

## University of St Andrews – Corporate Parenting Plan

### Context

The University of St Andrews has a long-standing commitment to support young people who have experienced care. Previously awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark (awarded to celebrate the commitment of the University to support students who have experienced care before 2015) and further pledging our support in meeting the needs for care-experienced young people through our partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, we welcome the opportunity to build on our commitment as corporate parents following the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Our new role as a corporate parent allows us to reflect and develop practices to ensure care-experienced young people are fully supported throughout the learner journey, through our Widening Access programmes onto on-going Student Services' support.

The University of St Andrews has a total student population of 7,047 undergraduates and 1,739 postgraduates, from a diverse range of backgrounds. With a continuation rate of 97%, students at the University are well supported during their studies. Applicants can apply for a range of degree subjects hosted within four faculties; Faculty of Art, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Divinity and Faculty of Medicine.

The University of St Andrews is in Fife, falling under the Fife Local Authority. From 2014-15, 15,404 children were 'looked after' across Scotland, with the Fife Local Authority representing one of the largest groups of care-experienced young people across Scotland (alongside Edinburgh and Glasgow)<sup>1</sup>. According to the 2016 Care Inspectorate Report, Fife had particular issues in regards to care-experienced young people and school attendance, a rise in the number of pupils placed outside the local authority and low goals set for these pupils within the school environment<sup>2</sup>.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan below seeks to outline the way in which the University will support care-experienced young people, in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Scottish Government's GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) obligations to support the outcomes and wellbeing of young people through a targeted and timely approach. 'Wellbeing' is understood to follow the

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<sup>1</sup> CELCIS, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Care Inspectorate, 2016

indicators set out by the Scottish Government: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI). The Commission on Widening Access Report identified key issues surrounding the identification of care-experienced young people to offer targeted support, the variety of routes these pupils may take to access Higher Education and issues that may arise with attainment and ability to study; all barriers which we seek to alleviate or overcome with the processes implemented in our plan.

### **Creating and Developing the Plan**

The University understands that it can play a pivotal role in improving the wellbeing of care-experienced young people especially in relation to educational attainment and outcomes. With the University's support, we aim for all care-experienced young people to have the same access to, enjoyment of and success in Higher Education as their peers, regardless of their personal background. The University aims to support care-experienced young people from across Scotland to reach their full potential and access an educational learning environment where they are allowed to thrive alongside and awarded the same opportunities as their peers, with the same rate of success in both entering and graduating from Higher Education. In the creation of this plan, the University has used both intrinsic and extrinsic evidence to create key actions and development areas, including testimonials and anecdotes from care-experienced young people (current students, school pupils and representatives from Who Cares? Scotland), as well as statistics such as application and acceptance rates to the University from this cohort. The University will seek to monitor and improve on these key action points in future years, drawing on ideas and support from care-experienced young people.

The current activity and action points laid out in the following plan together highlight the University's commitment to ensuring the needs of care-experienced young people are understood and assessed regularly. The interests of these young people will be promoted throughout the University and within the wider community and opportunities provided for these young people. As well as working with other corporate parents in Fife to ensure care-experienced young people achieve the best outcomes and to overcome potential barriers to education, we also actively seek to share best practice across Scotland through membership in groups such as CEECEF (Care Experienced, Estranged and Carers East Forum).

### **The Role of the University**

As identified in discussions around the Children and Young People Act (2014), care-experienced young people often face a number of difficulties throughout their time in education, which may limit them from achieving the grades necessary to access Higher Education. To help tackle this inequality of access, the University of St Andrews seeks to work with a large number of care-experienced young people in Fife throughout their time in both primary and secondary school to raise both aspirations and attainment and therefore allow them to access more opportunities after high school. Emphasis is placed on supporting pupils to reach Further or Higher Education, not on bringing them to the University of St Andrews exclusively. The number of care-experienced young people who are participating in one of our widening access programmes grew from 2 in 2014-15 to 43 at the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year. Bringing together both Corporate Parenting duties and proposals set forth in the Commission on Widening Access, further emphasis has been placed on collaboration between corporate parents and these young people to identify and support care-experienced young people from an early age and help them reach a positive destination.

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**“The Academic Mentoring Project and Sutton Trust Summer School gave me confidence and help, especially throughout exam periods. They provided many opportunities to meet new people and learn new things!”**

*(Ruairidh Cosgrove, participant on Academic Mentoring Project and Sutton Trust Summer School. Now at Fife College studying Sound Engineering)*

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Over the coming years, the University seeks to increase the total number of entrants from a care-experienced background and seek to better identify and track these students throughout the application process and time spent as a student. Each year the University (based on five years of data) receives between 20-30 applications via UCAS from self-identified care-experienced young people or care leavers, with under ten incoming students per year. Although there are more students entering the University who are care-experienced but have not self-identified, the University does not have a formal recording procedure in place to monitor this. As part of our commitment to offer support to care-experienced students, we will work to encourage students to self-identify during the application process as well as create other points of

identification throughout the matriculation process, which will allow us to target support and encourage communication between relevant staff and these students.

At present, due to the University's small declared care-experienced population, it is not statistically viable or representative to provide figures on continuation rates of past care-experienced students. However, with the University seeking to increase the number of entrants from a care-experienced background, a reporting system will be set in place to monitor progress in this area. The retention rate for care-experienced young people will be expected to match the retention rate of the general University cohort, and support will be provided throughout the students' learning journey to ensure all students fulfil their academic potential.

The University guarantees an offer to all care-experienced young people who have met, or are predicted to meet, the minimum requirements for their chosen course and who have demonstrated a passion for the subject throughout their application. Upon entering the University, care-experienced young people are expected to achieve in line with their peers. However, they will be provided with extra support if/when this is needed (for example, tutoring sessions, counselling sessions, staff attendance at reviews etc.).

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**"I've personally found the support from the university very helpful since coming to study here. Whenever I have a problem, it is easy to talk to someone. The university provided a tutor for me when I was struggling with my course and I feel this has helped a lot"**

*(Siobhan Redmonds, care experienced 2nd year student at the University of St Andrews)*

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The following plan identifies the key actions in relation to increasing our support and guidance for care experienced young people and will be spearheaded by senior management, with support given through the units listed under 'Unit Support'. This will ensure that all action points are integrated into the daily work of identified units while there is accountability within senior management positions to report on activities at

an institutional, overarching level. A new forum will be created which will review our Corporate Parenting Plan on a bi-annual basis, allowing care-experienced young people and staff to further engage with each other and input ideas, as well as provide recommendations to be passed to senior management.

<b><u>Strategic Priority Area</u></b>	<b><u>Outcome</u></b>	<b><u>Current Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Action Points</u></b>	<b><u>Unit Support</u></b>	<b><u>Timescale</u></b>	<b><u>Progress</u></b>
<b>58 1(a)</b> – <i>to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies</i>	Be alert to developments within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Membership within and attendance at local and national groups aimed at sharing good practice in regards to Care-Experienced Young People (henceforth; CEYP), such as CEECEF and Fife’s Corporate Parenting Board.</li> <li>ii. Continue to seek guidance from relevant organisations, such as Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with other Corporate Parents (CPs) to ensure good practice is being shared within the sector and any new developments can be discussed on a wider scale. Be aware of opportunities and changes within the Local Authority which may impact CEYP or CPs.</li> <li>2. Create a ‘knowledge bank’ of resources and materials which staff can access to give relevant, current information on opportunities available for CEYP.</li> <li>3. Attend and be active in local and national organisations, boards and</li> </ul>	<p>Admissions / Student Services</p> <p>Admissions</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>August 2018</p> <p>On-going</p>	

			conferences to actively participate in discussions on this matter.	Admissions / Student Services		
	Engage with CEYP to gain a greater understanding of issues/concerns, allow them to have a voice, and contribute to ongoing strategy	iii. Named co-ordinator communicates with care- experienced applicants and students regularly to offer support if/where needed. At least one face-to-face meeting is scheduled per semester, as well as phone calls, texts and emails on a regular basis.	4. Create a 'care experience and young carer' forum to meet bi-annually and raise awareness of any issues which are arising. Input from this meeting will also be used to inform future developments in the Corporate Parenting plan. This will be student led with staff support, and facilitated by the Students' Association.	Admissions/ Student Services / Student Association	September 2018	
<b>58 1(b)</b> - to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,	Be informed about CEYP	iv. Work with other CPs to best support individual CEYP (including social workers, local councils, local schools and guidance teachers). At present, all examples of CPs listed above are notified of the availability of programmes run in Fife which CEYP can	5. Improve communication with all schools in Fife and Local Authority to allow us to offer targeted support to more CEYP in the community.  6. Improve communication with CPs on a national level to emphasise the benefit CEYP have in identifying as care-	Admissions  Admissions	On-going  On-going	

		<p>participate in and are also given a key contact should they have any further questions about access to HE. By engaging with pupils from aged 10, we become more aware of factors which may impact CEYP and take positive steps to overcome these barriers at an earlier stage of the learner journey.</p>	<p>experienced, to open up channels of communication for these young people and to encourage these young people to apply for opportunities which arise pre-application (for example, the Sutton Trust Summer School).</p> <p>7. Create bi-annual meetings which give relevant staff and care-experienced students the opportunity to discuss any barriers which may present themselves during the young person's time at University and develop ways to limit or remove these. Engagement will be sought from all key University bodies (including Student Services, Careers, Registry, CAPOD,</p>	<p>Admissions / Student Association</p>	<p>September 2018</p>	
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			Academic staff, Admissions etc.)			
		<p>v. Track CEYP throughout the student journey to monitor where issues or additional support should be given. Consultation with current students to ensure we know about areas where issues may arise and processes to overcome these (e.g. guarantors for private housing). At present, this is conducted on an informal basis, in a variety of different formats; discussions with social workers, face-to-face and written communication with</p>	<p>8. Continually monitor this and ensure processes are in place to update support offered when new issues arise. This relies on a co-ordinated approach across different units to ensure the University, as a whole, is working to promote the wellbeing of CEYP and is attentive to the needs of this group of students.</p>	Admissions / Student Services	On-going	

		care experienced young people etc.				
Named care leaver support coordinator	vi.	Named contact within each team who can offer ongoing support and advice. This role is integrated into an Education Liaison Officer's post, with oversight from the University's Director for Home Admissions and Access.	9. Named contact holds more formalised meetings (at least one per semester) with care-experienced young people and keeps records of any issues arising or experiences to be noted. This will ensure that going forward, the University can report more effectively on the impact changes and developments are having on the students and where improvements could be made.	Pamela Forbes / Mike Johnson <a href="mailto:Schools.access@st-andrews.ac.uk">Schools.access@st-andrews.ac.uk</a>	February 2018	First one taken place
			10. A second 'named person' will sit within the Student Services' unit, allowing	Maggie Winton mw11@st-	February 2018	completed

			<p>them to offer more support to both incoming and current care-experienced students.</p>	andrews.ac.uk		
	Identify CEYP through application process	<p>vii. Flag those students who indicate they are care-experienced in an application and track these students' applications through the cycle.</p>	<p>11. Investigate a process for self-identification during the matriculation process and after (e.g. through student portal) to ensure all CEYP are offered relevant support. The University will implement a check during the matriculation process for CEYP to identify themselves. Student Services will also create a means of updating student profile to reflect disclosures should a student allow us to record this.</p> <p>12. Ensure all Admissions' Officers and outward-facing staff are promoting the benefits of declaring as care-experienced and fully</p>	<p>Admissions / Registry / Student Services</p> <p>Admissions</p>	<p>September 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Completed and will continue</p>

			<p>explaining what is deemed as care-experienced (both throughout the application process but also in regards to participants on Widening Participation projects and <i>ad hoc</i> visitors).</p>			
	Contextualised Admissions Process	<p>viii. To link in with national policy, we pledge to make an offer to all applicants who declare as care-experienced provided that the desire to study the subject is demonstrable, the minimum asking rates within all specified required subjects are met and, if relevant, there is success in external testing or interview.</p>	<p>13. Continue to promote this in Outcome Agreements.</p> <p>14. Add information to visiting day talks to reflect the importance of declaring as care-experienced.</p>	<p>Admissions</p> <p>Admissions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2018</p>	

	Offer support directly to CEYP	ix. CEYP can contact named person to access information or support they may need. This can be done through email, WhatsApp or by dropping into the Admissions Office in person.	<p>15. Develop a process where CEYP are directly contacted with information on additional support and services which may be relevant to them.</p> <p>16. Incorporate a monthly 'check-in' to ensure care-experienced students are progressing well in their studies and to break down any perceived barriers before they become an issue. This will take the format of either a formal meeting or phone call with the named person.</p>	Admissions / Student Services	August 2018	In place and will continue
				Admissions/ Student Services	March 2018	
<b>58 1(c)</b> - to promote the interests of those children and young people,	Raise staff awareness of CEYP	x. Continue to access support and training from WhoCares? Scotland, building on training provided to senior members of staff in 2016.	<p>17. Incorporate training information into 'New Staff' training workshops.</p> <p>18. Create training programme to be rolled out into Academic Schools and support departments. An online system would</p>	Admissions / CAPOD / Human Resources	September 2018	
				Admissions / Human Resources	September 2018	



	Record staff training and changes in institutional ethos	xi. Staff interest in Corporate Parenting Training recorded	<p>22. Research and create a space where staff training can be monitored and recorded</p> <p>23. Create a timeline to target specific units/departments for staff training to be rolled out to ensure as many people as possible have been trained on Corporate Parenting across the institution</p>	Admissions/CAPOD  Admissions	September 2018  March 2018	
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	Work with external organisations to provide further and alternative opportunities for CEYP	<p>xii. Continue to provide places on established summer schools for applicants to WhoCares Harvard Summer School who were unsuccessful</p> <p>xiii. Continue to provide support and partnerships where possible (for example, hosting Seen + Heard Model Exhibition for the Children’s Parliament and organising press releases for this)</p>	24. Continue to investigate partnerships which may benefit CEYP and work with other CPs to expand on these, e.g. bespoke visits to the University for care groups, parent and carer information sessions etc.	Admissions	On-going	
<b>58 1(d)</b> - <i>to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing</i>	Provide a range of Widening Access initiatives which CEYP can access throughout their time in education – from primary school throughout the educational	xiv. The University of St Andrews actively seeks and prioritises applications from CEYP to join our established Widening Participation programmes (incl. First Chances Foundation, First Chances Project, Reach and Sutton Trust). The aims of these programmes are to raise	<p>25. Continue to raise the number of CEYP on these projects. Engage with at least 10% of the local care-experienced community in S3 – S6 by 2020.</p> <p>26. Continue to work with local CEYP, social workers and teachers to develop the flexibility of these projects to support the</p>	Admissions	June 2020	
				Admissions	Ongoing	

	journey, into Higher Education.	both attainment and aspirations to give young people from non-traditional backgrounds access to a range of opportunities when they leave school. More information on the projects run by the University can be found here: <a href="https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access/">https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access/</a>	needs particularly of CEYP.			
	Accommodation Support	xv. Support is provided for CEYP to secure 365 day accommodation if needed.	27. Ensure this support is known to all care-experienced students who have received an offer and to CE students in targeted emails.	Admissions / Accommodation	September 2018	

	Financial Support	<p>xvi. CEYP status will be taken into consideration when bursaries and scholarships are awarded. This is one of a number of factors taken into consideration and scholarships range from £500-£4000.</p> <p>xvii. The Discretionary Fund can also be accessed at any point of the duration of study for any student who experiences financial difficulty.</p>	<p>28. Ensure CEYP are aware of scholarships available and apply for these before stated deadline by including information in targeted support email after offer is made.</p> <p><a href="https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/money/financialsupport/discretionaryfund/">https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/money/financialsupport/discretionaryfund/</a></p>	Admissions / Student Services	September 2018	
	Additional support while studying	<p>xviii. Continue to signpost students to relevant departments should they need additional support – e.g. CAPOD for studying advice, Student Services for health and wellbeing issues. This support is available to all students but depending on what</p>	<p>29. Named contact will create a network across all support departments and produce written material on what additional support is available, with contact details, to be distributed to care-experienced students.</p>	Admissions	March 2018	

		issues may arise, additional support may also be accessed, e.g. a peer tutor.				
	Employment opportunities	xix. Paid work opportunities and internships are available across the University (e.g. Student Ambassador scheme, Laidlaw Scholarships).	30. Ensure care-experienced students are made aware of paid employment opportunities through the University Ambassador scheme, and of other internship opportunities. Where financial need is great, the Admissions' department at the University can bypass the one year of voluntary work before paid work is available and place students onto casual contracts.	Careers Centre / Admissions	On-going	
<b>58 1(e)</b> - to take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people—	Provide a flexible structure in our Widening Participation programmes for CEYP and appropriate sessions for	xx. Continue to provide a flexible strand to our WP programmes allowing care-experienced young people to access support when they can / need to. These young people will	31. Continue to develop additional sessions to build on skills throughout our WP programmes – e.g. confidence building, mental health awareness etc. – linking in to key contacts from other CPs to	Admissions	Ongoing	

<p><i>(i)to access opportunities it provides in pursuance of paragraph (d), and</i></p> <p><i>(ii)to make use of services, and access support, which it provides</i></p>	<p>students to attend</p>	<p>not have as strict participation requirements as their peers.</p> <p>xxi. All care experienced young people from 10-18 years old within the local area can currently gain support through one of our access programmes</p> <p>xxii. Additional support with travel to access events is provided.</p>	<p>bring in other areas of expertise; e.g. NHS (mental health awareness), SAAS (money and budgeting).</p>			
	<p>Promote opportunities across Scotland</p>	<p>xxiii. Continue to have a strong presence in the local Fife community and maintain relationships with key contacts</p>	<p>32. Develop key contacts and relationships across Scotland to promote opportunities for CEYP at St Andrews</p>	<p>Admissions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

	Ensure applicants are aware of support offered and how to access this	xxiv. Maintain relevant information on webpages, prospectus and internal publications (such as Propel)	33. Create individual information leaflets for CEYP	Admissions	August 2018	
<b>58 1(f)</b> - <i>to 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</i>	Continuous reporting and evaluation	xxv. Continue to incorporate evaluation and reporting on CEYP into Access Reports to ensure we can disseminate good practice. Access reports are maintained annually and individual project reports are conducted as often as once every 6 months. A section on impact to CEYP will be included in all of these reports moving forward.	34. Ask for individual feedback from CEYP in projects and matriculated students. Case studies and quotes will be gathered annually to map where improvements can be made.	Admissions	Ongoing	
	Live document reviewed regularly	xxvi. The initial Corporate Parenting Plan will be created with input from a number of different	35. The plan will be reviewed every 6 months by the care experienced forum, composed of a range of	Student Association/ Admissions/	Every 6 months from	

		<p>key stakeholders; both at senior management level and at Academic School and Support Unit level.</p>	<p>staff and student representatives from across the University. The member for Widening Participation in the Student Association will coordinate the forum with the assistance of the named contacts in Admissions and Student Services</p> <p>The reviewed plan will be submitted to the Equality Compliance Group</p>	<p>Student Services</p>	<p>September 2018</p>	
<p><b>58 1(g)</b> – <i>collaborate with other corporate parents</i></p>	<p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>cxvii. Continue to work with Fife Council to identify CEYP and promote opportunities to them, through liaison with social workers and teachers.</p> <p>cxviii. Continue to contribute to Fife’s Corporate Parenting Board and offer ideas on collaborative projects</p>	<p>36. Maintain membership of Fife’s Corporate Parenting Board</p> <p>37. Maintain contact with a CEYP’s social worker if needed to ensure the LA is aware of any barriers (e.g. guarantors needed to secure private accommodation) and work with them to overcome any barriers.</p>	<p>Admissions/ Student Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

	Work with Colleges	xxix. A number of access routes are available from College to university	<p>38. Ensure care-experienced applicants/College students are aware of alternative routes to Higher Education</p> <p>39. Maintain contact with CEYP after they leave our access programmes to ensure they are supported through alternative routes into Higher Education. This will be done through a project alumni group, monitored through our online mentoring platform.</p>	Admissions  Admissions	Ongoing  August 2018	
	Continue to collaborate with other CPs and organisations to feed in to national projects and initiatives.	xxx. Maintain these contacts as discussed throughout the report.	40. Work on building experiences at other institutions for CEYP coming through our WP projects, e.g. shadowing days at other Universities.	Admissions	On-going	

**Abbreviation Key**

CEECEF	:	Care Experienced, Estranged and Carers East Forum
CELCIS	:	Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children In Scotland
CEYP	:	Care Experienced Young People
CP	:	Corporate Parent
LA	:	Local Authority
WP	:	Widening Participation