

A photograph of a diverse group of young adults sitting at a table in a classroom or meeting room. They are looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The image has a teal-to-red gradient overlay.

Corporate Parenting Plan

2021-24

Context

Statement of Ambition:

Ayrshire College will be an inspirational place of learning where individuals can excel and realise their full potential. A place where businesses and communities can access skills, expertise and innovation that supports local and national economic development and inclusive growth.

We will achieve this through strong collaboration and partnership working and by investing in and valuing our staff and students.

Our Values:

Respectful

Open and Honest

Supportive

Our Ambitions:

- To be an accessible, inspirational, and inclusive place to work and learn
- To support, empower and inspire our staff and students
- To be a high-performing, environmentally responsible college recognised for excellence, equality and integrity



Regional Context

The Ayrshire region covers an area of 3 370 km² and has a population of 370 600. The Regional Skills Assessment for Ayrshire, published in July 2021, shows that the region's population is declining – against national trends – particularly in the 0-19 and 35-44 age groups. The population is ageing and this is expected to continue.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measure shows that the Ayrshire region has 64 (10%) of the SIMD10 datazones in Scotland. In 2019/20, (17%) of enrolments at Ayrshire College came from the 10% most deprived areas. The concentration of SIMD10 students in our campuses reflects the proportionate number of SIMD10 datazones in that particular local authority area.

The profile of the College's student population shows that a higher proportion of students in Ayrshire are aged 16-19 and the majority of students (96% of enrolments in 2019-20) live in the region.

The Regional Skills Assessment for Ayrshire, published in 2021, shows that the three largest employment sectors in the region are Health and Social Care, Construction and Tourism. The College will continue to support the economic sectors of particular relevance to Ayrshire identified by the Regional Skills Assessment and by partners.

“Evidence shows that Care Experienced students have lower success rates than non-Care Experienced students at both FE and HE levels.”

Care Experienced Young People in Scotland

The Scottish Funding Council’s National Ambition for Care Experienced Students (2020)¹ states that Care Experienced children and young people are those who are or have been looked after by their local authority due to concerns about their wellbeing or protection, including parents being unable to provide appropriate care.²

There are an estimated 16,530 children and young people who were looked after in Scotland on 31st July 2020. The most recent figures available for the Ayrshire region for 2019-20 show that there were 382 looked after children and young people in East Ayrshire, 575 in North Ayrshire and 300 in South Ayrshire.³

Young people in care live in many different placement types or care settings:

- Foster care (living with another family): 34%
- Kinship care (with friends or relatives): 28%
- Looked-after at home (living with birth parents but with social work involvement under a supervision order): 26%
- Residential care (living in a children’s unit/house/secure): 10%
- With prospective adopters: 1%

Many Care Experienced young people do well at school and have a positive experience of education. However, evidence shows that Care Experienced students have lower success rates than non-Care Experienced students at both FE and HE levels. The largest gap is in successful completion on full time FE courses at College, where the gap is 15.6%.

¹ <https://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/corporate-publications/2020/SFCCP012020.aspx>

² In relation to Corporate Parenting, children/young people are legally known as ‘looked after children’ and those who were looked after on or beyond their 16th birthday are known as ‘care leavers’. However, the preferred term for these children and young people is ‘Care Experienced’ and this is used throughout this document.

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/documents/>



Corporate Parenting

Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 came into effect on 1st April 2015. Section 56 of the Act states that all persons and organisations listed, or within a description listed, in schedule 4 of the Act are corporate parents for the purposes of Part 9. All post-16 education bodies in Scotland are identified as corporate parents within the Act and as such are subject to the duties (excluding section 64) set out in Part 9 of the Act.

All corporate parents must prepare, publish and review a Corporate Parenting Action Plan, which details how they will fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities. The Act also encourages collaborative working between corporate parents to develop, enact and monitor plans. Corporate Parenting is not a task which can be delegated to an individual or team. The whole organisation is responsible for fulfilling the Corporate Parenting duties set out in Part 9.

The Statutory Guidance on Part 9: Corporate Parenting defines the term 'Corporate Parenting' as: "An organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted".

The Act states that Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) applies to:

- (a) Every child who is looked after by a local authority, and
- (b) Every young person who-
 - (i) Is under the age of 26, and
 - (ii) Was (on the person's 16th birthday or at any subsequent time) but is no longer looked after by a local authority

“Corporate Parenting is not a task which can be delegated to an individual or team. The whole organisation is responsible for fulfilling the Corporate Parenting duties”



Section 58 of the Act states that all corporate parents must fulfil the following duties:

- Be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after young people and care leavers
- Assess the needs of looked after children and young people for services and support we provide
- Promote the interests of looked after young people and care leavers
- Provide opportunities for looked after young people and care leavers to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing
- Take action appropriate to ensure looked after young people and care leavers access these opportunities and make use of our services and support
- Take any other action we consider appropriate to improve our functions to meet the needs of looked after young people and care leavers



Corporate Parenting at Ayrshire College

Ayrshire College's Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24 sets out an ambitious and detailed action plan in response to the duties outlined in Part 9 (Section 58) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014.

The current Corporate Parenting Plan builds on the progress made throughout the reporting periods 2016-18 and 2018-21. As with previous plans, the current Corporate Parenting Plan has been developed in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and in consultation with Care Experienced young people and the three Ayrshire local authorities. Ayrshire College recognises that our Corporate Parenting duties apply equally to young people regardless of type of care arrangement, e.g., looked after at home, foster care, residential care or kinship care.

The aims outlined in the Corporate Parenting Plan reflect the College's key strategic objectives, which are detailed in the Statement of Ambition 2030, the Refresh and Renew Plan 2021-2024 and the Equality Outcomes 2021-2025.

The aims of the Corporate Parenting Plan also take into account the Scottish Funding Council's National Ambition for Care Experienced Students. The National Ambition states that there should be no difference in the outcomes of Care Experienced students comparative to their peers by 2030. By 2022-23 the National Ambition is to:

- Maintain the 1.6% proportion by headcount in the college sector
- Reduce the gap of FT HE successful completions to six percentage points
- Reduce the gap of FT FE successful completions to ten percentage points

“Improving retention and attainment for Care Experienced students will be a key focus of our Corporate Parenting Plan for 2021-24.”

Ayrshire College recognises that whilst considerable progress has been made in relation to increasing the number of students who choose to declare their Care Experienced status, retention and attainment levels for Care Experienced students remain disappointing in comparison to their peers, particularly on FE level programmes. Therefore, improving retention and attainment for Care Experienced students will be a key focus of our Corporate Parenting Plan for 2021-24.

Futhermore, Ayrshire College fully supports the recommendations outlined in The Promise Scotland (2020) and will work with internal and external partners to ensure that Scotland can #KeepThePromise it made to ensure that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, able to realise their full potential.



Development and Review of the Plan

Section 60 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires all corporate parents to collaborate with each other, in so far as is reasonably practicable, when exercising their corporate parenting duties. This current Corporate Parenting Plan has been developed in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and in consultation with Care Experienced students and other corporate parents including the three Ayrshire local authorities. The Corporate Parenting Plan will be shared widely with internal and external stakeholders via the College intranet, the MyAyrshireCollege App and the College website.

A summary version of the Corporate Parenting Plan will be developed and made available in consultation with Care Experienced students. Further feedback will be gathered as part of the ongoing review process. Ayrshire College will continue to work collaboratively with other corporate parents through Ayrshire College's Corporate Parenting Group to monitor and review our Corporate Parenting Plan. Specific activities and actions relating to collaboration are outlined in the Plan below.



Governance and Responsibilities

Ayrshire College has in place a framework to evidence compliance with existing policies and procedures as these relate to the College's equality duties. We will use this framework to record and monitor our progress towards achieving the commitments outlined in Ayrshire College's Corporate Parenting Plan.

Our Board of Management has the responsibility to oversee delivery of the College's equality duties and exercises its commitment to ensure compliance and regular reporting of performance with our Corporate Parenting Plan through its governance structures.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan outlines the outcomes we will work towards and the action we will take to meet our responsibilities and make a difference to the lives of Care Experienced young people in Scotland. The following section details these outcomes and associated actions.

"Our Corporate Parenting Plan outlines the outcomes we will work towards and the action we will take to meet our responsibilities and make a difference to the lives of Care Experienced young people in Scotland."

Responsibility

1. To be alert to matters which, or which might adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people. Section 58 1(a)

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Re-establish the College's Corporate Parenting Group to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Corporate Parenting Plan. The Corporate Parenting Group will report to the VIEW Steering Group.	Head of Student Experience	Jan 2022	A clear governance structure in place to oversee the delivery and monitoring of the College's Corporate Parenting Plan.
Continue to promote the College's Corporate Parenting Plan through the Corporate Induction, mandatory training, and meetings with staff teams.	Corporate Parenting Group	Ongoing to Jan 2024	Increased awareness amongst staff of the College's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
Plan regular staff engagement activities including Conversation Cafés and focus groups to provide staff with an opportunity to provide feedback and share best practice in relation to Corporate Parenting.	Corporate Parenting Group	Ongoing Jan 2022	Increased staff engagement in Corporate Parenting.
Develop and implement an alert system for attendance registers to enable curriculum teams to easily identify students who are Care Experienced.	Head of BIIS, Head of Student Experience	Sept 2022	Care Experienced students are identified more easily. Appropriate support can be put in place. Improved retention and attainment.
Identify Care Experienced students who are considered to be "at risk of withdrawal" through retention meetings and work collaboratively to ensure appropriate support is in place.	Student Experience Team Curriculum Teams	Ongoing to 2024	Improved retention and attainment for Care Experienced students.
Continue to explore ways to make more effective use of existing information systems i.e. Retention Tool and Qlikview to support retention and attainment for Care Experienced students.	Head of BIIS Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Improved retention and attainment for Care Experienced students.

Responsibility

2.To assess the needs of these children and young people for services and support it provides. Section 58 1(b)

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Ensure all Care Experienced students are offered an individualised needs assessment and tailored support and advice regarding funding, digital equipment and skills, wellbeing and learning support.	Student Experience Team	Ongoing to 2024	Support is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Improved retention and attainment.
Review process for sharing PLSPs and support recommendations with curriculum teams to ensure staff are alert to the needs of Care Experienced students and have the opportunity to implement appropriate support measures.	Student Experience Coordinator CMs	Sept 2022	Support information is more accessible. Appropriate support is in place. Improved retention and attainment.
Continue to strengthen links with schools to improve transition support for Care Experienced students.	School College Partnership Team	Ongoing to 2024	Support needs are identified and appropriate support is in place at an early stage. Improved retention and attainment
Continue to develop existing links with children's houses, Throughcare, Foster Care and Kinship Care teams across the three local authority areas to enhance the learner journey and improve retention and attainment rates for Care Experienced students.	Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Care Experienced students are supported more effectively. Improved retention and attainment.

Responsibility

3. To promote the interests of these children and young people.

Section 58 1(b)

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Ensure Care Experienced students are aware of the full range of support services available at the College.	Corporate Parenting Group	Ongoing to 2024	The number of students reporting that they are aware of the support services available to them is increased throughout the reporting period.
Continue to work collaboratively with external partners to organise an annual Care Experienced celebration event as part of National Care Experienced Week in October.	Student Experience Team	Annually to 2024	Care Experienced students feel valued by the College. The College challenges stigma in relation to Care Experienced students.
Continue to work closely with external partners, e.g., Skills Development Scotland, Employability and Skills and employers to support Care Experienced students into a sustained positive destination.	Student Experience Team Curriculum Teams	Ongoing to 2024	The number of Care Experienced students achieving a positive destination is increased over the reporting period.
Increase the number of HN Care Experienced students who articulate to University and the number who articulate with advanced standing as outlined in the SFC's National Ambition for Care Experienced Students.	Curriculum Teams Head of BIIS	Ongoing to 2024	The number of articulating HN Care Experienced students is increased throughout the reporting period. A greater number of Care Experienced students articulate with advanced standing.

Responsibility

4. To seek to provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing. Section 58 1(d)

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Continue to promote resources to support positive mental health and wellbeing including Togetherall, the Wellbeing Hub and access to complimentary holistic therapies.	Promoting Wellbeing Group	Ongoing 2024	Students are aware of wellbeing resources. An increased number of Care Experienced students access wellbeing resources.
Continue to develop and deliver activities, events and campaigns to support student mental health and wellbeing as outlined in the College's Promoting Wellbeing Action Plan.	Promoting Wellbeing Group	Ongoing 2024	Care Experienced students have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of wellbeing activities throughout the academic year.
Ensure Care Experienced students are given priority access to College Counselling services.	Student Experience Coordinator	Ongoing to 2024	Student Counselling Service is accessible.
Work in partnership with the Student Association to promote and develop the Care Experienced Students Forum.	Head of Student Experience Student Association	Ongoing to 2024	The number of students engaging with the Care Experienced Forum is increased. Care Experienced students have greater representation. The College is more aware of the needs of Care Experienced students.

Responsibility

5. To take action to help these children and young people access opportunities, make use of services and access support. *Section 58 1(e)*

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Continue to liaise with external partners and organisations in each local authority area to identify opportunities and services, and support students to access these opportunities.	Student Experience Team	Ongoing to 2024	The number of Care Experienced students who are referred to external opportunities and services is increased.
Provide regular updates and information about opportunities and services via the My Ayrshire College App, the College website and social media posts.	Head of Marketing Student Experience Team	Ongoing to 2024	Care Experienced students report that they receive regular information about support services.
Promote the newly launched Connecting Voices mailbox and website to Care Experienced students in EAC and share relevant College information via the Connecting Voices website.	Head of Student Experience Head of Marketing	Ongoing from Jan 2022	Students have improved access to Connecting Voices information. College information is shared with Care Experienced young people, their families and support workers.
Reestablish links with the Champions Boards in NAC and SAC and work collaboratively to encourage Care Experienced students to engage with these external groups.	Head of Student Experience	Mar 2022	Students have improved access to information about Champions Boards in NAC and SAC.

Responsibility

6. To take action to improve as a Corporate Parent. Section 58 1(f)

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Continue to encourage all staff to access relevant Corporate Parenting e-learning resources including CDN's Corporate Parenting in Colleges e-learning course.	Corporate Parenting Group	Ongoing to 2024	College staff have a greater understanding of the needs of Care Experienced students and demonstrate best practice in supporting students.
Continue to work with Who Cares? Scotland and other internal and external partners to develop staff training opportunities in relation to Corporate Parenting.	Staff Learning & Development Team	Ongoing to 2024	Staff have an increased knowledge of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
Continue to monitor progress and KPIs for Care Experienced students against the targets set out in the SFC's National Ambition for Care Experienced students.	Head of BIIS Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Improved retention and attainment rates for Care Experienced students.
College policies and procedures are reviewed at regular intervals and the needs of Care Experienced students are considered as part of the EqlA process.	Head of Quality Enhancement	Ongoing to 2024	The rights and interests of Care Experienced students are protected within all College policies and procedures.

Responsibility

7. To prepare, publish and keep plan under review. Section 59

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Share the Corporate Parenting Plan via the website, the My Ayrshire College App and through the local authority Corporate Parenting Steering Groups.	Marketing Head of Student Experience	Jan 2022	Students, staff and the public are aware of the support available to Care Experienced students.
The College will work with Care Experienced students and a BSL Signer to develop an accessible summary and BSL version of the Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24.	Corporate Parenting Group Marketing	Ongoing to 2024	The Corporate Parenting Plan is easily accessible to students and members of the public.
The College will carry out an annual progress review and update of the Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24 in partnership with staff and students.	Corporate Parenting Group	Annually until 2024	The Corporate Parenting Plan is up to date and reflects ongoing work to support Care Experienced students.
The College will publish a Corporate Parenting report by September 2024 which will provide a detailed evaluation of the actions outlined in the Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-24.	Head of Student Experience	Sept 2024	Students, staff and members of the public are aware of the work carried out by the College to support Care Experienced students. The College continues to improve support for Care Experienced students.

Responsibility

8. To collaborate with other Corporate Parents and other appropriate persons.

Section 60

Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescale	Outcome
Continue to participate fully in external networks including CDN's Access and Inclusion Network and Safeguarding Forum and the Care Experienced, Estranged & Carers - West Forum.	Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Opportunity to share best practice and improve support for Care Experienced students. Improved transitions beyond College.
Continue to participate fully as a member of the Corporate Parenting Steering Groups across all three local authorities and contribute to the development and delivery of local authority Corporate Parenting Plans and activities to support Care Experienced young people across Ayrshire.	Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Increased opportunities for sharing good practice. Services for Care Experienced young people are coherent and relevant.
Continue to develop links with SFC, CELCIS and WhoCares? Scotland to further enhance support for Care Experienced students and ensure College staff are aware of latest developments in research, support and funding for Care Experienced students.	Head of Student Funding Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	College staff have increased knowledge of developments to support Care Experienced students.
Further enhance links with NHS and Police Scotland to share best practice with regards to supporting Care Experienced students and ensure prioritised support as required.	Head of Student Experience	Ongoing to 2024	Staff have a greater understanding of factors affecting the wellbeing of Care Experienced students. Care Experienced students receive appropriate support.