporate parenting duty and support offered by the University is included in induction for new staff.</p> <p>(c) We will support our staff in becoming mentors for care experienced young people locally with Breakthrough Dundee.</p>	From session 2018/19 onwards. / Student Services (with HR support for items b and c)
Improve the conversion rate of offers to registrations for care experienced young people (noting that the small number of individuals involved means that % may fluctuate significantly).	We will investigate further the means by which we can encourage applicants to take up our offer.	From session 2018/19 Student Services, Academic Registry and Student Recruitment.
Continue to encourage care experienced young people to engage with the Named Contact and other support services.	We will continue to make contact with care experienced young people to offer support.	Ongoing/Student Services
Liaison with relevant external organisations including local authority.	We will continue to liaise with relevant external organisations including	Ongoing/Student Services

	<p>Breakthrough Dundee and Dundee Champions Board.</p> <p>We will explore applying to become a Partner Organisation for Breakthrough Dundee.</p>	<p>2018/19</p> <p>Director of Student Services and Director of External & Corporate Relations</p>
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Approved by the Executive Group

28 March 2018

Case study

Far From Home

Far From Home is an online 3D adventure game made for the Care Inspectorate, Scotland's care watchdog

Students from Abertay University helped young people with experience of being in care develop a new computer game.

Far From Home is an online 3D adventure game made for the Care Inspectorate, Scotland's care watchdog. The game explores themes of trust, consequence and unfamiliarity in an action-packed and strange alien world. The game aims to help young people who play it engage with issues they experience in their own personal journey through care, and support young people to understand their right to good quality care. The game's star, Sid - a blue-headed alien - was originally conceived by young people as a fun and friendly character to engage with youngsters living in care and to help discuss their rights under Scotland's National Care Standards.

The Care Inspectorate worked with young people from Who Cares? Scotland and the Aberlour Childcare Trust to develop the ideas behind Sid into a full-scale game. Game design students at Abertay University turned those ideas into a fun and visually stunning reality. Annette Bruton, the Care Inspectorate's Chief Executive, said: "Promoting the rights of young people in care, and helping them understand what they can expect from the services they engage with is hugely important. "Finding new ways to explore those ideas is a tremendous challenge, and this computer game is a brilliant, innovative way to do that. It is fun, it's smart and the themes it explores are really important. "We want to show young people that if you make the right decisions in life, you will not only protect yourself from harm but also get where you want to be. "All of the team behind Far From Home should be proud of the excellent work they have done." The game will help young people explore trust and the consequences of making a poor decision. The game is set in the outskirts of an alien city where characters can either help or hinder Sid to find items to repair his damaged spacecraft so he can return home.

One of the young people with experience of life in care who helped design the game is David Miller, 25, from Glasgow. David was in care for five years from the age of 14. David said: "I think that it's really important that everybody in care understands that they have rights, like a right to privacy for example. "I didn't know that privacy was my entitlement. I think it's so important that children get to understand that. "I'm a gamer myself. I think the game would appeal to a young audience who may think they're just playing a game but actually there are really good messages that come across in it."

<http://meetsid.co.uk/>