



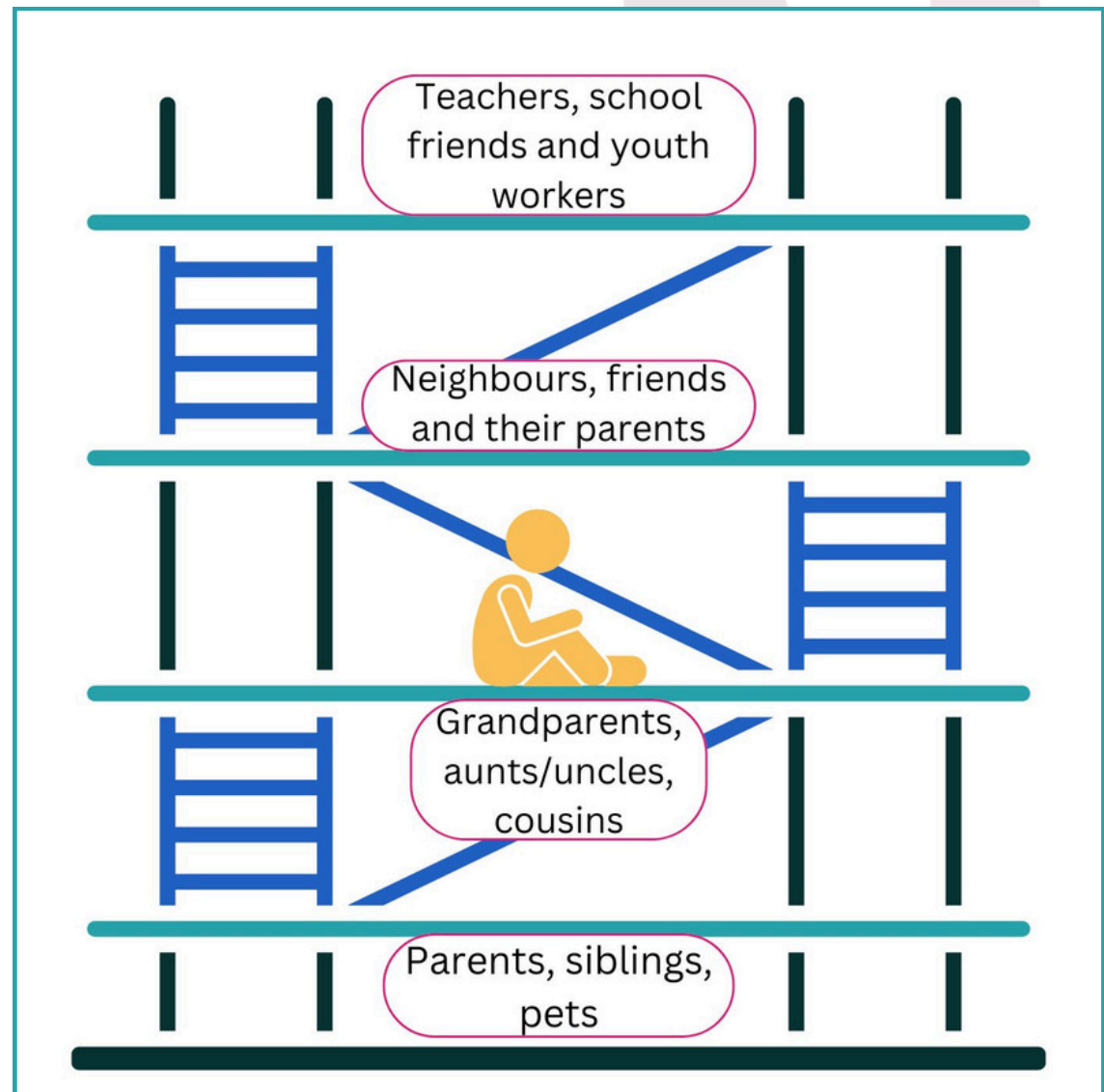
EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE

Corporate Parenting Duties: **An Overview**

Introduction

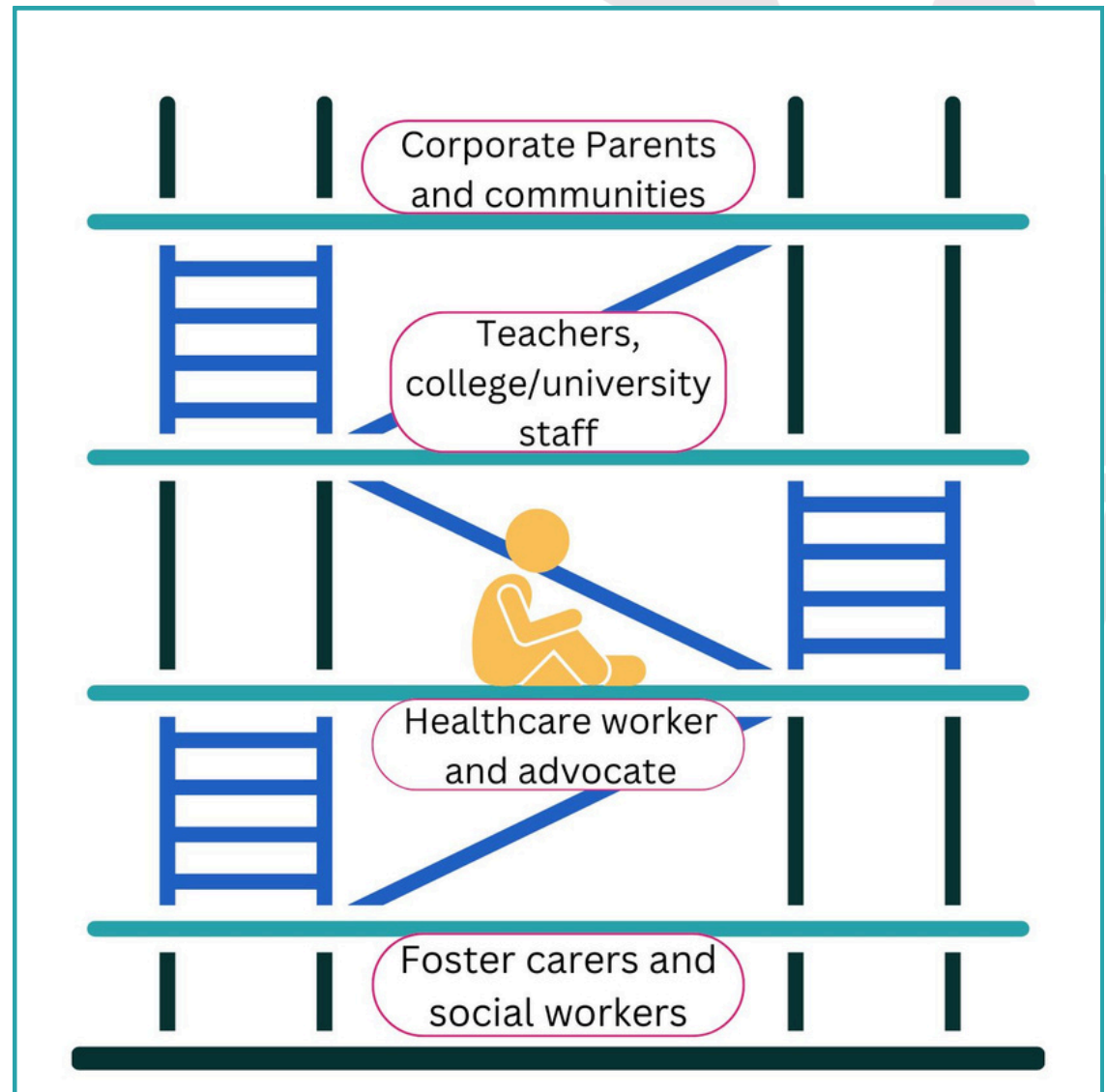
Everyone needs a strong scaffold of love, care, and support throughout their life. This scaffold is often built by immediate family, such as parents, brothers and sisters, pets, grandparents, and aunts and uncles, and strengthened by a wider community of friends, neighbours, and other trusted adults. These people support us to thrive; they love and care for us, help us build confidence, and support us to navigate life during challenging moments.

When a child or young person is taken into care, it can feel like essential pieces of this scaffold are removed very suddenly.



Lots of new people step in to rebuild and form a new scaffold, such as social workers, carers, teachers, and many other Corporate Parents, all of whom become an important part of our support network. However, it can take time to trust the new foundation that has been placed around us.

Care Experienced people must have a robust and supportive scaffold around them throughout their lives. Building a strong scaffold of support cannot fall to one person, or even a few. It is the shared responsibility of all Corporate Parents, and all of us across Scotland, to ensure that Care Experienced people always have the support, love, and stability they need, for as long as they need it.

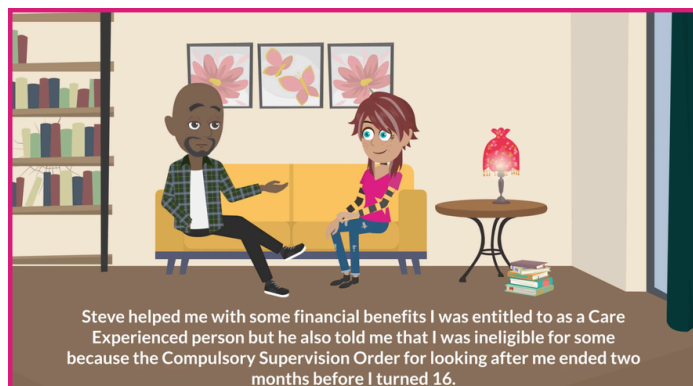


Alex's Story



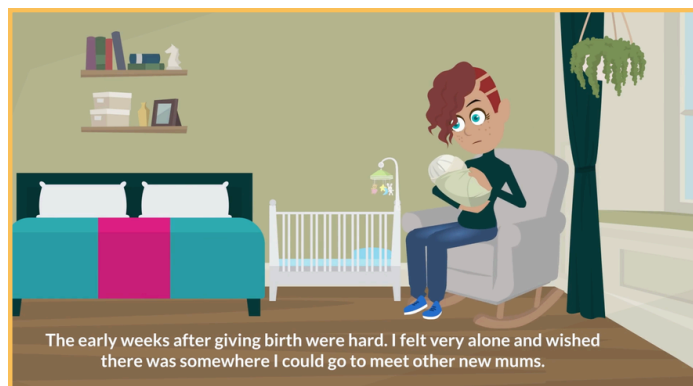
In this animated series of videos we meet Alex as she reflects back on her experiences of care and how it has impacted her life. This is a composite case study informed by Who Cares? Scotland's advocacy evidence.

In Part One Alex talks about moving into care and how that affected her relationships and education.



In Part Two Alex reflects on when she moved into independent living at the age of 17 and how that felt.

In Part Three Alex discusses how her experiences still impact her in adulthood and how she sought help to navigate life's challenges.



You can view the videos in our resource library on our website at the links below:

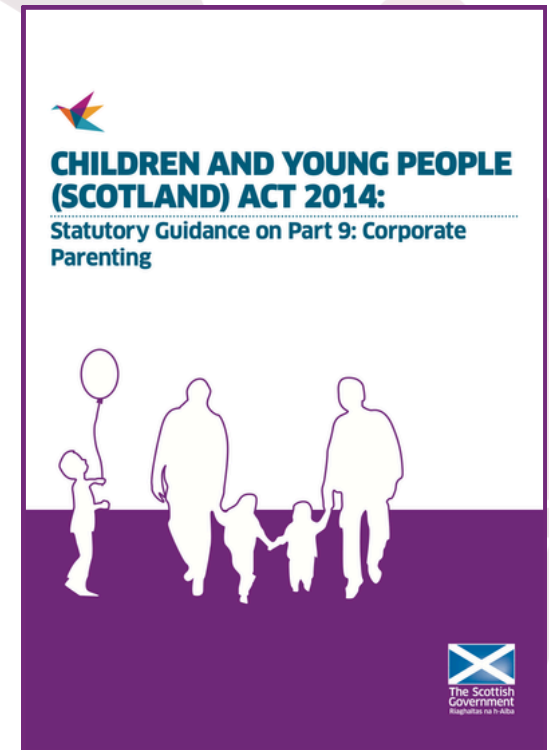
- [Alex's Story Part One](#)
- [Alex's Story - Part Two](#)
- [Alex's Story - Part Three](#)

This document provides an overview of the Corporate Parenting duties as laid out in the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). It also sets out the wider policy and legislative landscape in which they exist.

Whilst the duties within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, apply to Care Experienced people up to the age of 26, Who Cares? Scotland would encourage all Corporate Parents to **recognise the lifelong impact of care** and not limit their support by arbitrary age cut-offs. Furthermore, the [Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#), outlines that Care Experienced people can apply for Aftercare support even if they left care before their 16th birthday, and that advocacy should be a lifelong entitlement for all Care Experienced people, further recognising the need for lifelong support.

This overview draws on the Children and People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) and the [Statutory guidance on Part 9 \(Corporate Parenting\) of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). This overview should provide a good starting point for understanding the Corporate Parenting duties, but for a full understanding, we recommend you look at both the Act and the Guidance.

While the Act and the Guidance outline the legal responsibilities of Scotland's Corporate Parents towards Care Experienced people, we would also recommend that you consider how these duties interact with other significant frameworks, plans, policies, and legislation.



What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parenting is the legal responsibility that named organisations in Scotland have to support Care Experienced people. The ethos of Corporate Parenting is to enact the role of a parent: you must uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of Care Experienced people and promote their physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and educational development (Statutory Guidance, 2015). The Children and Young People Scotland Act (2014) names 26 corporate parents, as seen here:

Corporate Parenting is a shared responsibility and cannot be delegated to one individual or team- it is the whole organisation's responsibility to uphold the Corporate Parenting duties.



The Corporate Parenting Duties

A faint, stylized illustration in the background shows a person climbing a ladder that extends from the bottom right towards the top right. At the top of the ladder is a large, light-colored star.

Every Corporate Parent has **six substantive duties they must uphold for Care Experienced people**. You'll notice the duties are deliberately vague in nature, and this is to ensure that they apply to the diverse range of Corporate Parents and functions they perform. You are not expected to change your primary functions as an organisation – rather, look at what already exists within your current roles, remits and resources, and develop or expand them accordingly to ensure they have a positive impact on Care Experienced people.

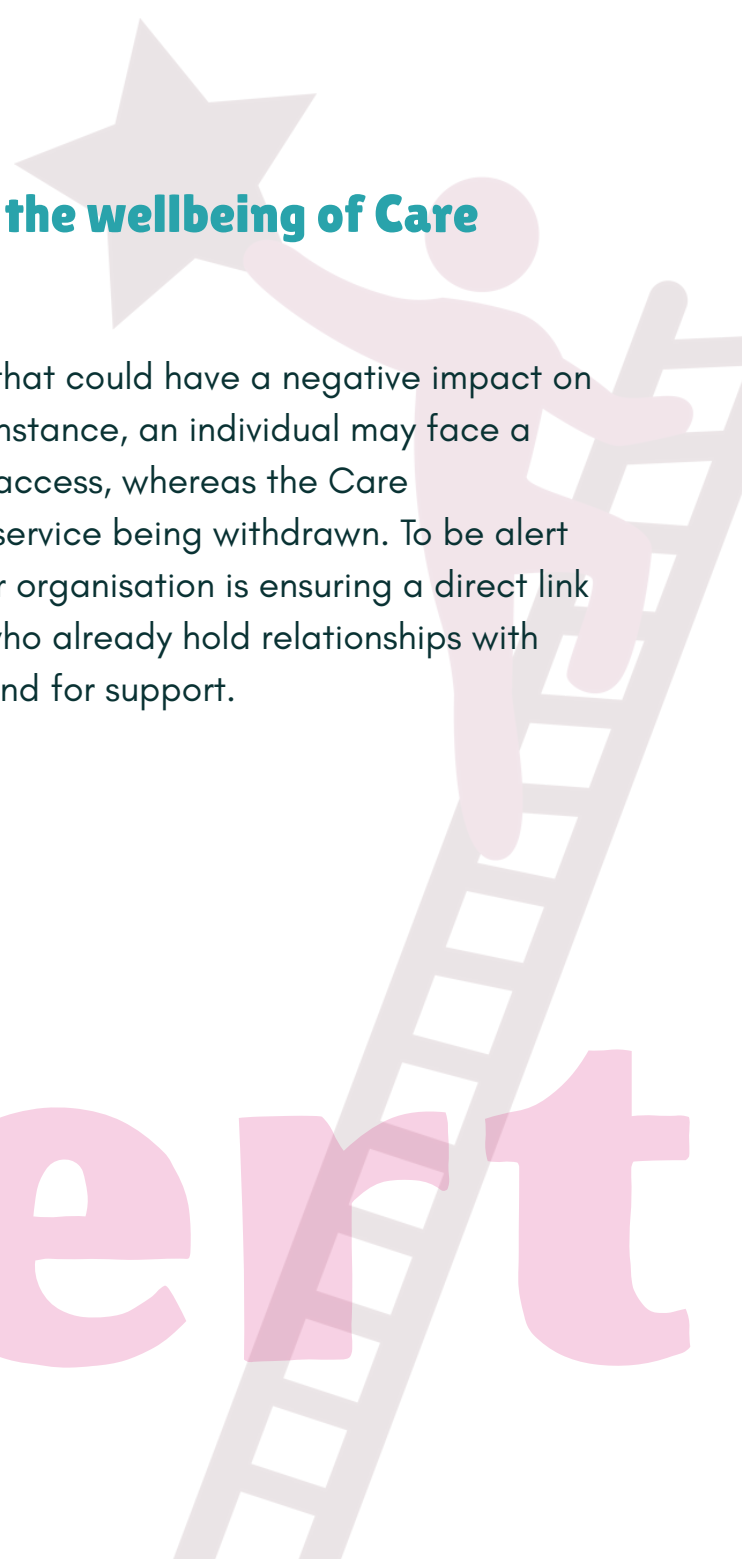
Corporate Parenting should be more than a tick-box exercise. It should be something that can really be felt throughout an organisation's culture, and a role you and your organisation should be proud to undertake! The most important question to ask yourself as a Corporate Parent when designing services or opportunities is:

“Would this be good enough for my child/niece/nephew/friend's child?”

Duty 1:

Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of Care Experienced people.[i]

As a Corporate Parent, you **must be aware of, and stay informed about**, issues that could have a negative impact on a Care Experienced individual, or on the wider Care Experienced community. For instance, an individual may face a change of placement or residence, or changes to a service that make it harder to access, whereas the Care Experienced community might be negatively impacted by changes to a benefit or service being withdrawn. To be alert to these matters affecting Care Experienced people, you should consider how your organisation is ensuring a direct link with the community. This could mean collaborating with other Corporate Parents who already hold relationships with Care Experienced people, or reaching out to organisations like Who Cares? Scotland for support.



Alert

[i] Section 58(1)(a) of the Act and paragraphs 70-74 of the Guidance.

Duty 2:

Assess the needs of Care Experienced people for the services and support you provide.^[i]

When considering this duty, you must first consider whether you have systems in place to identify Care Experienced people who use your service. You cannot support those you do not know exist!

Of course, assessment is not enough on its own; you also need to be able to show how the assessment of needs leads to changes in current services. For example, explain and explore the development of new services or provide evidence demonstrating why changes were not needed.

If you are asking people to self-identify as Care Experienced, are you doing this in a way that is trauma-informed? Are you clearly stating the benefits to self-declaration? Some people from kinship care or looked after at home backgrounds may not immediately identify as Care Experienced, and others may not wish to declare their care status for fear of judgement or discrimination – consider how you may address this. Always ask yourself: Why would someone want to “tick that box” – how do you make it feel like a safe option? You must be clear that you are asking so that you are able to offer support, make the support available by doing so clearly, and show how it would be beneficial.

Assess

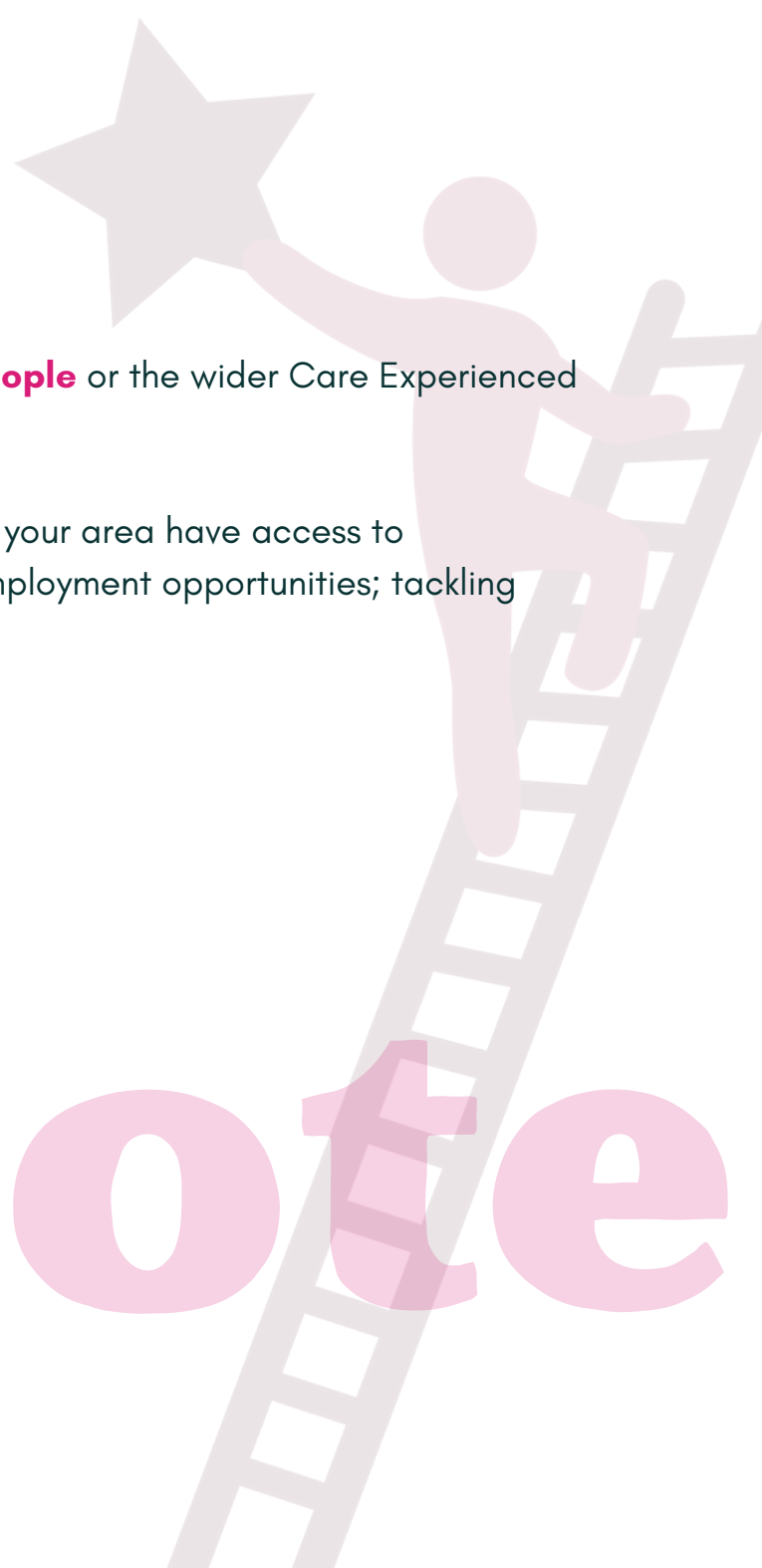
^[i] Section 58(1)(b) of the Act and paragraphs 75–83 of the Guidance.

Duty 3:

Promote the interests of Care Experienced people.[i]

This duty is about actions which can **advantage or benefit Care Experienced people** or the wider Care Experienced community.

Ways to ensure this duty is met could include ensuring Care Experienced people in your area have access to independent advocacy; positive action to widen access to education, leisure or employment opportunities; tackling discrimination; upholding children's rights; and removing barriers to wellbeing.

A faint, light pink illustration of a person climbing a ladder that extends from the bottom right towards the top right. The person is reaching up towards a large, light pink star at the top of the ladder. The word 'Promote' is written in large, light pink, rounded letters across the middle of the page, with the ladder and star graphic partially overlapping it.

Promote

[i] Section 58(1) of the Act and paragraphs 84–87 of the Guidance.

Duty 4:

Provide Care Experienced people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing. [i]

This duty is about securing a wide range of high-quality opportunities to help Care Experienced people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to their communities. **This is about improving, not just safeguarding, wellbeing.** We all want to see the Care Experienced population thrive!

As a Corporate Parent, you're required to offer Care Experienced people meaningful opportunities to participate. You'll need to identify which activities are relevant and then make sure the opportunities you provide are available. In some instances, this might mean making it possible for Care Experienced people to engage in activities you're already doing. In other cases, you might need to develop or procure new activities specifically targeted at this community.

Different Corporate Parents will meet this duty in different ways depending on their focus and function. However, all Corporate Parents are employers. Importantly, as an employer, you can offer opportunities for work experience, training or employment.

Provide

[i] Section 58(1) of the Act and paragraphs 84–87 of the Guidance.

Duty 5:

Take action to help Care Experienced people, (a) access the opportunities you're providing and (b) make use of services, and access support, available.[i]

Care Experienced people often face additional barriers to participating in opportunities, such as: limited access to transport and finances; unstable housing arrangements; childcare and other caring responsibilities; and inadequate access to the internet/technology. As a Corporate Parent, you **must act to help Care Experienced people overcome these barriers**, so that they can benefit from the opportunities, services and support available (even if you're not providing the service or support directly). Providing wraparound support to participate in any opportunity you create, including offering free transport, catering, childcare, etc., is essential when engaging with the Care Experienced community.

Access

[i] Section 58(1)(e) of the Act and paragraphs 95-99 of the Guidance.

Duty 6:

Take any other action you consider appropriate to improve the way you work with Care Experienced people.^[i]

This duty recognises that **improving wellbeing sometimes means going beyond what is written in legislation**. It is intentionally broad to recognise that legislation cannot anticipate every circumstance. This duty gives the flexibility for you to ask yourself “What more could our organisation be doing?”. This is your opportunity to be ambitious for the Care Experienced community.

It is so important to keep your work with Care Experienced people under review and look for ways to improve and be the best Corporate Parent you can be. For example, you could regularly work with Care Experienced people to review your progress so far and regularly collaborate with other Corporate Parents to share best practice.

Meeting your Corporate Parenting duties is not a process with an end date, but rather a permanent part of your policy, practice, and culture. It is an opportunity to be a socially responsible organisation that supports Care Experienced people to thrive!

Take Action

^[i] Section 58(1)(f) of the Act and paragraphs 100-102 of the Guidance.

What is Corporate Parenting? – Video



For this video, we welcomed Corporate Parents from five organisations to our National Office to share what Corporate Parenting means to them and why it matters.

They discuss why Corporate Parenting goes beyond fulfilling legal duties and why organisations should recognise the unique opportunities they have to support Care Experienced people to thrive and reach their goals.

They also reflect on what Corporate Parenting means to them personally, and the importance of collaborating with others to share resources, knowledge, and best practice.

You can view the video here:

- [What is Corporate Parenting – For Corporate Parents](#)

Wider Policy Landscape

The Promise

From 2017 to 2020, an independent 'root and branch' review of the care system was carried out in Scotland. The aim of the review was to **identify and deliver lasting change in Scotland's 'care system'**, leaving a legacy that will transform the wellbeing of infants, children and young people. It began its work in February 2017, and concluded in February 2020, with the publication of seven reports, the most substantial volume of which was ['The Promise'](#).

Scotland's promise to Care Experienced children and young people is that **they will grow up loved, safe, and respected**. Plan 24-30 is Scotland's shared planning framework to support work to keep the Promise by 2030. It sets out the remaining work required to transform how Scotland supports children, young people, families, and Care Experienced adults. It is vital that Corporate Parents engage with the route maps to understand what work they are responsible for delivering to ensure The Promise is kept by 2030.

Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

The [Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#) is part of Scotland's ongoing commitment to Keep the Promise. The Act strengthens support for the Care Experienced community through the expansion of Continuing Care and Aftercare, access to lifelong advocacy support, and the extension of aspects of Corporate Parenting to a wider group of Care Experienced people. The Act also includes provision for updated statutory guidance on Corporate Parenting. The Scottish Government's expectations of Corporate Parents will continue to develop, and all Corporate Parents should be prepared to **align their practice with updated guidance** and emerging evidence about what further support Care Experienced people need.



Wider Policy Landscape

The UNCRC

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) is an international human rights treaty that sets out the rights of all children and young people. It covers civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, providing a framework for ensuring all children are safe, healthy, respected, and able to reach their full potential. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, places children's rights at the centre of decision making and public service delivery in Scotland.

The principles and expectations of the UNCRC are aligned with the Corporate Parenting duties set out in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Corporate Parents **should ensure that the rights of Care Experienced children and young people are considered** when making decisions, developing policies, and delivering services through meaningful participation.

A SUMMARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



ARTICLE 1 (definition of the child)
Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

ARTICLE 2 (non-discrimination)
The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)
Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)
Every child has the right to think and

ARTICLE 24 (health and health services)
Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 36 (other forms of exploitation)
Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

ARTICLE 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)

Conclusion

We hope this guide helps to inform your Corporate Parenting plan, which should lay out how you intend to support the Care Experienced community. You can find other guides and resources like this on our Resource Library.

If you would like to discuss this document further or request live training for your team or to begin hosting our e-learning module please get in touch with us, we'd love to hear from you.

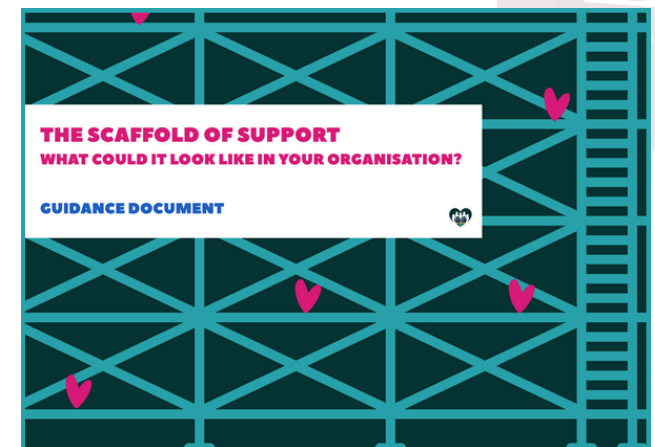
Additional Resources



[Self-Assessment Tool for Corporate Parents](#)



[Corporate Parenting Plans: Best Practice](#)



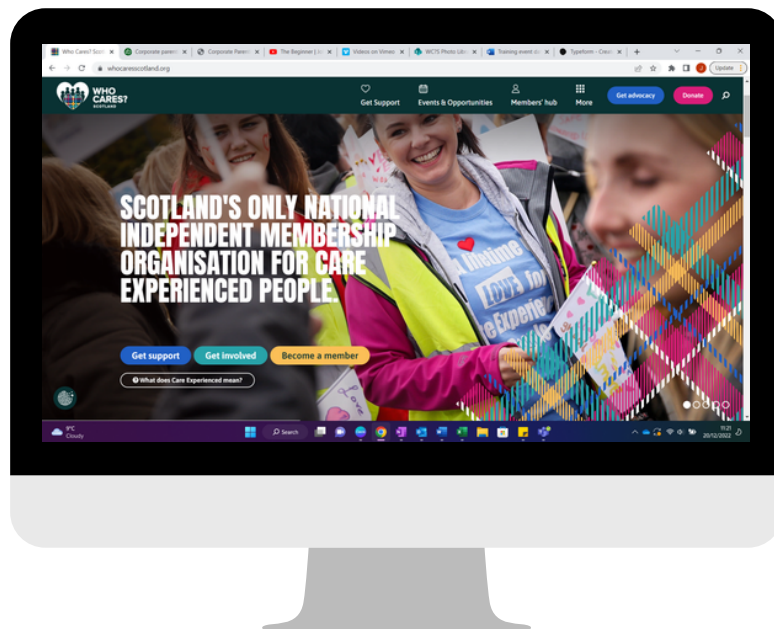
[The Scaffold of Support: What could it look like in your organisation?](#)

Keep in Touch

If you would like to work with us or find out more about our training offer please do get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.



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Please visit our [website](https://whocarescotland.org) where you can find useful documents and videos on our Resource Library. You can also keep up with all of our influencing work and member events through our social media accounts.

