



Corporate Parenting Plan

2025-2028



UHI Shetland, as part of 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.

The Scottish Government acknowledges that care experienced young people often have low levels of educational engagement and attainment, leading to poorer life experience, impacting on health and wellbeing.

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.

Through corporate parenting the aim is to improve the outcomes for care experienced young people.

Who do we mean?

The term "Care Experienced" refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age. This care may have been provided in many different settings, such as:

- Kinship Care - Living with a relative who is not the child's mum or dad.
- Looked After at Home - With the help of social work
- Residential Care - Living in a residential home or school.
- Foster Care - living with foster carers.
- Secure Care - Living in a secure accommodation.
- Adoption - Living with adoptive parents.

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Corporate Parenting is defined by the Scottish Government 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, August 2015)

As a Corporate Parent we will support every care leaver who is under the age of 26 (and was on their 16th birthday or at any subsequent time) but is no longer looked after by a local authority. It is our duty as a Corporate Parent to:

- Be alert of issues which might adversely affect the wellbeing of the care experienced learner.
- Assess the needs of care experienced learners for services and support provided.
- Promote the interests of those care experienced learners and provide opportunities and activities designed to promote their wellbeing.

- Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.
- Take action to improve and review our performance as a corporate parent.

We are committed to widening access to further education in relation to supporting care leavers (only 4% of care leavers in Scotland go from school to university compared with 37% of all school leavers).

Our guiding principles

Care leavers can struggle on their journey into adulthood. Growing up, moving out and becoming independent often happens gradually with ongoing family support. Care leavers should expect nothing less. At UHI Shetland we believe that it is important for us to:

- Recognise the vulnerability of care leavers and prioritise and reference them in policy documents.
- Assume all care leavers are entitled to services, support and opportunities. This includes access to bursaries and grants (including Discretionary funds), learning support, support with housing and accommodation options and access to cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Demonstrate to care leavers that they are encouraged, enabled and empowered especially with transitions into and out of learning.
- Relax age restrictions especially in relation to supporting transitions.
- Improve employment transition planning alongside public and third sector bodies.
- Give priority to relationship-based practice support.

Our commitment

The Shetland Meids and the Shetland Meids Pledge

'A reinvention of Shetland's prior Corporate Parenting Board, the Meids are a group of care experienced young people supported by Who Cares? Scotland and local corporate parent.

We signed the *Shetland Meids Pledge* and we will be proactive in ensuring we deliver the best support that we can to our care experienced learners, working with the individual to provide the help and support specific to their needs.

At UHI Shetland we pledge

- *I listen and take your views seriously.*
- *I act with love to help you thrive.*
- *I have high aspirations for you to live the life you deserve, and I will celebrate your successes.*
- *I will work together with others to provide you everything a good parent would.*

- *It is my duty and my privilege to fight your corner – I will remove barriers and give you every opportunity to reach your potential and to access all opportunities for career pathways.*
- *I will work with other Meids to improve things for all care experienced children and young people by delivering the Promise in Shetland*
- *I will ensure all our services are “going the extra mile” to meet the needs of people with care experience in our community.*

Scottish Care Leavers’ Covenant

UHI Shetland signed up to the Scottish Care Leavers’ Covenant, which outlines a cross sector approach to supporting and implementing Part 9, 10 and 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) model is a national approach to supporting the wellbeing and outcomes of all children and young people and is at the source of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Where support cannot be met by family, the GIRFEC approach ensures that all of the child’s needs are identified, appropriate support is available, and its accessibility is effective. The eight wellbeing indicators which form the basis of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included (SHANARRI); were taken into account when forming UHI Shetland’s Corporate Parenting Plan and will be used to review and monitor the effective delivery of our duties.

There are five key duties of corporate parenting which are to be considered in all aspects of management and support of care experienced students. These are:

- Be alert of issues which might adversely affect the wellbeing of the care experienced learner.
- Assess the needs of care experienced learners for services and support provided.
- Promote the interests of care experienced learners and provide activities and opportunities to promote their wellbeing.
- Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.
- Take action to improve and review our performance as a corporate parent.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan

UHI Shetland’s Corporate Parenting Plan will detail how the college will deliver its corporate parenting responsibilities. It has been developed in consultation and collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland, local Through Care and Aftercare groups, SDS, and the local Meids group.

It was important to us to reflect on both the statutory Corporate Parenting Duties and the local Shetland Meids Pledge in the action plan; we are signatories and intend to support our care experienced young people in accordance with the Pledge.

We will review progress on the action plan at the Operations and Estates Committee, and this will be published once a year.

UHI Shetland Corporate Parenting Action Plan						
Area	Corporate Parent Duty Criteria	Current Activities	Improvement Actions	Owner	Timescale	Meids Pledge
Management and delivery of plan/outcomes through continuous enhancement of provision for care experienced students	<p>Be alert of issues which might adversely affect the wellbeing of the care experienced learner.</p> <p>Take action to improve and review our performance as a corporate parent.</p>	Identify those who have declared they are care experienced.	<p>Care experienced who have been through the college system are invited to speak about their experiences of learning.</p> <p>Attend school events to ensure that those who are care experience are given information while at school so that potential students have a better understanding of what is available,</p> <p>Staff to improve their awareness of care experience through training.</p>	<p>KB/Student Support</p> <p>Student support/academics visiting schools/Bridges</p> <p>KB/GM – ensuring training on care experience is</p>	<p>First invitations by June 2025</p> <p>First to take place academic year 24/25</p> <p>Board training 24/25 Additional training to</p>	<i>I listen and take your views seriously.</i>

			All staff are aware of UHI's Compassionate College approach	available – section heads. All staff are encouraged to access training around being trauma informed (e.g. CDN training)	mandatory training forms part of staff development training by June 2025 By June 2025	
Raising aspirations and improving pre-entry guidance	Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.	<p>Student Support meets with individuals and assists with accessing support including funding to assist with their learning.</p> <p>Student Support to work with transitions agencies to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of</p>	<p>Priority places (without interview) to be given for Senior Phase and Skills for Work courses, provided the candidate meets the minimum educational requirements.</p> <p>UHI staff (academic or support to meet care experienced students in schools/Bridges and talk through what courses are available</p>	<p>GM/LB/KB</p> <p>This process has been agreed by SMG and ensure that staff are aware.</p> <p>Student Support/academic staff</p>	<p>Academic Year 24/25 for the intake for 25/26</p> <p>First cohort by the end of academic year 24/25</p>	<i>It is my duty and my privilege to fight your corner – I will remove barriers and give you every opportunity to reach your potential and to access all opportunities for career pathways.</i>

		<p>support channels.</p> <p>Through the transitions process, care experienced students are invited in to the college for trial days/tours to meet with key staff and so potential students get to know who they will work with.</p>	<p>Potential students are specifically made aware of what funding is available to them (e.g. care experienced bursaries). The information is made more accessible.</p> <p>Potential students need to be made aware of the benefits of declaring that they are care experienced (e.g. access to support and funding)</p>	<p>Student Support/KB/GM</p> <p>Ensure information cascaded through channels and is accessible.</p> <p>Student Support</p> <p>KB/Student Support</p>	<p>By April 2025</p> <p>By end of academic year 24/25</p>	
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Application	Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.	Student Support meets with students with care experience and advises of available services.	Those who declare they are care experienced are flagged to Student Support on enrolment (Metis report/registry)	GM, KB	By end of academic year 24/25 in time for enrolments 25/26	<i>It is my duty and my privilege to fight your corner – I will remove barriers and give you every opportunity to reach your potential and to access all opportunities for career pathways.</i>
Pre-entry	Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.	Student Support meets with other service providers as part of the transitions group to best support new students onto our campuses. Students can decide to meet	With the agreement of the student, a support plan to meet the needs of the individual is put in place.	Student Support/PATs	By end of academic year 24/25	<i>I will work together with others to provide you everything a good parent would.</i>

		with student support and lecturing staff ahead of entry so they can address questions and students have a point of contact				
On course support	<p>Assess the needs of care experienced learners for services and support provided.</p> <p>Promote the interests of those care experienced learners and provide opportunities and activities designed to promote their wellbeing.</p>	Students are signposted Student Support for funding and in-course support.	<p>Students who declare they are care experienced are contacted within 4 weeks of induction with an offer of support.</p> <p>Declarations can be made at any stage of the student journey</p> <p>Care experienced students are prioritised in any enquiries academic and support requirements.</p>	<p>KB/Student Support</p> <p>Student Support</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>By end of academic year 24/25 for cohort 25/26</p> <p>Any process changes implemented by end of academic year 24/25</p> <p>By end of academic year 24/25</p>	<p><i>I act with love to help you thrive.</i></p> <p><i>I listen and take your views seriously.</i></p>

				Academic staff/Student Support		
Progression support	Take action and support care experienced learners in accessing opportunities, making use of services and receiving support.	Information on support services is shared with all students Help navigate access to other support services if required.	If no transition plan in place, student support and PAT agree appropriate check in dates.	Student Support/PAT	In place for start of academic year 25/26	<i>I have high aspirations for you to live the life you deserve, and I will celebrate your successes.</i>
Monitoring of plan and outcomes	Take action to improve and review our performance as a corporate parent.	KPIs for performance are monitored annually by Head of Student Experience and Vice Principal, in context of the small number of students. Training provided for staff including mandatory training.	Establish a means of gaining robust feedback to have a better understanding of student experience at the end of the period of study.	KB/GM/Student Support	By end of academic year 24/25	<i>I will ensure all our services are “going the extra mile” to meet the needs of people with care experience in our community.</i>