

Corporate Parenting Factsheet

On 1 April 2015, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014¹ comes into effect. As of this date, all post-16 education bodies, including Scottish HE and FE institutions, will be defined as **corporate parents (see Part 9 of the Act)**. The responsibilities which come with this designation apply to all **looked-after students** (i.e. students who have experience of being in care).

Looked-after children and young people are at risk of leaving education with lower attainment than their peers, and are significantly less likely to pursue further and higher education. People who have been looked-after are also at disproportionately high risk of suffering from poor mental health, addiction, or homelessness, and are over-represented in the UK prison population.²

Which students count as looked-after, and how many are there in HEIs?

- In Scotland, the term 'looked-after' has a broad definition, including children and young people who live in the family home under supervision, or who live with family ('kinship agreements'), as well as those in residential units or foster care.³
- From 1 April 2015, looked-after young people in Scotland will be entitled to continuing care until the age of 21, and aftercare until the age of 26.⁴
- There are no reliable data about the intake, retention and completion rates of looked-after students in Scotland.⁵

¹ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp_20140008_en.pdf

² http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Care_Report_28.01.14_web.pdf

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac/about>

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00425174.pdf>

⁵ http://www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/From_Care_to_Uni_Research-briefing.pdf



What do HEIs need to do?

We would encourage HEIs to consider care experience in the same way as protected characteristics such as gender, race or disability.

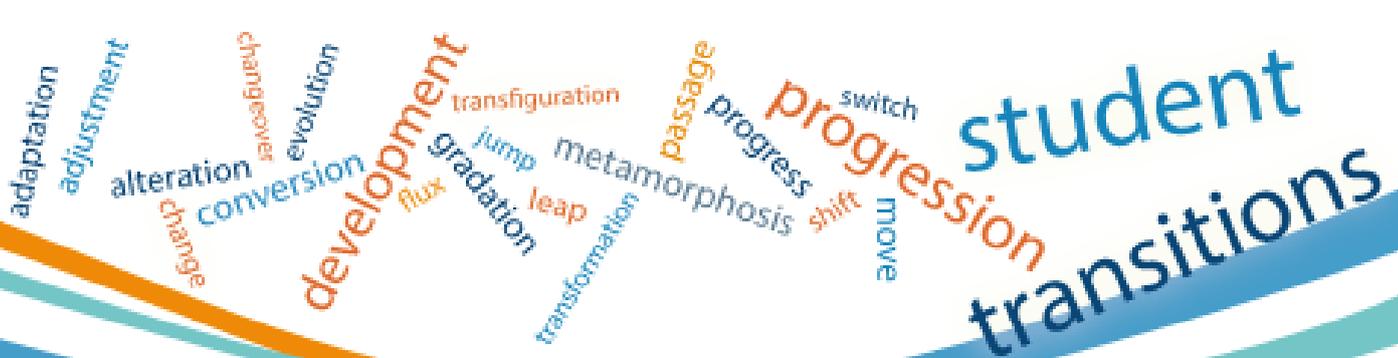
This legislation invests in corporate parents a responsibility to be aware of the experience and needs of looked-after students, to remove barriers to their participation, and to promote their wellbeing. It is not prescriptive in terms of the support which corporate parents will be required to provide – rather, it encourages a proactive mind-set.

Senior managers must ensure that they are aware of their statutory duties in relation to this legislation:

- Each corporate parent will be required to **publish and review a plan** detailing how they will meet their responsibilities. It is left up to individual corporate parents how best to do this, but information must be provided to Scottish Ministers if requested (Scottish Ministers will be required to report to the Scottish Parliament every three years).
- Corporate parents will be required to **collaborate** as much is feasible, and this should be evident in their plans (for example, HEIs may wish to consider forming regional teams with FE providers and Local Authorities).
- Corporate parents will be required to **take on board any guidance** issued by Scottish Ministers.

Managers whose staff have frequent and direct contact with students, whether in an academic or administrative context, should take steps to ensure that staff are equipped with some understanding of the needs of looked-after students. This may be a professional development concern for:

- staff included in recruitment, admissions and selection
- staff who advise students about finance, accommodation or childcare
- advisers of study
- student health advisers, counsellors and chaplains
- careers advisers



What is being done elsewhere in the sector?

- There is an acknowledgement that better quality data are needed about widening access in general, including the recruitment, retention and completion rates of students from a care background.
- It is likely that the Scottish Funding Council will introduce a new National Ambition with the aim of increasing the intake of looked-after young people to higher education.
- The Buttle UK Quality Mark, which is held by most Scottish HEIs, is being retired in Scotland this July. There is a Legacy Group which is considering future accreditation in this area.

What is QAA Scotland doing to support the sector?

- The experiences and needs of looked-after students are informing our activities on the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme.
- Our Student Network is holding an event at the University of Glasgow on 1st April.
- We are in discussions with Who Cares? Scotland with a view to providing training to targeted staff within HEIs.
- We are also considering whether to produce written guidance for the sector.

Where can I get more information?

- Who Cares? Scotland⁶, who offer specific training on Corporate Parenting⁷
- CELCIS (the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland)⁸, which has been working with the Scottish Government and Who Cares? Scotland to develop statutory guidance on Corporate Parenting
- Buttle UK⁹, which will continue to manage the Buttle UK Quality Mark in Scotland until July 2015
- STAF (the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum)¹⁰

⁶ <http://www.whocaresscotland.org>

⁷ <http://www.corporateparenting.co.uk>

⁸ <http://celcis.org>

⁹ <http://www.buttleuk.org/pages/quality-mark-for-care-leavers.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk>

