

# UHI Corporate Parenting Plan

**2022-2025**

## Introduction

UHI 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 a ny 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.

UHI 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 UHI 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 UHI plan.

UHI and locally specific plans will therefore form the totality of the partnership’s approach to meeting the duties, and as part of this UHI 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, UHI 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 UHI Vision

UHI 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, UHI 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 UHI will continue to work closely with relevant external agencies as well as our academic partners.

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| **UHI - 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 | UHI 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, UHI 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. The Student Support Manager also represents UHI on the Highland Care Experienced Young People Opportunity Steering Group, Chaired by the local Who Cares? Scotland representative. | 1. Coordination of the cross-  partnership Priority Groups Forum 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 | On-going | 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 | On-going |
| 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 Student Experience Senior Management Team (SMT) | On-going | 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 | On-going |
| 4. Creation of internal reporting system and procedures to analyse data for care experienced students regarding recruitment, retention, and outcomes | Dean of Student  Experience  MIS Manager | Complete | 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 | Created data reports  detailing student disclosures, student retention, and progression. These will be monitored annually, by the Priority Groups Forum |
| 5. Organisation of relevant training  for UHI and academic partner staff | Student Support Manager | Complete | 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 | Online training  module, which is mandatory for UHI staff and the majority of the academic partners. Priority Groups Forum will continue to monitor training needs. |
| Raising aspirations and pre-entry out reach | Raising awareness of the support services available for care experienced students | UHI have created a Care Experienced 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 | On-going | 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 | On-going |

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| 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  Admissions team is a member of the Priority Group Forum to assist with refining the HE admissions process in relation to care experienced young people | Admissions Manager | Complete | 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. |
| Pre-entry | Provide timely information re funding for courses (HE). | UHI 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. This can be filtered by course, location, etc. | 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 | On-going | 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 | On-going |
|  | Ensure that care experienced students have access to useful materials to provide help and guidance prior to enrolment | UHI have 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. | EDU | On-going | 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 | On-going |
|  | Help to ensure that care experienced students have access to appropriate accommodation | UHI has its own accommodation in key sites,  which is managed by the central Accommodation team. This enables a close working relationship with the academic partners, to ensure care experienced students in these locations are supported. | 10. Accommodation is available for  care experienced students 365 days per year. | Head of Facilities and  Procurement | Complete | 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 | Complete |
| On course support | Provide academic support for care experienced students | UHI have 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 | EDU | On-going | Improved retention rates for care experienced students | 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services | On-going |

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|  | Provision of a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) to provide additional support for care experienced students | UHI 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. Review online resources for  PATs to include information re support for care experienced students. 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 | On-going | 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 | On-going |
| Annual survey of care experienced students re support | UHI run an annual anonymised survey, launched each time to coincide with National Care Experienced Week, to seek the views of care experienced students on the support we offer and how we can make this even better. The results are included in a report, which is reviewed - and subsequent actions agreed - by the Priority Groups Forum. | 13. Annual survey launched during National Care Experienced Week and promoted by local AP staff, on social media, on the student portal (MyDay), and in various internal newsletters. | Student Support Assistant | On-going | Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience | 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent | On-going |
| Access to an  Online Counselling service | UHI have 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. | 14. Coordinate Online Counselling  service, including staff training. Increase awareness of the service to all students and staff across the network | Mental Health and Counselling  Manager | On-going | 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 | On-going |
| Communication | Raise awareness of the  duties in relation to | UHI provide a mandatory online training module  for all staff in respect of Corporate Parenting. | 15. Coordinate staff training via  external agencies. | Student Support Manager  Student Support Assistant | Complete | Enhancement of the student  experience and improved | 58:1 (f) to take action to  improve as a corporate | Online training module  now mandatory for UHI staff and the majority of academic partners. External training sessions to be arranged for new SET and SMT staff. |
|  | Corporate Parenting and |  |  |  |  | retention rates for care | parent |
|  | arrange staff training |  |  |  |  | experienced students through |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | greater awareness amongst all |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | staff. |  |
| Monitoring of | Meet Government | UHI will produce a report every three years which | 16. Establish a monitoring and | Student Support Manager | On-going | Adherence to legislative | 59:1 to prepare, and | Reports submitted |
| plan/outcomes | requirements for reporting on Corporate | will provide information regarding the Corporate  Parenting Plan and the actions within it. | reporting system to comply with legislative requirements |  |  | requirements | keep plan under review 59:3 to publish plan | April 2018 and April  2021. |
|  | Parenting Plans/Actions |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |