

The University of Aberdeen

Corporate Parenting Plan

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Executive Summary

In April 2015 Part 9 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 came into effect. As a consequence of this act the University, as a post 16 education body for the purposes of Higher Education (Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005), became a Corporate Parent.

The University of Aberdeen is committed to supporting young people who have had experience of care and to fulfilling its corporate parenting responsibilities.

In March 2015 the University was awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care Leavers in recognition of its commitment to young people in and leaving care. The University provides a range of support mechanisms and services which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual care experienced students.

The University is currently working with both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to develop and strengthen partnerships that will allow greater sharing of resources and information for the benefit of young people with care experience.

In compliance with Section 59 of Part 9 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 the University's has written a Corporate Parenting Plan. This document contains a copy of the plan. (Please see section 1)

The University's work with the Buttle Trust, the two local authorities, STAF (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum), CELSIS (Centre for excellence for looked after children in Scotland), Who Cares Trust, Aberdeen University Student Association and other partners, have informed the development of its Corporate Parenting Plan.

The University is working closely with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and the three local students associations on developing ways of jointly supporting students and applicants who have care experience. This work has led to the creation of a joint FE & HE Regional Corporate Parenting Framework. (Please see section 2)

In compliance with Part 9 of the Act the University will monitor and report on its Corporate Parenting Plan. Section 3 of the plan details how the University will monitor and report on its progress. This document contains a flow chart that shows how this process will work. (Please see appendices 3.2)

There are currently over 30 students with Care Experience at the University. These students are at various different levels of study and on programmes across a wide range of subject areas. The

University is now better able to identify students with Care Experience due to changes in the registration process. Students can more readily identify themselves and access pastoral support.

The Care Experienced Student Population was asked for their input and guidance in the development of this plan. These students helped to identify the barriers that they faced in trying to get into University and they suggested actions that might be of assistance to both them and their peers.

The University will continue to seek the input of the Care Experienced Student Population and the Aberdeen University Students Association (AUSA) when this plan is reviewed. The University will review its Corporate Parenting plan on a yearly basis.

1. Corporate Parenting Plan

1.1 Raising Aspirations and Pre-entry Outreach Activities:

The actions and outcomes described in this section will enable the University to fulfil three of the duties described in Part 9 (Section 58) of The Childrens and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 – 1. To promote the interests of care experienced children and young people, 2. To seek to provide looked after children and care leavers with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing. 3. To take action to help looked after children and care leavers access the opportunities being provided and make use of the services, and access the support, which they provide.

Raising Aspirations and Pre-entry Outreach			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.1.1	Build working partnerships and liaise with those local authorities and agencies that support care leavers.	This action will allow the University to more readily identify and subsequently support potential applicants throughout the recruitment process. This action will allow us to share information more easily with the relevant partners and will open up opportunities to further improve the institution's practice when working with this category of students	The Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.
1.1.2	Ensure that outreach activities are accessible for those in care / care leavers by offering bespoke support and opportunities. This will be accomplished by working with care leavers and those who support them to identify any barriers and ways in which to reduce or remove these.	This action will help to remove any barriers to information and advice for this category of potential applicants. This support will help Care Leavers to make more fully informed choices when thinking about going into Higher Education.	The Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.

1.1.3	<p>Ensure that costs are not a barrier to accessing information on applying to the institution and to accessing outreach activities. Work with care leavers and those who support them to identify what is stopping them for attending events and then try to remove or reduce these factors. Also we will offer financial assistance for costs to Care Leavers upfront. For example we will offer to help pay the travel costs for a care experienced applicant to attend University Open Days.</p>	<p>Children and Young People from care backgrounds will be able to make more fully informed choices about going into Higher Education. The University will be better equipped to support this category of students throughout the recruitment process.</p>	<p>The Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.</p>
1.1.4	<p>Take action to encourage children and young people who are in care / care leavers to access Higher Education through appropriate outreach materials and activities. This will be accomplished by working with local education departments, social work departments and targeted marketing materials. The University will measure the success of these efforts by looking at how many care leavers engage in outreach activities and where possible their post-secondary education destinations.</p>	<p>Children and Young People from care backgrounds will be able to make more fully informed choices about going into Higher Education. The University will be better equipped to support this category of students throughout the recruitment process.</p>	<p>The Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.</p>
1.1.5	<p>Include those in care / care leavers as a specific</p>	<p>This action will allow the University to assist more</p>	<p>The Widening Participation Team,</p>

	target group (category) for the institution's access schemes – the Summer School for Access and Access to Degrees programmes.	potential applicants into Higher Education where they need additional support and / or do not meet the normal entry requirements. Students from this category will be better prepared before starting a full time H.E. course.	Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, the Access to Degrees Programme co-ordinator.
1.1.6	Provide pre-entry guidance, to those in care / care leavers, on HE study.	Potential applicants from Care backgrounds will be able to make more fully informed choices about going in Higher Education. They will have more information on what courses and options are available to them.	The Widening Participation Officer, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, Student Support Services.
1.1.7	Provide pre-entry financial advice and information on the types of support that is available to those in Care / Care leavers in Higher Education.	Potential applicants from Care backgrounds will be better informed about the types of pastoral and financial support that can be made available to them in Higher Education – which may help to improve their confidence in applying and remove barriers to entry.	The Widening Participation, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, Student Support Services.
1.1.8	Effectively publicise the support which is on offer to potential students from a care background. Ensure that the relevant webpages and print materials are up to date.	This action will ensure that the University is better able to reach this category of potential students and that applicants who are considering going in HE have an opportunity for support.	The Widening Participation Team and Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.

1.2 Application, Entry and Induction Support:

The actions and outcomes described in this section will enable the University to fulfil three of the duties described in Part 9 (Section 58) of The Childrens and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; 1. Being alert to matters which adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers, 2. Assessing the needs of those children and young people for the services and support they provide, 3. Taking action to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.

Application, Entry and Induction Support			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.2.1	Develop methods of identifying applicants from care and establishing contact with them as appropriate.	This action will better enable the University to support potential applicants from a care background to gain entry.	Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.
1.2.2	Ensure that information on the full range of support mechanisms offered to applicants with care experience is readily available and easily accessible.	This action will help potential students from care backgrounds who are thinking about applying to the University of Aberdeen to be more fully informed about the process and to have confidence that they will be supported.	Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.
1.2.3	Create a designated webpage / web presence for young people in care on the University's website.	This will allow the University to provide useful information on HE options and the support available for this category of students and the professionals / agencies that work with them.	Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, ICT Services and Support.
1.2.4	Offer personalised support before the course start and identify arrangements for continued support	This will enable the University to offer the types of support needed by this category of students during	Widening Participation Team and Student Support Services.

	once a place is offered. (If required) This support will be provided by the Widening Participation Officer in conjunction with the Support and Advice Office	the application process.	
1.2.5	Offer flexible application arrangements for young people in care, e.g. guaranteed interviews, feedback on applications and general support from the admissions team	This action will enable the University to better support the individual application needs of this category of students. A guaranteed interview would give potential students an opportunity to explain their needs and how their experiences have impacted on education. This process would also help the University to identify those students who could potentially benefit from going on one of the access programmes.	Widening Participation Team, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, Admissions Selectors.

1.3 Accommodation:

The actions and outcomes described in this section will enable the University to fulfil three of the duties described in Part 9 (Section 58) of The Childrens and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; 1. Being alert to matters which adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers, 2. Seeking to provide opportunities which will promote the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers, 3. Taking action to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.

Accommodation			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.3.1	Where required, support students seeking accommodation to secure a 365 day lease in the University's halls – this type of contract would be available to the student for the entire length of their stay.	By providing an opportunity for year round accommodation the University will be effectively removing one of the main barriers to attracting Care Leavers in H.E. This type of accommodation scheme should also help students to remain for the duration of their course. Students would also be provided with a range of specific support mechanisms whilst in University Accommodation.	Widening Participation Officer, Student Recruitment and Admission Service, the Accommodation Office and Campus Services.
1.3.2	Ensure that care experienced students staying in student accommodation are aware of the support that is available from the Student Residents Assistants.	This action will help to reduce some of the problems faced by care experienced students staying in student accommodation – for example isolation.	Widening Participation Officer, the Accommodation Office, Campus Services, Student Residents Assistants Office
1.3.3	Work with the Aberdeen University Student's Association in order to help integrate students into	This action will help students with experience of being in care to better integrate into the University's	Widening Participation Officer, Aberdeen University Students

	the University's community.	community. This will hopefully allow the students to more fully enjoying the "student life" aspect of their time at University. Students will be better able to integrate in to the University's culture – meeting new friends, finding out about societies and other extra-curricular activities.	Association, Student Residents Assistants Office
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1.4 Health and Wellbeing:

Health and Wellbeing			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.4.1	A designated member of staff will be identified to act as a key point of contact and advisor throughout the duration of the student's course. Students will also be given information on the University's counselling service and will be made a priority group for referrals. The Widening Participation team will work to ensure that support is provided throughout the holidays.	This action will mean that students are offered support throughout their relationship with the University – the recruitment / application process, the degree programme and vacation times. An appropriate support plan should help to remove barriers to individual students successfully completing their course and staying at University.	The Head of the Student Support Service and the wider Student Support Team – with appropriate assistance from the Widening Participation Officer.
1.4.2	Implement a protocol for information sharing with the student and the responsible local authority / health and social care trust – that will contribute towards the students Pathway Plan.	By sharing information with the appropriate agencies and partners then the University will be in a better position to support students from a care background. Health and Social care Services will also be in a position to better support the needs of their clients by knowing about experiences at University.	Widening Participation Officer and Student Support Services.
1.4.3	Ensure that any available sources of financial support for the students are in place throughout the duration of their studies.	This action will enable the University to better support student from care backgrounds whilst they are studying. By ensuring that available sources of financial assistance are in place to then this will help to remove a potential source of stress for the	Student Support Services, Widening Participation Officer, the University's Development Trust.

		student and will remove a barrier to them successfully completing their studies.	
1.4.4	Offer appropriate transitional support for those learners who have completed their course – in partnership with the appropriate agencies.	<p>Leaving University, where there is considerable pastoral support and secure accommodation is recognised as a potentially difficult transitional period for this category of students.</p> <p>By offering an appropriate transitional service the University can help to make this a less stressful and problematic time for the student.</p>	Student Support Services and the Careers Service
1.4.5	Offer wider staff training across the institution on issues affecting children and young people in care / leaving care. The University will also make awareness training on this issue an essential part of the induction package for new members of staff in specific roles. The entire University staff team will be made aware that they can access support and guidance from the Widening Participation team.	A training programme will help to ensure that staff teams across the institution are more aware of this category of students, their needs and how they can be supported. This should make teaching and student support services more accessible for care leavers.	Widening Participation Officer, Centre for Academic Development, Human Resources Section.

1.5 Educational Support

The actions and outcomes described in this section will enable the University to fulfil four of the duties described in Part 9 (Section 58) of The Childrens and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; 1. Being alert to matters which adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers;; 2 Assessing the needs of those children and young people for the services and support they provide; 3. Seeking to provide opportunities which will promote the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers; 4. Taking action to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.

Education Support			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.5.1	Ensure that care leavers are offered appropriate educational guidance and support services.	Care experienced students will be better able to cope with their studies and will have reduced levels of stress. Long term learning issues like dyslexia can be properly identified and support offered. By ensuring that an appropriate level of educational support is offered the University can help to increase retention rates for care experienced students.	Student Support Services, Student Learning Service.
1.5.2	Each academic school will have a designated member of staff who act as a first point of contact for care experienced students. This role may be fulfilled by the students Personal Tutor.	Students are better supported in their studies and are better able to integrate into the University's community. Student's are given expert advice and guidance by an experienced academic member of staff.	Widening Participation Officer, Infohub Support Team, Human Resources Department
1.5.3	Students to be offered access to peer support from	The students can gain from the knowledge and	Widening Participation Officer

	AUSA (?)	experience of their older peers. Students will also gain access to the range of support that is offered by AUSA.	
1.5.4	Financial assistance for books, outings, learning materials, IT equipment	Financial support can reduce barriers into education	Widening Participation Officer, Student Support and Advice Office

1.6 Partnership Working and Regional Support

The actions and outcomes described in this section will enable the University to fulfil three of the duties described in Part 9 (Section 58) of The Childrens and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; 1. Promoting the interests of those children and young people; 2 Seeking to provide opportunities which will promote the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers; 3 Taking action to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.

Partnership Working and Regional Support			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.6.1	Work with regional partners to support and take part in Champion's Board, Working Groups and other appropriate committees	Senior management will be able to directly contribute towards the development and continuous improvement of services	Widening Participation Officer
1.6.2	Develop and implement a joint regional framework / plan with NESCOL and RGU.	By working in partnership with the other local FE and HE providers the University will be able to help shape and improve services for care experienced applicants and students. The sharing of resources will allow each of the local institutions to better support this category of students.	Widening Participation Officer
1.6.3	Develop links with other appropriate agencies e.g. STAF, CELCIS	By working closely with partners like CELCIS and STAF the University can continually improve its understanding and knowledge of this category of	Widening Participation Officer

		<p>applicants and students. The University can then improve the services that it offers.</p> <p>Also by engaging with national partners the University can contribute towards local and national dialogues and efforts to improve services for students with experience of being in care.</p>	
1.6.4	Develop partnerships with appropriate Social Care and Health Care agencies.	<p>This action will allow both the University and its partners in health and social care to better support applicant and students with experience of being in care.</p> <p>The University will be able to share appropriate information –</p>	Widening Participation Officer

1.7 Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and Reporting			
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead
1.7.1	Senior management and the appropriate committees will ensure the implementation of this action plan across the institution and ensure that the monitoring and evaluation process is carried out. Quantitative and Qualitative measures will be used to look at how successful the implementation of the actions detailed in this plan has been. A annual report will be produced by the Widening Participation Officer and regular updates will be presented at the Widening Participation Working Group.	This action will drive forward the implementation of this plan and ensure that each of the actions is delivered.	The Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning, the University Management Group, the Widening Participation Working Group.
1.7.2	The senior sabbatical officers of the Aberdeen University Students Association will be consulted during the process of writing the report – with their input included where appropriate.	This action will ensure that the views of the student population and their representatives will be considered during the reporting process.	Widening Participation Officer
1.7.3	The University Court will receive a copy of the three yearly report and regular updates on the progress on the implementation of the Corporate Parenting plan.	This action will ensure that the views and input of the University's governing body are considered during the reporting process. It will also ensure that the members of the Court are	Widening Participation Officer

		aware of the University's progress as a Corporate Parent.	
1.7.4	The University will seek guidance and advice re the monitoring of its corporate parenting plan from CELSIS and other national / local agencies.	This action will ensure that the University produces and plan and support mechanisms that allow it to both meet its statutory obligations and provide an excellent service for care experience students.	Widening Participation Officer

2. FE and HE Regional Corporate Parenting Framework

Action	Outcome	Who	When
<p>Joint Regional Peer and Student Support: Each of the institution's affiliated Students Associations will work together to provide support to Care Experienced students.</p>	<p>Care Experienced students will have access to a network of peer support, guidance and advice. These students will be better supported within their institutions community, will be able to successfully complete their studies and more fully take part in the student experience.</p>	<p>All three institutions plus their affiliated student associations.</p>	<p>To be launched Freshers week(s) August & September 2016.</p>
<p>Sharing of best practice: The relevant teams and individuals within each of the three institutions will share best practice and intelligence.</p>	<p>Staff in each of the institutions will be better equipped to support, advice and recruit care experienced students and applicants.</p>	<p>All three institutions plus their affiliated student associations.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Care Experienced Student Award: All three of the institutions will work together to deliver a Care Experienced Student Award scheme.</p>	<p>This scheme will allow all three of the institutions to recognise the achievements, hard work and contribution of their care experienced students.</p> <p>This highly publicised scheme will also help to raise awareness of the</p>	<p>All three institutions plus their affiliated student associations.</p>	<p>Ongoing – to be awarded on a yearly basis</p>

	care experienced students and their issues.		
Sharing of resources to provide joint events and information: Each of the institutions will contribute towards providing advice and support to care experienced individuals thinking about going into Further Education and Higher Education.	Care Experienced students will be able to make more fully informed choices about going into Further and Higher Education.	All three institutions plus their students associations.	Ongoing.
Sharing of resources to provide a joint regional awareness raising campaign: Each of the institutions will contribute towards a regional educational awareness raising campaign that highlights the issues faced by care experienced students and the opportunities that are available to them.	There will be a greater awareness of care experienced individuals, their educational needs and the different routes into F.E. and H.E.	All three institutions plus their students associations.	To be launched September 2016.
Joint regional training opportunities: All three institutions will share the costs and resources needed to source and provide	Staff from all three institutions and their associated students associations will be trained in how to support care experienced students.	All three institutions plus their students associations.	To be launched September 2016.

regional training opportunities.			
<p>Support for regional Champions Boards, Throughcare and Aftercare services: Each of the institutions will support the region's Care Leavers Champions Boards, relevant committees, social work departments, education departments, schools, Throughcare and Aftercare services.</p>	<p>All three institutions will be able to work with local and national partners to help improve services and support for Care Experience people.</p>	<p>All three institutions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

3. Corporate Parenting Reporting process and flow chart

3.1 Reporting Process

- As required under Part 9 of The Children in Scotland Act the University will publish reports reviewing its role as a corporate parent and the support that it provides to young people with Care Experience.
- These reports will be published once every three years.
- The University will use three sets of data when reviewing the implementation of its corporate parenting plan; Students Admission Data, Student Support Data and Qualitative data.
- **Student Admissions data:** The University will gather annual statistics on the number of applicants who have indicated that they have experience of being in care. The University would also gather statistics on the number of care experienced students that gain entry and subsequently register with the University. The table below explains what will happen to this data during the reporting process:

Stage 1 – Gathering the data	Stage 2 – Analysing the data	Stage 3 – Action plan
The WP team gathers annual stats on the number of applications and registrations from Care Experienced students.	The WP team analyses this data and puts it into an appropriate report format.	The WP team identifies any actions that are needed to increase recruitment, improve services and reduce gaps. These actions are included in the final report.

- **Student Support data:** The University will gather annual data on the number of (self-declared) care experienced students who access student support services. The table below explains what will happen to this data during the reporting process:

Stage 1 – Gathering the data	Stage 2 – Analysing the data	Stage 3 – Action plan
The WP team, working in conjunction with the Student Support and Advice Office, will gather	The WP team will analyse this data and put it into an appropriate report format.	The WP team identifies any actions or resources that are required to improve services and reduce

stats on the number care experienced students who have accessed support services.		gaps. These actions are included in the final report.
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- **Qualitative data:** The University will work with the Aberdeen University Student’s Association to gather qualitative data on the experience of care experienced students. The University’s Widening Participation Team will gather data on the experience of applicants by working directly with the young people and the key local partner’s e.g. local authority through care services.

Stage 1 – Gathering the data	Stage 2 – Analysing the data	Stage 3 – Action plan
The WP team, working in conjunction with the Aberdeen University Student’s Association, will gather qualitative data on the experiences of the care experienced students.	The WP team will then analyse this data and put it into an appropriate report format.	The WP team will identify any actions or resources that are required to improve services and reduce gaps identified during the analysis. These actions are included in the final report.

- The reports will contain a statistical analysis, data comparisons with other institutions and case studies.
- A completed draft of the Corporate Parenting report will be submitted for approval by the appropriate committee and senior management. The report will then be submitted to the Scottish Government via the designated channels.
- It is anticipated that the way in which the University reports on its corporate parenting duties will evolve as the University seeks to continually improve upon its performance as a corporate parent.
- **FE and HE Regional Corporate Parenting Framework:** The University will work with Robert Gordons University and North East of Scotland College to produce a three yearly report reviewing the progress and outcomes of the FE and HE Regional Corporate Parenting Framework.

3.2 Report Flowchart

