

Corporate Parenting

Progress Report

2018 - 2021



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND



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Introduction

Hello and welcome to this corporate parenting progress report, created by Who Cares? Scotland using information shared with us by the Scottish Government and CELCIS.

This report is packed with easy to understand information on what corporate parents have been doing for people with care experience over the past three years, from 2018 to 2021.

This report offers an overview of corporate parenting activity across Scotland.

If you would like to find out more, read the full national report by clicking [here](#).



Introduction

What is a corporate parent?



A corporate parent is a public organisation that supports people with care experience

‘Public’ means an organisation that has been set up by the government or local government.



Some examples of corporate parents are your local council, the NHS, Police Scotland, colleges, universities and national bodies like Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

The Scottish Ministers are corporate parents too, including the First Minister.



Every person who works for these organisations is also known as a corporate parent.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and social workers are some examples.



Corporate parents have responsibilities for taking care of people with care experience – it is the law.

In the law, corporate parenting is mentioned in part nine of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Why has this report been written?



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 says that all corporate parents need to share information with Scottish Ministers about how they are meeting their responsibilities as corporate parents.



The law says that every three years Scottish Ministers need to report to the Scottish Parliament on what they have been doing as corporate parents.



This report talks about what corporate parents have done in the past three years, from 2018 to 2021.



This is the second time that Scottish Ministers will tell the Scottish Parliament how corporate parents are meeting their responsibilities. The first time was in 2018 and told the Scottish Parliament what corporate parents had done between 2015 to 2018.

What were corporate parents asked to share?



Corporate parents were asked to share their corporate parenting plans, and to fill out a survey telling the government what they have been doing between 2018 and 2021.

What are corporate parents doing for you?

The government asked all corporate parents to tell them what they have done between 2018 and 2021 to meet their responsibilities to people with care experience.



Every corporate parent is responsible for the **wellbeing** of people with care experience.



By 'wellbeing', we mean the things that people need to be healthy, safe and happy.



To do this, corporate parents have **legal responsibilities**, or things they **must** do, by law.



Corporate parents must work with other corporate parents and create a plan which tells everyone how they will meet their responsibilities to people with care experience. They must also keep this plan up to date.

Responsibility One

Be alert to what might affect the wellbeing of a person with care experience

Corporate parents said:



- they had trained staff on what it means to be a corporate parent and their roles and responsibilities.
- they had worked with other corporate parents to share their learning and experiences as corporate parents.
- they have listened to the voices of people with care experience (for example by supporting Champions Boards, creating opportunities for people with care experience to take part in decision making, as well as seeking out their views and opinions).

Responsibility Two

Assess what supports a person with care experience might need

Corporate parents said:



- that they have identified what supports people with care experience might need to help with their: physical health, mental health, housing, employment, and finances and other aspects of their lives.
- they have improved how they use the information they have about people with care experience to understand what their needs are and what supports they might need.

Responsibility Three

Make decisions and take actions which promote what is best for people with care experience

Corporate parents said:



- that they had created more opportunities for people with care experience to share their views and experiences to influence the decisions and actions they make as corporate parents.
- that they were working with other organisations and corporate parents to think about what decisions and actions would help people with care experience.

Responsibility Four

Give people with care experience opportunities that are good for their wellbeing

Corporate parents said:



- that they had continued to develop different opportunities and supports for people with care experience to benefit from (for example, access to opportunities within training and employment, education and skills development; social and leisure activities; as well as access to support with health and wellbeing, and housing).

Responsibility Five

Help people with care experience to access opportunities that are good for their wellbeing

Corporate Parents said:



- what they had done to make sure that people with care experience know about the opportunities and supports they can access.
- that they were improving access to IT equipment and Wi-Fi for people with care experience. This was especially important during Covid-19 lockdowns to make sure people with care experience had access to their schoolwork and online learning.

Responsibility Six

Reflect on what they have done to support people with care experience, and try to improve on this

Corporate Parents said:



- that they were improving how they listened to people with care experience so that they could get better at responding to their needs.
- that they had improved how they learn and reflect on what they are doing as corporate parents.

Zoom in on your Corporate Parents



The government looked at what corporate parents told them by the different groups of corporate parents, which are:

Scottish Ministers

Local Authorities

Universities

Colleges

NHS Health Boards

National Bodies



Most corporate parents told the government that they have done a lot to support people with care experience.



The government also found that there are areas where the different groups of corporate parents could be doing more to support people with care experience.

Zoom in on your Corporate Parents



Scottish Ministers



Scottish Government has committed and delivered on a number of **policies** during this reporting period.

Government policies are an important way of making big changes, as they give instructions for how things should be done in the best way for the most people across Scotland.



The Scottish Government published the Independent Care Review findings and recommendations known as The Promise, or the Pinky Promise to young people. The Scottish Government also approved these recommendations to be taken forward.



Throughout the duration of the Independent Care Review, the First Minister heard first-hand from over 1,000 people with experience of care.



The key themes from those conversations matched with those which came out of the Review as well as from organisations who represent people with care experience, such as Who Cares? Scotland and the Scottish Through Care and After Care Forum.

Scottish Ministers responded to these priorities by committing to a number of actions in the 2019-20 Programme for Government that included:



Keeping brothers and sisters together, where appropriate.



Making sure more people with care experience between the ages of 18 and 26 can access free dental care.



Making it easier to access free early learning and childcare.

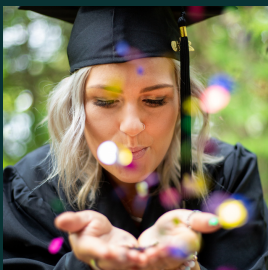


Making it easier to access [the Job Start Payment](#).

The Job Start Payment is money for young people which helps to cover the costs of starting a new job.



Working with local government to make sure people with care experience who get certain benefits can also access housing payments.



Making sure that students with care experience of all ages can get [the Care Experienced Students Bursary](#).

The Care Experienced Students Bursary is money for students with care experience, to help them with studying at college and university. It does not have to be paid back.

Scottish Ministers

Other Scottish Government support in place for people with care experience included:



Providing financial, digital and wellbeing support during the pandemic, some of which was supported by Who Cares? Scotland.



[The care experienced attainment fund](#) to support children and young people in education.



Creating jobs and other employment opportunities for people with care experience such as [the Care Leavers Internship Scheme](#), [The Young Person's Guarantee](#) and the 'No One Left Behind' project, which is a strategy to help people to find jobs.



Giving out digital devices and helping people to stay connected through the '[Connecting Scotland](#)' programme.

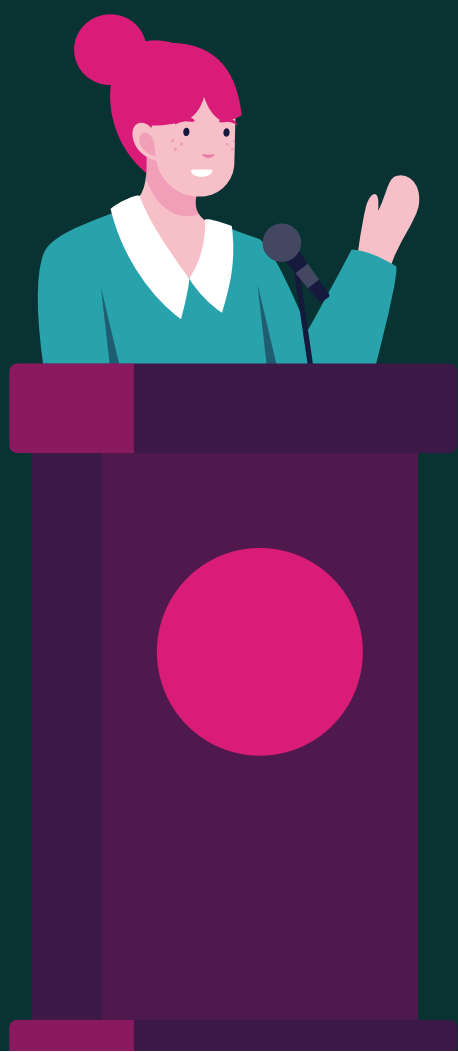
What's important to the Scottish Government as a corporate parent?



The Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Keeping the Promise is all about looking after Scotland's families and making sure they have what they need to be safe and strong, even in tough times.



The Promise says that 'where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way'.



Local Authorities



Local authorities told the government that they have been doing lots of different things to support people with care experience.

However, the types of supports that people with care experience could access were different across all of the local authorities.



It is important that local authorities learn from each other's ideas, to make sure that people with care experience get the best support from their local council, no matter where in Scotland they live.

Most local authorities have developed Champions Boards as a space for people with care experience to participate in decision making, service design and to share their views with senior managers and elected members.



In some local authorities, Champions Boards for younger children have been set up, such as 'Little Fix' in Moray, 'Mini Champs' in East Renfrewshire, 'Little Champs' in Highland and 'Mini Clacks Voices' in Clackmannanshire.



In East Renfrewshire, and working with In Control Scotland, the Champions Board embarked on a project to support young disabled people with care experience to be more included in their home life, local community, in decision-making and in their local champions board.

Local Authorities

Local authorities talked about the work they have done to improve how they make sure that they meet the needs of people with care experience as a group, and as individuals, making sure they are listened and responded to.



In Stirling, a 'Dear Corporate Parent...' letter from the Champions Board on behalf of all people with care experience was shared with thousands of Stirling Council staff, including teaching staff. It got a huge response and led to many pledges of support.



In Falkirk, children and young people with care experience were involved in making their first Children's Rights Plan and in shaping Falkirk's Health and Wellbeing Service supports.

As well as improving the opportunities available to people with care experience:



In the Scottish Borders, young people with care experience worked with a local IT firm to build an internet/Wi-Fi system for children's homes. Each young person has their own digital Wi-Fi hub which lets them go on the internet but also has added features for staying safe online.

Universities

Since 2018, universities have made good progress in increasing their awareness and understanding of the needs of students with care experience, as well as how they respond to these needs.



The University of the Highlands and Islands launched an anonymous student survey last year, asking students with care experience for feedback. A report was written based on the survey, telling the university what they could do differently. The survey will become a yearly activity. The local Champions Board helped, making sure that the questions asked were suitable.

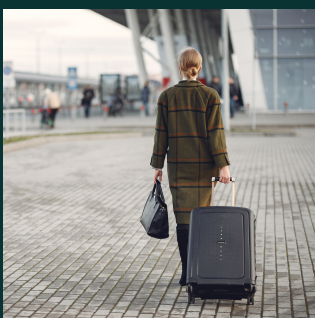


Since the beginning of 2020, the University of the West of Scotland has two named members of staff for students with care experience. They have formed a new team - the 'WeCare' Team. The team work together to support students with care experience all the way through their studies, from before they start at university, until they graduate.

Universities have shown that as well as meeting their responsibilities to provide support to students with care experience with their education, they are also providing support which helps a young person's wider wellbeing.



Queen Margaret University has supported their students with care experience to access 'My Place'. This is a brand-new project that helps people with care experience to connect with a peer flatmate who is there to support them.



The University of Strathclyde has been prioritising students with care experience for international opportunities since 2018. These have included educational trips to Madrid, Barcelona and Los Angeles.

Universities

Universities increased the support to students with care experience during the Covid-19 pandemic to help with their learning, wellbeing and health.



In response to the pandemic, the University of St Andrews contacted all students with care experience to find out what support they needed and made sure that they had access to the events being run. On top of that, they sent information to people with care experience about financial advice and support.



Glasgow Caledonian University has been aware that for some students it's difficult to study at home, so have offered safe socially distanced study spaces in the library.



In partnership with Dundee University Student Association, university staff co-hosted a Christmas lunch in 2020 for students who could not travel home for Christmas. Whilst this was due to the pandemic, they will be providing a lunch again in 2021 for any students who are on their own.

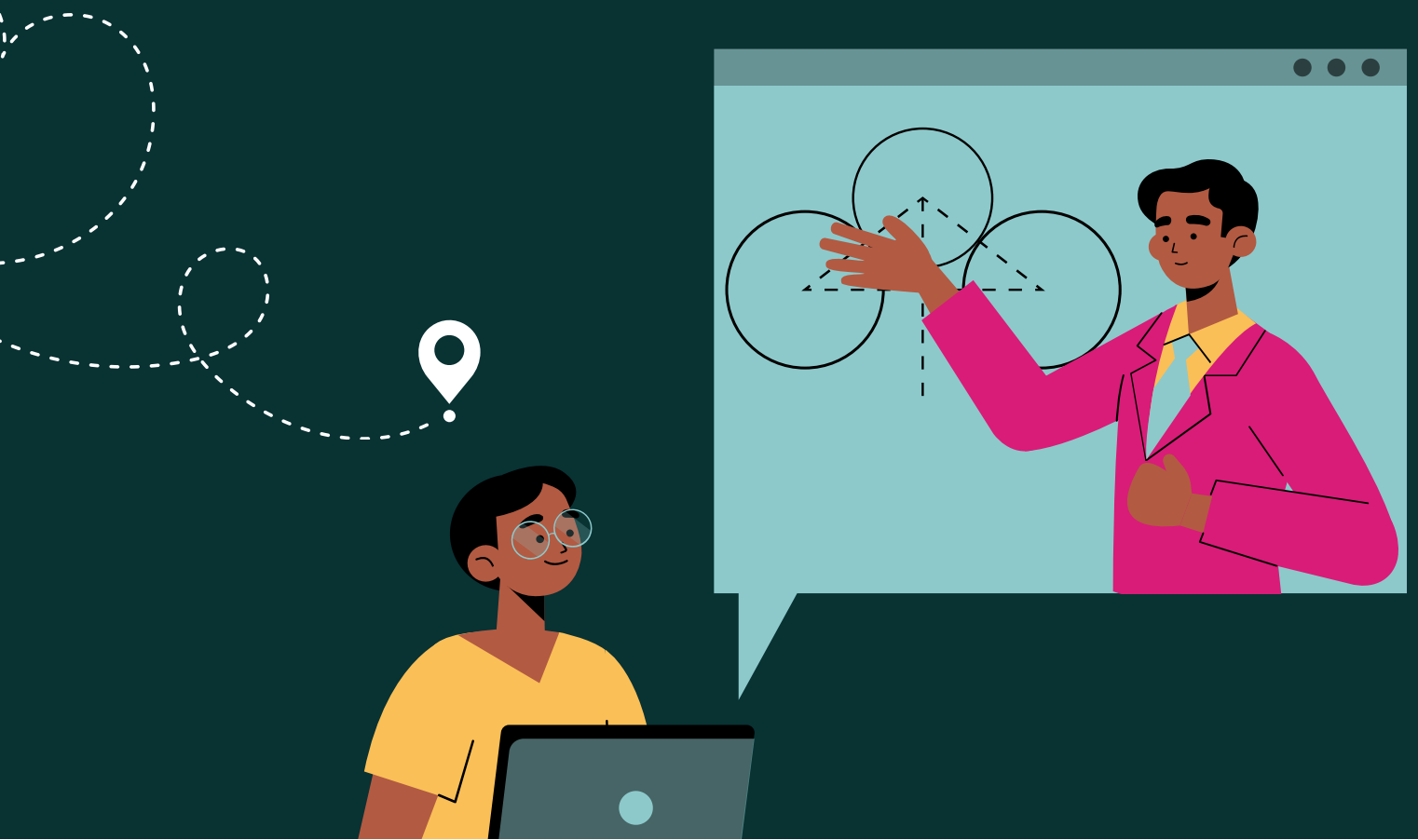
What does the government think that universities should focus on moving forward?



Some universities were grouping the needs of students with care experience together with estranged students (young people studying at university without the support and approval of their family network) and student carers (students who have a responsibility to care for someone else).



The government thinks it is important that universities continue to think about their specific responsibilities to students with care experience.



Several colleges told the government that since 2018 they had improved the way in which they help people with care experience to access college.



Dundee and Angus College introduced their 'Care Experience pledge', promising places at the college to people with care experience. They did this to show that they believe in people with care experience and want them to be part of the college community. The college has reported that since the pledge, they have had more applications from people with care experience.



At Borders College, the Borders Young Talent Project provides one-to-one mentoring support for pupils at local schools who are in their final year and who might face extra obstacles moving from school to college.

The schools and young people say that the Borders Young Talent Project has worked really well:

It can be a challenge to get the kids to take it on. [The mentor] has been great at building relationships with them. It's all about relationship building.



It was the encouragement I got from my mentor that helped me to keep going.

Colleges

Colleges also told the government about the supports they had put in place to help young people with care experience whilst at college, including support with their mental health and wellbeing, accessing financial support, accessing training and employment opportunities and taking part in extracurricular opportunities.



North East Scotland College listened to students with care experience who said they found it difficult to plan their finances. The college offered these students different options around when they wanted to be paid their further education bursary payments, to help with their budgeting. As a result, most students chose to be paid their bursary weekly rather than monthly.



Fife College has run a project to encourage students with care experience to consider volunteering for the Children's Hearings Panel. Students who took part got training, a certificate, a Saltire Award and a financial contribution paid in gift vouchers.

What does the government think that colleges should focus on moving forward?



The government noticed that not many colleges told them about supports to help students with care experience with transport to and from college, or to help with accessing housing.



Also, whilst colleges told the government about the different types of support they had in place to help students with care experience to transition into college, they didn't hear much about the support being given to students when they were transitioning on from college.



NHS Health Boards



The government was disappointed that there were few responses to the survey from NHS Health Boards, but they also know that the Covid-19 pandemic had a big impact on health services and how they are able to support people.



From the responses the government did get, they felt that Health Boards could take more ownership of their responsibilities to people with care experience as their corporate parents.



Health Boards mostly told The Scottish Government about services and supports available to all children and young people, rather than focusing on those with care experience.



Corporate parents have a responsibility to plan for and provide supports that meet the specific needs of children and young people with care experience.



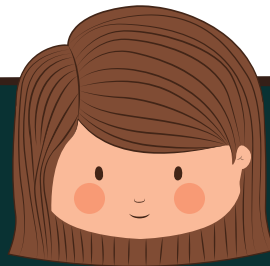
It's important that corporate parents make sure that people with care experience have the same opportunities as people without care experience. This means making sure everyone has what they need rather than making sure everyone has the same thing.

There were a small number of examples where health boards had provided opportunities specifically for people with care experience.



NHS Ayrshire and Arran spoke with children and young people about their experiences of healthcare services from their corporate parents. This made a big difference to the local services, particularly around people with care experience accessing dental care. It also showed how important it is to have the voices of children and young people when thinking about how services work.

We never went to the dentist every 6 months. Mum was very forgetful and would have issues with the dentist and stuff...I'm still petrified to go to the dentist because of the past.



Voice of Care Experienced Young Person, NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health Needs Assessment, 2018



NHS Grampian, in partnership with Moray Council, developed free and reduced cost options for accessing leisure services, and asked afterwards how useful this was.

On listening to feedback from young people that they did not want to use the leisure facilities on their own, the healthboard and council gave out extra passes for friends or carers.

National Bodies



National bodies are organisations that improve or monitor services which are provided by Scottish Government for people living in Scotland.



Some of the national bodies who are corporate parents include The Scottish Prison Service, The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), sportscotland and Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB).



Not all national bodies interact with people with care experience regularly. Some national bodies give money to other services to support people with care experience, or they provide training, or they watch over what other services are doing.



The government found that since 2018, many national bodies have done more to engage with and listen to children and young people with care experience to understand their needs, and what help and support they would like. However, this was easier to do for those corporate parents who interact with people with care experience regularly.



Some national bodies who don't interact with children and young people everyday found it harder to tell the government how they were meeting all of their responsibilities as corporate parents. Some national bodies have done a lot since 2018, whereas some national bodies have struggled to meet their responsibilities as corporate parents.

National Bodies

National bodies, through their actions and commitment to their corporate parenting responsibilities, showed the government that they saw their responsibilities for people with care experience as important:



The Care Inspectorate consulted widely with people with care experience in the development of the Health and Social Care Standards and in the review of their complaint processes. To improve accessibility for children and young people to complain about the care service they receive, a 'text to complain' service has been launched.



Articulate Cultural Trust (on behalf of Creative Scotland) undertook a mapping exercise of where projects were being delivered specifically for people with care experience, finding that people with care experience face systemic barriers to accessing creative opportunities and to progression within art form areas.



Scottish Fire and Rescue Service worked in partnership with Morrisons to deliver food parcels to the care experienced community, as well as collected care packages for people with care experience.

National Bodies

Most of the national bodies had worked with other services and organisations to improve services for people with care experience.



Police Scotland collaborated with multiagency partners to test an idea to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people with care experience. Processes were put in place to respond differently to behaviours that could be considered as low-level crime and children missing or not at home. This led to a 62% reduction in recorded crime of a minor nature within the care homes.



Scottish Fire and Rescue Service build relationships and support local groups for children and young people with care experience. They go for walks and keep in contact online through watching films, playing board games and bingo, as well as arranging online drop-in sessions where young people can pop by for an informal chat.



Education Scotland worked with the University of Stirling and other organisations on a project to improve how children and young people take part in school and early years education. The project helped children to reflect on how they feel and learn at school and how things could be done differently.



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) have been working with Who Cares? Scotland to make information more accessible and improve how to deal with requests for information from people with care experience. They have launched a new suite of materials to make it easier for people to understand how to make a request to SCRA to access their information.

An update on corporate parenting plans



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 tells corporate parents that they must make a plan of what they will do as a corporate parent and that they need to keep this plan up to date.

85

Corporate parents sent their plans to the government to look at for this review.



Most corporate parent plans included an action plan which set out what they planned to do for children and young people with care experience.

Most of the individual actions on the action plans connected to the responsibilities that corporate parents have to people with care experience.



Most of the corporate parenting plans were written in a way that may be hard to understand for children and young people.

Only some corporate parents were keeping their plans up to date.



Most of the corporate parenting plans didn't show how people with care experience have helped to influence the plan.

What has been helpful or challenging for corporate parents?

The government asked corporate parents to tell them what helped them to meet their responsibilities and what made it harder for them.

What has been helpful for corporate parents?



Lots of corporate parents said that talking with and listening to people with care experience has helped them be better in their role as corporate parents.



Corporate parents said they have learned what support is and isn't helpful, where there needs to be more or different types of support, and how to let other people with care experience know what help is there for them.



Corporate parents also said that having one or more person in their team who was responsible for making sure that they were achieving their corporate parenting aims and ambitions was important.

What has been challenging for corporate parents?

Corporate parents said that some of the challenging parts of being a corporate parent included:



Making sure that everyone understands their role and responsibilities as a corporate parent – this was more challenging for corporate parents who don't directly work with people with care experience on a daily basis.



Making sure that people with care experience can get the support they need and want, whilst also supporting their right to choose whether or not they want their corporate parents to know that they have care experience.



Understanding the 'care system' and knowing how best to support children and young people who are part of the care system.



The Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the response to the pandemic on the help, support and opportunities that corporate parents had in place.

What do corporate parents plan to do in the future?

The government also asked corporate parents about the future and what the most important thing they planned on doing as a corporate parent was.

Corporate parents talked about how they want to improve in order to be better corporate parent. Some of the things they mentioned were:



How they include people with care experience when planning and making decisions about how they can be best supported and what supports need to be available to them.



Continuing to make decisions to help children and young people with care experience and to make sure that they know that this help is there and what opportunities are available to them.



Making sure that they meet their responsibilities to children and young people with care experience in other ways, including by making sure that they are protecting their rights, looking after their wellbeing and keeping The Promise.

Corporate parents also talked about making the support they give to children and young people better by:



Increasing the number of foster carers and by keeping brothers and sisters together where possible.



Improving how they meet children and young people's mental and physical health needs.



Improving the opportunities available to young people to access: digital technology, support for learning, mentoring support, employment skills and training, financial support, housing, and supported transitions into adulthood.



What does the government recommend that corporate parents do next?

Over the next three years the government thinks that:



Corporate parents need to make sure that their corporate parent plans are written in a way that children and young people can easily understand.



Corporate parents need to keep their corporate parent plans up to date.



As well as supporting young people and adults with care experience, corporate parents need to do more to support babies and younger children with care experience.



Corporate parents need to think more about the different needs that children and young people with care experience within their community may have and make sure their planning and actions will respond to these different needs.



Corporate parents need to work together with other corporate parents to plan for how they can make best use of their skills and resources when supporting children and young people with care experience.

What does the government recommend that corporate parents do next?



NHS health boards need to focus on understanding the needs of children and young people with care experience.



Corporate parents need support to make sure they are including children's rights, The Promise and working together with children and their families within their planning and activity.



Corporate parents need to improve how they measure if their activity is making a difference or not.

In all of this, the Scottish Government has an important role to help corporate parents to understand and respond to the Promise, the incorporation of the UNCRC and other important policy changes in Scotland that affect people with care experience.



Corporate Parenting

Progress Report

2018 - 2021

If you would like to share your thoughts on this report, or what you think corporate parents should do in the future, email Who Cares? Scotland at:

corporateparenting@whocaresscotland.org



We'll share your thoughts and ideas with the Scottish Government, as well as corporate parents.



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