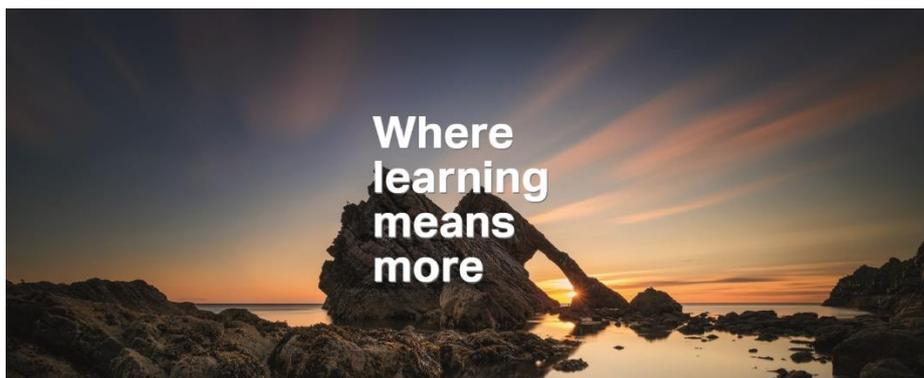




UHI Moray

Corporate Parenting Plan

2023 - 2026



Introduction

UHI Moray was established as a Corporate Parent by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. [Statutory guidance](#) issued by the Scottish Government outlines the principles and duties placed on the College and defines the term corporate parent as:

“...an organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted, from infancy through to adulthood”.

We recognise that currently many looked after children and care leavers experience some of the poorest personal outcomes of any group in Scotland. Low levels of educational engagement and achievement feed into high levels of poverty, homelessness and poor mental health. Barriers to education which care experienced young people face include lack of funding, disrupted schooling, an unstable home environment, and accessing further and higher education at a later age than their non- looked after peers.

UHI Moray is a partner of the University of Highlands and Islands and this Corporate Parenting Plan compliments the overarching UHI plan to support the wellbeing of care experienced young people who are students of the College. This plan covers the next 3 years and the action plan will be reviewed annually.

Context

The vision of UHI Moray is to be a destination of choice for students and that means removing barriers for care experienced students and ensuring they are supported through transition into College and onwards and upwards to the next stage of their lives.

Our vision is **“To transform lives, and be at the heart of transformation in Moray and the wider region”**, taking a collaborative approach with key stakeholders and the wider community the College serves.

Post-Global Pandemic Impact

From March 2020, the College and all stakeholders have operated in a challenging environment due to the global pandemic. Session 2022/23 was the first time since the start of the College that normal operations resumed, although the “new normal” is quite different, with work patterns of staff and study patterns of students being adapted based on the lessons learned during lockdown and the partial closure of the College facilities.

The impact of the pandemic on care experienced students is significantly higher than others due to the known challenges outlined above and the overall plan going forward focusses on improving the post-pandemic response.

UHI Moray's Commitment to Care Experienced Students

Partnership Working

The College has a representative on the UHI Partnership Care leavers group which meets bi-annually with Corporate Parenting as part of their work. Guidance staff have also attended College Development Network events, local *Who Care's* Scotland events and The Student Advice Manager represents the college on Moray council Strategic Board for Corporate Parents and local Champion's Board.

Transitions, Applications and Enrolment

Staff continue to work with local corporate parents to raise awareness and plan for better transitions to College for care experienced young people. This comes from referrals through Moray Council and also supported by a Data Sharing Agreement with Skills Development Scotland. This has improved with Data sharing now more accessible and more awareness of what we can offer by working together with our partners.

Our Head of Academic Partnerships and Student Advice Manager work with local partners to ensure where it is known the applicant is a care leaver before application that there is a transition plan for care experienced learner.

We promote the services available to care-experienced students through UHI Moray UHI's own website and that of the UHI. We have a dedicated page in the support area's encouraging students to disclose, what the benefits are and who the main contact for support is. We have posters on all notice boards around the college. We have a whole page dedicated to Students in care in our Student Guide and we flag information on the "My Day" student portal and use Facebook and twitter to promote disclosure and information relevant to this group.

Application

With regard to University Admissions processes, students who declare care experience at the time of application are flagged on the data management system and the application form marked. This information locally is sent to The Student Advice Manager who can then make contact to offer all support required. This information will also be sent to academic staff who can take this into consideration when interviewing.

The University have developed a "Contextualised Admissions and Practice" to formalise the existing inclusive approach to admissions. This means that contextualised data provided on application form can be used to support applicant and ensure a seamless application process for both FE and HE.

Pre Entry

UHI Moray is involved in Transitional planning with Moray Council and is a member of the Family Firm. This provides a framework for the Council and Corporate parenting partners to offer learning opportunities for care experienced young people and others who require additional support. Our Head of Academic Partnerships oversees all transitional issues and works closely with The Student Advice Manager to enable appropriate support. Student Services are open all summer to support students with their application, funding applications and guidance support for any other queries.

We have local resources on UHI Moray UHI website in our care leavers section along with UHI centralised resource for HE students, including individual bursary schemes, internal and external, and University's Discretionary and Childcare funds.

We run a kick start programme in College in June for all students who feel they need support to come back to College. This is run for 2 weeks in June and **all** prospective students are encouraged to sign up for this.

With regards to accommodation for care- experienced students studying higher education programmes, UHI can act as guarantor for care experienced students.

On Course Support

UHI Moray UHI has recently expanded our support services by introducing Learning Development Workers who work closely with teaching staff and students to gain the best possible support and outcomes. The LDW's have been able to give unprecedented support to individual students, supporting them with all non- academic issues. This role is now well established in College and the practice has been positively commented on in Education Scotland reviews.

All students enrolled on UHI Higher Education programmes at UHI Moray UHI have access to Personal Academic Tutor's (PAT) to provide academic support and guidance, as well as signposting for additional support services. The University Student Services Team co-ordinate the support and training available for Personal Academic Tutors based across the network, which includes an annual Development Day. Recent agenda items for the day have included a session on care-experienced students, delivered by a current PAT.

The Essential Student Skills resource is available to all students and these interactive modules can be accessed at all stages of the learner journey. Full details of the resource and a link to access it, are on the University Care leavers page.

Communication

The creation of an online Corporate Parenting training module has raised awareness amongst all staff of the legislative duties under the statutory act and, importantly, of the challenges faced by care experienced students. The mandatory College Development Network/ Who Cares? Scotland face to face training for staff was a huge success in previous years and is a key action to do again in 2023. Feedback from staff attending these sessions has been very positive.

The College can again celebrate Care Day on campus for the first time in 3 years and this will continue going forward.

Monitoring of Plan/Outcomes

This is the first report to provide information regarding the university Corporate Parenting Plan and the actions within it. The plan is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis with reporting to take place every three years in line with Government requirements. The Student Advice Manager and Director of Information, Planning and Student Support will monitor the plan on a bi monthly basis the support and progress of the care experienced students. This will be fed back to The Strategic Leadership Team. The Student Advice Manager will continue to work on issues within the Care Leavers group in the UHI.

Conclusion

All of the work undertaken since 2013 has been with the aim of ensuring care experienced students have access to all the support they need, which will allow them to make the most of their time at UHI Moray UHI.

The tables later in this document provide summary information on how care experienced students performed in the last 3 reported years across both further and higher education.

Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2023/24

There is a focus on continuous enhancement of provision for care experienced students, with regular reviews of outcomes and consideration of how we can improve. The number of Care experienced students is increasing with more awareness and promotion to declare this and the benefits that go with that.

We also work closely with our other corporate parents on Moray Council's Strategic Board for Corporate Parents which enables collaborative working to help improve outcomes for all care experience students.

The action plan reflects the SFC's National Ambition for Care-Experienced Students and also responds to the impact of the global pandemic:

ID	Description	Responsible	Timescale
1	Continue to work in partnership with local agencies to ensure that good practice in support of care experienced students is incorporated into College processes and there is a joined up approach to supporting care experienced students not just in College, but with other agencies outside College.	Student Advice Manager (SAM)	Through the lifetime of this plan.
2	Review Student Outcomes. Student outcomes for care experienced students dropped in the first year of the pandemic. Review these outcomes through to the first year of normal operation 22-23 and identify any issues for improvement with course teams and support services.	SAM	By December 2023
3	Review the impact of the changes to student funding. Engage with care experienced students to gather feedback on how the changes impacted them and identify any revised guidance which would enable students to better manage their funding.	SAM	By December 2023
4	Develop a plan to ensure that 3-yearly Corporate Parent Training refresher for staff is completed.	SAM	By September 2023
5	Re-establish the UHI Moray Corporate Parenting Group to help promote, engage and share good practice in College.	SAM	By June 2023

ID	Description	Responsible	Timescale
6	Develop an up-to-date engagement plan for care experienced students in order that their feedback is captured and incorporated into the design and on-going quality improvement of services across College.	SAM	By September 2023
7	Continue to work with the Local Authority on both senior phase and transitions to full time College places for those pupils who have a care background to ensure services to support care experienced students are signposted as early as possible.	Head of Academic Partnerships (HAP)	Through the lifetime of this plan.
8	Develop new promotional materials targeting care experienced students which signposts support available and key contacts in College, to incorporate the new branding.	SAM	By September 2023

Review of Actions

The plan will be reviewed and updated annually, but progress on the new action plan will also be reviewed 6 months after initial approval in order to provide a more timely update to the Board of Management.

Care Experienced Student Outcomes

Key

- Apps – Number of care experienced applications
- Enrols – Number of care experienced enrolments.
- ESR - Early Student Retention (number and %) at the 25% point of the session
- SR - Student Retention (number and %) at the end of the session.
- Outcome – number and % of care experienced students passing a course

Further Education

Session	#Apps*	#Enrols	#ESR	ESR%	#SR	SR%	Outcome #	Outcome %
17/18	104	60	55	91.7%	48	80.0%	43	71.7%
18/19	51	86	81	94.2%	62	72.1%	53	61.6%
19/20	53	78	71	91.0%	62	79.5%	52	66.7%
20/21	103	92	84	91.3%	70	76.1%	52	56.5%
Grand Total	311	316	291	92.1%	242	76.6%	200	63.3%

*Not all students declare care experience at application, hence lower applications than enrolments.

Higher Education

Session	#Apps	#Enrols	#ESR	ESR%	#SR	SR%	Outcome#	Outcome%
17/18	48	20	17	85.0%	11	55.0%	11	55.0%
18/19	33	16	14	87.5%	13	81.3%	11	68.8%
19/20	30	17	17	100.0%	13	76.5%	13	76.5%
20/21	46	24	24	100.0%	19	79.2%	10	41.7%
Grand Total	157	77	72	93.5%	56	72.7%	45	58.4%

Student numbers are small in terms of overall student population, but there is a notable drop in the first year of the pandemic for both further and higher education. The main action plan identifies the need to review the outcomes to help identify the factors behind this. Lockdown was effective from March 2020 to the remainder of session and retention rates held up well, therefore careful consideration of the reasons for lower outcomes is required.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to work closely with external agencies such as Celcis, Who Cares? Scotland, UHI partners, The College Development Network and Moray Council in response to the action plan.

There is work to re-establish and re-invigorate engagement with care experienced students now that the College has returned to a more normal mode of operation. The issues with a lack of student engagement prior to the pandemic still exist and this is fully recognised as a key action to be developed. More work is required to try and enable better engagement with the Care Experienced students who have disclosed to enable them to communicate with The Student Advice Manager and utilise all the extra support we can offer.

We understand that some young people do not wish to draw attention to their care experienced status for numerous complex reasons and as such not all applicants may declare their status prior to enrolment. They will be actively encouraged to do this by their Learning Development workers and Personal Academic Tutors.

The Staff at UHI Moray UHI will continue to attend mandatory training and complete the UHI Training module raising awareness of the difficulties Care experienced students may face and enhance the support available.

Through the specific actions in the Corporate Parenting Plan our aim is to encourage more care experienced young people to study at UHI Moray, reducing barriers to entry and to improve outcomes and opportunities for care experienced students overall.