



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND

How to write a great
Corporate Parenting plan.
Guidance Document

2023

Introduction

We know that growing up every child needs a scaffold of supportive community in their lives. These people are loving, attentive, invested, and forward-looking adults who ensure that the child has everything they need placed around them in order to grow up in a healthy and thriving environment. Care Experienced children, young people and adults are no different – they need a group of caring and dedicated people who are thinking about their wellbeing not only in the time being but through a dynamic and long-lasting vision of how they plan on keeping the necessary scaffold around each and every Care Experienced person they have responsibilities for. A Corporate Parenting plan serves this exact purpose for you.

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) places a set of duties on a range of public bodies known as “Corporate Parents”. The role of Corporate Parent and the duties that come with that role are intended to improve the wellbeing of Care Experienced young people in Scotland. By **understanding and assessing their needs, promoting their interests, providing meaningful opportunities, looking for ways to overcome barriers to accessing services** and **continually improving**, Corporate Parents can make a real difference in the lives of Care Experienced people.

These duties are far reaching and broad, written as such to enable them to be incorporated into the diverse areas of work of Scotland’s 26 named Corporate Parents. For some Corporate Parents, this may involve work in areas they are unfamiliar with. There is however an expectation (and indeed a duty) to **collaborate** with other Corporate Parents, so this is not an issue that any Corporate Parent is required to tackle single-handedly. Collaboration provides an excellent opportunity to learn and grow from each other, sharing best practices in striving to ensure support and services are available to help Care Experienced people thrive.

Each Corporate Parent must publish a plan setting out how they intend to fulfil their duties. In our role supporting Corporate Parents, **Who Cares? Scotland** provides feedback on draft Corporate Parenting Plans to identify areas that can be improved or strengths that can be built upon. We have reviewed a wide range of plans and have put together this document to provide some general guidance on what a good Corporate Parenting Plan looks like.

We recommend this document is read in conjunction with our guide: [Corporate Parenting Duties – An Overview](#), which can be found along with other resources on [our website](#).

[The Promise](#) says: *“All of Scotland’s institutions, organisations, national bodies and Local Authorities who have responsibilities towards care experienced children and young adults, must be aware of, understand and fully implement all their parenting responsibilities.”* The commitment for joined-up and collaborative parenting needs to be reflected in a good Corporate Parenting plan.

Presentation/Design/Language

Your Corporate Parenting plan needs to be written in a **clear, consistent, interactive and accessible way**. This includes both the content of the plan and its visual presentation. The plan must be structured in a way that following the overall outline of the plan, as well as engaging in specific sections is easy and intuitive.

Who are you writing the plan for, or rather who are you writing the plan to? The plan is for the benefit of Care Experienced people as well as Corporate Parents. Be mindful of the language you use in the plan: is it inclusive and will it be comprehensible to all readers? It needs to be proof-checked against accessibility criteria such as different age-groups, disabilities, and learning differences. Consider writing your plan in a manner that is accessible to both children and adults.

Create a simple but engaging design that will keep your reader's attention and allows the information to be easily digested. Be aware of the readability of the font, font sizes and layouts that you choose. The inclusion of infographics will help convey key points, statistics and numbers.

Ensure that the content and the language of the document is not further stigmatising Care Experienced people. For this purpose, it is useful to follow the [framing toolkit](#) created by the [Each and Every Child initiative](#).

Context

A good Corporate Parenting plan needs to set the background prior to outlining the specificities of the plan, timeline and responsibilities. This means that the plan needs to be grounded in a comprehensive needs-assessment which is primarily **based on the voices of the Care Experienced community** that it represents. This assessment should review the policy landscape and the existing gaps in implementation, identifying the systemic reasons behind these gaps. At the same time and most importantly, the needs assessment must be based on what Care Experienced people say about the priorities of the plan. For this purpose, mixed and diverse methods of participatory research need to be utilised. This could include: face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and arts-based inquiry methods such as role-play or theatre. The methods need to be appropriately selected based on age, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the group you are engaging with.

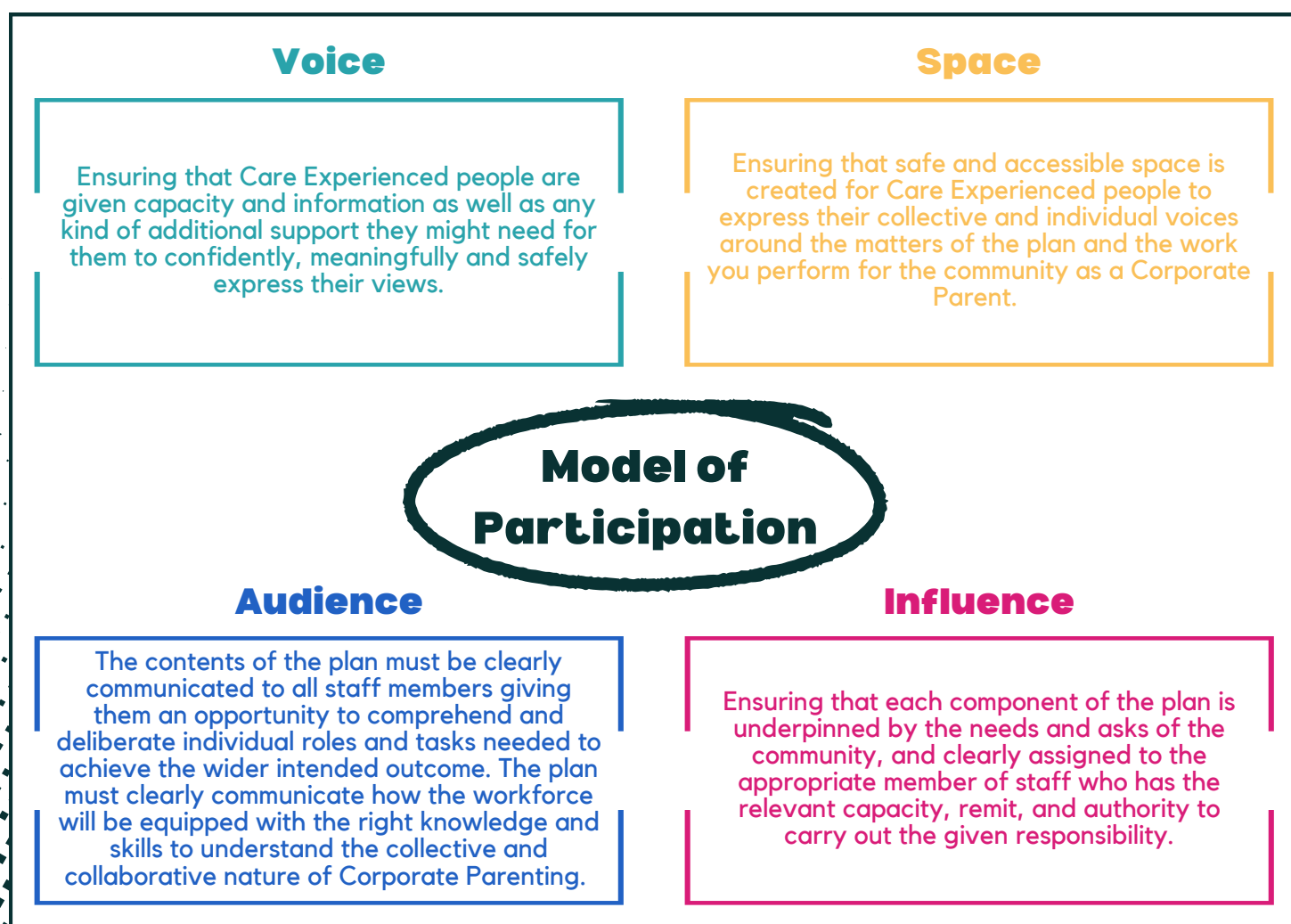
The plan must paint a clear and accurate picture of the Care Experienced community that it will be addressing in terms of numbers, statistics and their experiences that include both **challenging and successful stories**. This context-setting part of the plan is crucially important as it provides the rationale behind the plan, and, thus, the motivation to the workforce who will be leading on its implementation. A good Corporate Parenting plan gives a **strong understanding and appreciation of the 'why'** of Corporate Parenting prior to outlining the 'what' and 'how'.

Voice

The **Care Experienced voice** must underpin the entire plan at its different stages. The plan must clearly demonstrate how it sought the voices of Care Experienced people making sure that groups of diverse backgrounds were represented. Furthermore, it needs to outline how these voices are given due regard throughout the plan with accountability in terms of timeline and individual responsibilities attached to each ask.

If you are not able to address specific asks of the community within the timeframe of the plan, this must also be reflected honestly in the plan documenting specific commitment to progress this within the long-term perspective.

To ensure that the plan has the rights-based approach and is fully grounded in the voices of Care Experienced people, the [Lundy model of participation](#) can be utilised checking the plan against four main components:



Accountability

Accountability mechanisms must be incorporated into your plan. The shared duty of Corporate Parenting needs to be threaded out across the plan making it clear that it is not the responsibility of a single person or a team, but rather the entire organisation with everyone understanding their share of individual roles.

Against each goal and deliverable, the plan needs to provide the names and contact details of specific staff members who will be able to update the community on the progression of the specific part of the plan if needed.

The plan must clearly indicate the methods that will be used for tracking the impact of the plan on the lived experiences of Care Experienced people. Not only should the plan aim to achieve specific goals set at the start of the planning period, but it should be clear about tangible aspects of change that these goals will have on the lives of the Care Experienced community.

Furthermore, the plan must be clear about how the results of the plan will be communicated, primarily, to the Care Experienced community, as well as the wider society and other Corporate Parents. There needs to be multiple opportunities for Care Experienced people to hear about the progression of the plan and engage with it by asking questions or requesting adjustments.

Your Corporate Parenting plan must demonstrate that the appropriate provision of financial resources are allocated to the implementation of the plan. It needs to highlight the role of the senior leadership and finance teams in prioritising Care Experienced people and Corporate Parenting while taking budgetary decisions.



Lifelong Impact of Care

There is a vast amount of evidence which demonstrates the lifelong impact of care. Care Experienced people have repeatedly told us that care has a multifaceted impact on different areas of their lives at later stages. They have shared the sentiment that “we might leave care, but care doesn’t leave us” and expressed their aspiration for the support for Care Experienced people to be lifelong. The Promise further confirmed this and made a commitment: “Parenting does not stop at 18. Throughout The Plan, Scotland must continue to consider how to create greater equity and opportunity for care experienced young adults.”

Although the statutory guidance on Corporate Parenting sets an arbitrary limit to the age up until which Corporate Parents have duties towards Care Experienced people, we strongly encourage you to be clear on how you plan on supporting adults with care experience. If you set an age limit to the support you provide to Care Experienced people, it needs to be transparent and backed up with the reasons that are substantiated with the evidence grounded primarily in the voices of Care Experienced people.

You can read our report to find out more on [Lifelong Rights for Care Experienced People here.](#)

Training

The plan must demonstrate how the organisation is planning to invest in the capacity building of the workforce. The statutory guidance emphasises that staff at all levels must understand their duties and be supported and enabled to fulfil them. The Promise also highlights the importance of ‘nurturing Scotland’s workforce’ throughout the report. The Promise states that Scotland’s workforce “must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care”. A good Corporate Parenting plan will include commitments to providing training for all employees, with staff participation and outcomes being properly recorded and reported upon.



Collaboration

Corporate Parents do not have to meet their duties on their own. In fact, all Corporate Parents are under a duty to collaborate with each other where this will safeguard or promote the wellbeing of Care Experienced people.

The functions of the 26 named Corporate Parents are diverse, targeting different areas of Care Experienced people's lives. The Promise said: "Scotland must ensure that there is 'no wrong door' for Care Experienced young people and that Scotland's parenting responsibilities are life long and holistic for the young people that Scotland has cared for." The plan must demonstrate how the named Corporate Parent is intending to collaborate with all other organisations, so that the parenting experience that Care Experienced people are receiving is holistic and non-fragmented.

Collaboration could involve publishing a joint Corporate Parenting plan. It could also involve:

- Sharing information
- Providing advice or assistance
- Coordinating activities
- Sharing responsibility for action
- Funding activities jointly
- Creating local collaborative groups
- Sharing research findings

Collaboration should go beyond membership of working groups and be embraced as an opportunity to increase and diversify the high-quality opportunities available to Care Experienced people while avoiding the duplication of labour.



For further information on Corporate Parenting, feel free to contact the **Education & Engagement Team** at **Who Cares? Scotland**. We can review and provide a consultation on your Corporate Parenting plan and discuss delivering learning sessions to support your workforce in realising your plan.

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**WHO
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SCOTLAND

EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE