University of St Andrews – Update Report on Corporate Parenting Responsibilities (April 2015 – April 2018)

Overview

Since the publication of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the University of St Andrews has reviewed and implemented additional support for care-experienced young people holistically across all departments of the University, in line with our obligations under Corporate Parenting. The report below offers an update on the steps made towards meeting the statutes of the Act between the period of April 2015 and April 2018.

This Report should be read in line with the University of St Andrews’ Corporate Parenting Plan which can be found here:

Update on Developments in Relation to Specific Priority Areas

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(g) – collaborate with other corporate parents

• The University of St Andrews gained a place on the Fife Corporate Parenting Board from 2016 and a representative regularly (at least once every three months) attends meetings to ensure that we are aware of developments in relation to care-experienced young people within the local community, opportunities which may be relevant to the young people we work with, and to promote opportunities the University can provide to care-experienced young people within our local community.

• The University of St Andrews gained a place on the Care Experienced, Estranged and Carers East Forum (CEECEF) from 2015, where Universities, Colleges and third sector partners meet to discuss recent developments in the sector in relation to care-experienced young people and what we can do to support these groups through our roles in various institutions.
• The University of St Andrews has developed a close working relationship with WhoCares? Scotland from 2015 which has allowed us to seek guidance and support when fulfilling our duties as a corporate parent. More information on our relationship with WhoCares? Scotland can be found in the points below.
• Representatives from the University of St Andrews have attended ad hoc conferences where the needs of care-experienced young people are discussed and listened to, e.g. Staff ‘Helping Hand’ Conference.

58 1(b) - to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,

• Two named contacts within the University have been identified (Pamela Forbes in Admissions and Maggie Winton in Student Services) who are readily available to talk to care-experienced young people in contact with the University (from pupils on Access programmes to matriculated students) and gather information on where issues or needs may lie. Named co-ordinators allow care-experienced young people and care leavers to feel more comfortable contacting the same person throughout their contact with the University and allows the co-ordinators to gather any relevant information to feedback to the Corporate Parenting Plan and Policy going forward.
• Over the past three years, relationships have been developed with Fife Council employees (teachers, social workers, counsellors) and residential services, to ensure any support the University can give young people is widely understood and made available to them. This also allows the University to discuss the specific needs of care-experienced young people in Fife with other corporate parents and allows us to identify any potential room for improvement or development.
• Staff are in conversation with the University’s Students’ Association Director of Wellbeing to incorporate the creation of a focus group (including members of staff, student representation, and most importantly care-experienced students) to bi-annually meet and review the current Corporate Parenting Plan and discuss any developments which may need to be made. The organisation of this group will be written into the role remit of the SRC Member for Widening Participation after the March 2018 student elections.
• Care-experienced status has been added to the University’s contextual Admissions Policy and applications from care-experienced applicants are flagged during the Admissions process, as can be viewed on the University’s website: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/policy/contextual-data/
58 1(c) - to promote the interests of those children and young people,

- From 2015, the University worked with Who Cares? Scotland to promote the needs of care-experienced young people and understanding on the role of corporate parenting to staff members across the University. In October 2015, the University held a film screening and reception with Who Cares? Scotland to which staff and students were invited and where care-experienced young people gave a voice to issues they face throughout their educational and life journey. This was followed up in February 2016 with Corporate Parenting training given to senior members of staff at the University, including Heads of Academic Schools, Directors of Teaching and representatives from the Principal’s Office. At this event, Vice Principal Anne Mullen signed the Who Cares? ‘Pledge to Listen’ to the voices of care-experienced young people.

- The University has continued to liaise with other corporate parents to provide opportunities to care-experienced young people, including extending direct applications to summer schools to young people who were unsuccessful in securing a place on the Who Cares? Harvard Summer School and by hosting the Seen + Heard model exhibition as part of the Children’s Parliament.

58 1(d) - to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing

- The University actively encourage teachers, parents/carers, social workers and other key stakeholders to promote access opportunities to care-experienced young people. These young people are prioritised for places on our Access programmes. More information on the projects run by the University can be found here: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access/.

- The number of pupils actively engaging on our Access programmes has increased from 4 in 2015 to 30 in 2018. We are on track to continue increasing the number of care-experienced young people to whom we offer support during their educational journey.

58 1(e) - to 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
• Flexibility has been incorporated into all Access programmes to ensure care-experienced young people can access support where needed independent of personal circumstances (e.g. taxis to activities, direct applications to summer schools, less strict participation criteria for progression etc.)

58 1(f) - 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

• The University of St Andrews has created a Corporate Parenting plan which sits with the Principal’s Office and will be reviewed by a group biannually and updated. This document details the University’s first update report, and these will be produced annually.
• Case studies and quotes have been gathered from care-experienced young people with whom the University has worked with to ensure best practice going forward.

Priority Improvements for April 2018 to April 2021

As identified in the University Corporate Parenting Plan, the two key areas for development in the next three year cycle is the development of a full training programme for staff and raising awareness of opportunities and support available to care-experienced students applying to and matriculated at the University. This will include:

➢ Incorporating training into ‘All Staff’ training.
➢ Investigating and implementing an online training programme for current staff.
➢ Addition of a workshop each year to which staff can sign up to increase understanding of Corporate Parenting across the University.
➢ Creating clear timelines for the roll out of training.
➢ Creating clearer lines of communication when providing support for care-experienced students.
➢ Investigating alternative forms of self-declaration as care-experienced through the matriculation process in addition to the UCAS checkbox, to ensure every student who can access support aimed at them is targeted with relevant information.

➢ The creation of a process where students are informed of and offered support throughout the duration of their studies.

➢ The introduction of a bi-annual focus group to ensure the voices of care-experienced young people are heard and included in further reports and plan updates.

➢ Investigate the inclusion of Care Experience within future Equality Outcomes, Equality Impact Assessments, and in the Equality Policy in liaison with the Equality Challenge Unit.