

Corporate Parenting: A guidance document for Finance Departments



Introduction

This guidance document has been developed to support you within your role as a Corporate Parent. It can be challenging to realise how you can fulfil your role as a loving Corporate Parent when you are not working in a front-facing role. This document will provide you with supportive guidance to empower you to fulfil your duties in practice, and be the best Corporate Parent you can be.

What is Corporate Parenting and who are Corporate Parents?

Corporate Parenting is defined within the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) as "the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers". This means that those named as Corporate Parents must take steps to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of **Care Experienced** people. In order to ensure that the most holistic scaffold of support possible surrounds Care Experienced people, Corporate Parents should work in collaboration with others in order to ensure that Care Experienced people feel loved, cared for, safe, secure, healthy, well supported and have access to opportunities – the same way any supportive parent would.

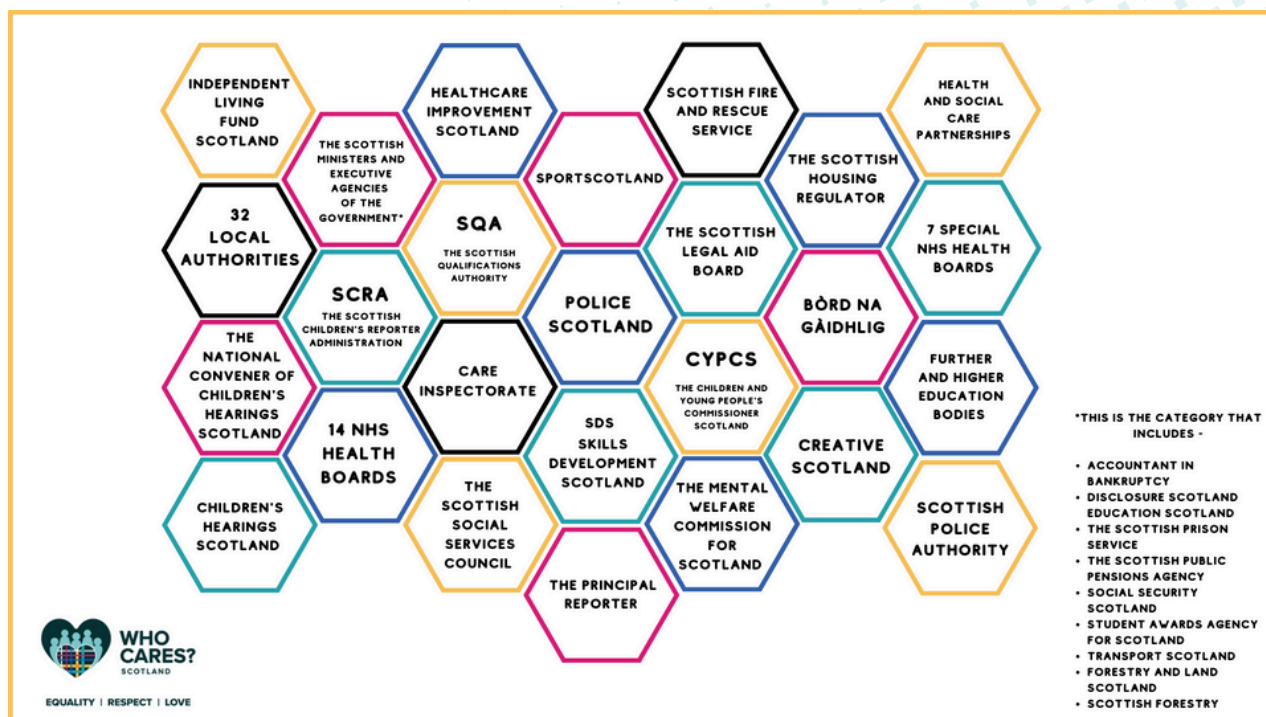
If you are employed by a named Corporate Parent, then you yourself are a Corporate Parent. No matter what your role is within your organisation, the statutory Corporate Parenting duties apply to you. Your role as a Corporate Parent provides you with an opportunity to make a real impact on the lives of Care Experienced people. Positive Corporate Parenting practice can be transformational in the lives of Care Experienced people. No matter what role you play, never underestimate the impact you can make!

Corporate: "Shared by a whole group and not just a single member."







Parenting: "the raising of children and young people and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved in it."



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) names 26 individuals and bodies as being Corporate Parents:



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) outlines six key statutory duties that should be upheld by corporate parents, these are:

-  Be **alert** to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.
-  **Assess** the needs of those children and young people for services and support.
-  **Promote** the interests of those children and young people.
-  Seek to provide looked after children and care leavers with **opportunities** to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
-  Take action to help those children and young people to **access** opportunities and make use of the services and access support they provide.
-  Take any other action you consider appropriate for the purpose of **improving** the way in which you exercise your functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

Please note that although the legislation and accompanying statutory guidance set out duties to Care Experienced children, young people and adults up to the age of 26, we ask that Corporate Parents view this as a minimum requirement. Who Cares? Scotland recognises that the impact of care can be lifelong, and would encourage Corporate Parents to offer lifelong support to Care Experienced people.

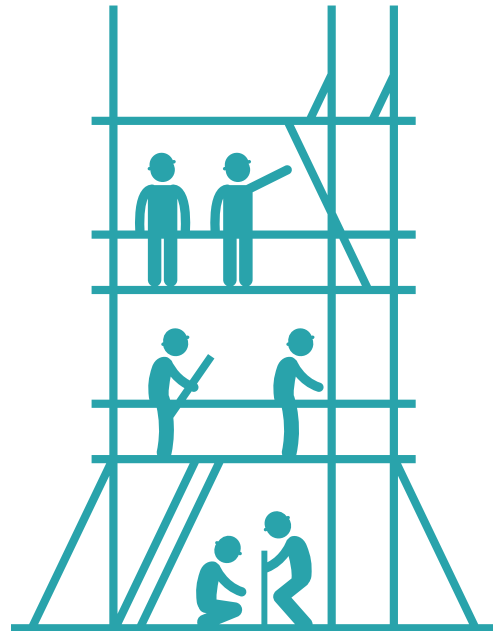
Care Experience Definition

The term 'Care Experienced' refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age. This care may have been provided in many different settings such as; Kinship Care, Looked After at Home, Residential Care, Foster Care, Secure Care and Adoption.



Scaffold of Care

Every child and young person needs a strong scaffold of love, care and support to see them through to adulthood and beyond. For many people, that scaffold is provided by those closest to them - parents, siblings, pets; wider family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles and the Scaffold of Care surrounding communities, like neighbours and school friends. When a child or young person goes into care, it can feel like essential pieces of this scaffold are removed. Sometimes very suddenly and often outside of the young person's control. Of course, many new people will step in to form a new scaffold, such as social workers, carers, care workers, teachers etc. Many of whom are Corporate Parents. Our message to Corporate Parents and wider Scottish society is that it is the job of all of us to ensure Care Experienced people have a strong scaffold of support around them, for as long as they need it. Together we can support our Care Experienced communities to thrive.





How can you support the Care Experienced community?

Everyone in your organisation has a role to play as a loving and supportive Corporate Parent. Sometimes it can be hard to understand how you can make a difference, so the suggestions below can help guide you.

Access to Bank Account

Care Experienced people may rely on their Corporate Parents to support them to set up their first bank account and overcome some of the challenges they face when doing this. Care Experienced people may face barriers getting formal personal identification (such as a passport) and access to birth certificates. It's important to be mindful that not all Care Experienced people will have a bank account in place when they gain employment. Organisations should be aware of this barrier and provide support and guidance to Care Experienced employees to navigate this.

Pay Schedules

Allowing Care Experienced employees to have choice over their pay schedules may relieve anxieties felt around managing finances.

Organisations may wish to provide employees with a choice between fortnightly or monthly pay to support with their budgeting. Managing finances on a monthly basis can sometimes feel overwhelming, therefore having pay schedule options allows employees to feel more confident and in control of their finances.

Financial Literacy Support for Care Experienced People

Care Experienced people may have a different scaffold of support than their peers, and may be less likely to have had support from family to understand and navigate finances. Care Experienced people can therefore rely on their Corporate Parents to support them to develop financial literacy.

Organisations should consider the ways in which they can provide financial education to their Care Experienced employees, to support them in building their confidence in managing their own finances.



Delay in Wages

As noted, the support networks that surround Care Experienced people are often different to those surrounding their non- Care Experienced peers. It is important to note the impact that banking errors from payroll that delay wages can have on your Care Experienced employees. Unlike many others, Care Experienced people often do not have the safety net of being able to borrow money from family members.

Delays in wages can cause a delay in bills being paid and can further impact on a Care Experienced individual's financial security. Therefore, your organisation should consider this and may wish to consider creating a "Safety Net Fund" to support employees who need it to cover outgoings until the error is resolved. Everyone in your organisation should understand and recognise the impact that errors like this can have for Care Experienced employees and they should offer comfort and reassurance to anyone affected.

Consider ring-fencing funding for events

A way in which you could exercise your duty of seeking to provide opportunities for Care Experienced people to participate in activities designed to support their wellbeing, could be by ring-fencing funding for events, including social events when they begin their employment.

Often employees will socialise after work or go for lunch, however, when a Care Experienced employee is first employed they may not always have funds available to join in on this social aspect of office life.

Organisations may wish to provide social events in office instead, ensuring that there are no financial barriers to Care Experienced people fully embracing this opportunity with their colleagues.

Ring-fencing funding can support Care Experienced people to develop a sense of belonging in their new place of work, encourage and create nurturing and organic trusted relationships and reduce the isolation often felt by this community.





Consider the introduction of health and wellbeing initiatives through department funding allocations.

Care Experienced people are disproportionately impacted by health inequalities. Organisations may wish to consider the ways in which they can help to promote and advocate for the health and wellbeing of the Care Experienced community within their employment.

Some organisations have secured discounted gym memberships and many are part of programmes such as the Cycle to Work Scheme. Consideration around funding allocations and where funding can be provided to support the implementation of health and wellbeing initiatives is a nurturing and caring way Corporate Parents can both attend to their duties and show loving support for the community.





Corporate Parenting in Action: Accountant in Bankruptcy

Accountant in Bankruptcy (AIB), a Scottish Government executive agency that helps deliver options for those seeking debt management and debt relief in Scotland, have fully embraced their role and duties as a Corporate Parent allowing them to not only be fully alert and understanding to the impact of care, but responsive to the barriers Care Experienced people face, ensuring they work towards a lifetime of equality, respect and love for Care Experienced people.

AIB have been engaging with primary school pupils through their implementation of Skills4Bills®, an interactive game developed by consumer debt company Cabot Credit Management to support financial education. Through this engagement, pupils are developing an increased understanding of concepts such as household bills, financial commitments and budgeting. This can be particularly valuable for Care Experienced pupils, who may not have learned financial literacy from their scaffolding of support.

Within the Skills4Bills® game, each child is allocated a job, after which, they find out how much of their salary is left once tax is deducted. The children are then encouraged to choose a home, choose a mode of transport, and finally decide on their food budget. Any money the children have leftover can then be used for holidays or taking part in any leisure activities they are interested in. The game is designed to help children understand the economic freedom they have in life by providing insight into the consequences of their financial choices.

Within the game, supporting staff try to sell the players the most expensive options available and explore the theme of 'overspending'. Once each round has come to an end, players must visit the "accountant", who will check to see if they have stayed within their budget. If players have not managed this, they must draw up a debt repayment plan.

The game is a wonderful tool to help prepare children from the earliest possible age for financial responsibility. It was noted that when the children first begin the game, they end up in debt. However, as the game progresses, the children learn more about how to budget and where their priorities lay. This meant that children became insightful with their money and the choices they made.

This game can have a lifelong impact on those who engage with it by providing Care Experienced people with vital financial education skills.

Regardless of the role that you fulfil within your organisation, you have an incredible opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of Care Experienced people. By taking this guidance into consideration and implementing the practices suggested, you will ensure that your organisation is fulfilling its Corporate Parenting duties and ensuring that Care Experienced people can thrive.



The Education and Engagement Team at Who Cares? Scotland are funded by Scottish Government to provide support and guidance to named Corporate Parents. For more information or to access further guidance or support, please contact us at : corporateparenting@whocaresScotland.org



EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE