



Corporate Parenting Plan



2016-2018

Plan: Corporate Parenting

Author: Lorna Jenkins, Access & Support Service Leader; Jill Davie, Schools & Community Planning Officer

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Equality and diversity impact: Positive action to address the disadvantages faced by looked after children and care leavers

Senior Team Approved Date: June 2016

Location: Serengeti/Website

West Lothian College

West Lothian College is an award winning provider of further education based in Livingston, West Lothian. The College offers the widest range of academic and vocational qualifications in the area, offering a diverse curriculum to approximately 6000 learners. The College is led by Principal & Chief Executive, Mhairi Harrington and is renowned for its successful collaborations with external partners such as local authority, skills sectors, employers, universities, government agencies and community groups.

West Lothian College operates out of its main campus in Livingston as well as having offices in several other regions across the country including Glasgow, Dundee, Inverness and Edinburgh. With a vibrant, modern and innovative learning environment, the College is well equipped to ensure that students have the best facilities and resources to help develop their learning and skills.



West Lothian College's vision is

To be innovative in the delivery of high quality learning and skills for the workforce needs of Scotland and to support the needs of young learners who are the future of West Lothian and Scotland

The College Curriculum

The College is renowned for a number of key specialisms in:

- Health and Social Care
- Computing and Digital Technology
- Engineering
- Construction
- Sport and Fitness
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy
- Creative Industries
- Business and Management

Current Support

The College already recognises the needs of care experienced students and has been working to support them. We were awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark, which endorsed our commitment to young people in and leaving care, and we are committed to increasing the number and levels of activity with this vulnerable group of learners.

We currently gather information which is disclosed. This mainly comes from referrals through the Local Authority, supported by a data-sharing agreement. We receive information from carers, young people, schools, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Positive Participation Officer, Keyworkers, and the Student Funds Team.

We have expanded our team of staff who work within the Access and Support Team and this team provides support to all students across the College. We have a full-time Schools and Community Planning Officer who works closely with our schools to support pupils whilst they attend College part-time. We have recently appointed a Positive Participation Officer, an employee of West Lothian Council, who also works closely with the Access and Support Team. Based at the College, the Officer is working collaboratively with College and Skills Development Scotland staff to identify vulnerable learners, (particularly care experienced individuals who are at risk of negative destinations) to offer support into sustained employment, education or training.

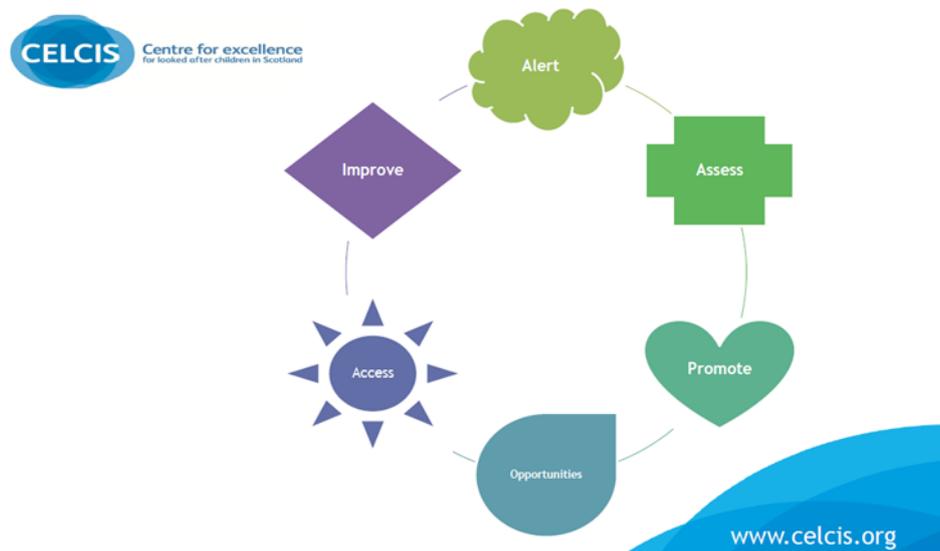
The College nurtures a positive partnership and close working relationship with West Lothian Children and Families Strategic Planning Group in our commitment to further develop and improve the level and quality of the support offered for this cohort. In supporting increasing the number of care-experienced students enrolling and successfully attaining at West Lothian College, we work closely with other organisations within West Lothian Community Planning Partnership including West Lothian Young Carers, Youth Action Project and Youth Inclusion Project, to remove barriers to participation and encourage successful outcomes among young people in care and care leavers. Our collaborative work supports the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) commitment to Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) to reduce the actual number of young people in and leaving care.

This means we:

- put the child or young person at the centre of our work, understand what their unique needs are and how we can help.
- use common tools, language and processes to consider a child or young person's wellbeing, working closely with them, their parent(s) and other professionals, supporting them where appropriate.
- feel confident that we have the right information to provide the best support we can to a child or young person and their parent(s).

We are an active member of the Care Experienced and Carers East Forum (CECEF), led by Heriot Watt University.

We also work in partnership with The Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children In Scotland (CELCIS), a national organisation that is dedicated to making positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of children and young people living in and on the edges of care. They have a range of services in relation to working with care experienced young people which we can access such as consultancy, learning and development and research.



What is Corporate Parenting and who are we a Corporate Parent for?

As a Corporate Parent, West Lothian College has a legal and moral duty to provide young people under the age of 26 who are looked after or are care leavers with the kind of support that any good parent would give their own child to ensure that all aspects of their development are nurtured. We have a duty to show how we are going to deliver on our corporate parenting responsibilities for care-experienced students and have a duty to produce a plan which will outline how we aim to do this.

A Corporate Parent is intended to carry out many of the roles a parent should. They may not be able to provide everything a loving parent can, but they should still be able to provide the best possible support and care for the children and young people.

Why is Corporate Parenting important?

Corporate Parenting is intended to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can to make sure care-experienced young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face. Research confirms that, generally, looked after children and young people are much more likely to face poorer life experiences. Previous legislation has made very little difference and outcomes for care-experienced youngsters are still very poor.

We know that some looked after young people do achieve positive outcomes. Unfortunately, however, for most care-experienced young people, the outcomes are much less positive, and can result in lower educational attainment, significant under achievement and life chances that are largely reduced. Care experienced young people are:

- 7 times more likely to be excluded from school
- Much more likely to leave school at an earlier age
- Much more likely to leave school with little or no qualifications
- Much more likely to experience health problems
- Much more likely to drink, smoke, take drugs

Whilst further education is the main positive destination for care experienced young people, only 4% progress to higher education. Nearly half of 5-17 year olds having a mental health disorder and 50% of the Scottish adult prison population are care-experienced.

Many people think that care leavers get the same chances as all other young people to get a job or go to college and work towards fulfilling their dreams. The reality is the opportunities may be there but these young people can't always sustain them as they are still dealing with the emotional impact of being raised in care. They need continued support to take advantage of these opportunities. Young people in care are just like all other young people, except they also need to deal with: being separated from their parents; experience lots of changes with their accommodation and their main carer; being judged for living outwith the family home; and being viewed as 'different' because their families can't look after them. It is unsurprising that, after these experiences, their outcomes in life can be much poorer than their

non-care peers. Corporate Parenting is not the duty of a specific individual or team within the College but a duty which we all have, regardless of job role.

What Corporate Parenting means for us

West Lothian College is proud to be a 'College for All' and provides a range of support to all students. When working across vocational education and training, we need to ensure age restrictions are relaxed for those care leavers whose transition takes longer.

Corporate Parenting means that we have a duty to:

- Collaborate with other Corporate Parents
- Talk to young people, families and carers
- Develop a plan to specifically support care-experienced students
- Report on what we are doing every 3 years

As a Corporate Parent we will need to:

- **be alert** to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of young people and care leavers
- **assess the needs** of looked after young people and care leavers for the services and support it provides
- **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 appropriate action to help looked after young people and care leavers
 - (i) **access** the opportunities it provides and
 - (ii) also to make use of the services, and **access** the support, which it provides
- take any other action that we consider appropriate for the purposes of **improving** the way in which we exercise our functions in relation to looked after young people and care leavers.
- ensure we undertake educational and employment transition planning for young people in care. This should start early with sustained support from public and third sector bodies and employers available throughout their journey toward and into employment as is deemed necessary.

Developing the Young Workforce, Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy

The Scottish Government is committed to develop a world class vocational education system in Scotland to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021, focusing particularly on occupational segregation and reaching those young people furthest from the labour market. West Lothian College is committed to improving life chances

for young people to successfully participate in vocational education opportunities within the region.

In aligning our delivery to support West Lothian Community Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement to 'Tackling Inequality', key outputs for the College are to address gender imbalances in participation in our courses, address the needs of young disabled people and widen access for socially disadvantaged young people including those who are looked after or are care leavers.

Stage	Present Provision	New Provision	Action	Who	Lead	Deadline
Pre-entry	Individual transition programme where referrals are made by Through Care / After Care teams.	Data sharing agreement to improve communication between College and Local Authority to help identify care experienced students	Data sharing agreement to be drawn up and agreed by West Lothian College and West Lothian Council	Senior Team	Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Planning	August 2016
		Opportunity to inform College of care-experienced background at the earliest opportunity.	Ensure application form, online and paper versions, incorporate a space to capture care experienced information. Systems to be updated to accommodate recording and flagging of this information.	MIS Team	Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Planning	January 2017
		Identify care experienced students through funding information.	Amend student declaration in FE Funding Application to include sharing of information internally	Student Funds	Bursary Officer	January 2017

		Ensure there is a further opportunity for care experienced students to inform College of background at enrolment.	Enrolment forms adapted to capture care experienced information. Systems will have to be updated to support this change and accommodate recording and flagging of information.	MIS Team	Head of Quality & Learner Services	August 2016
		Guaranteed interview	Where care experienced students are identified at application stage an interview will be guaranteed for the appropriate course.	Admissions Team	Head of Quality & Learner Services	March 2017
		Ensure the support available for care experienced students is effectively communicated.	More obvious presence on website.	Marketing Team	Head of Quality & Learner Services	December 2016
		Ensure young learners in schools are aware of care-experienced support opportunities.	Incorporate care experienced information into schools presentations and prospectus	Admissions Team Schools and Community Planning Officer	Schools & Community Planning Officer	August 2016

		Ensure special schools are aware of support on offer for care experienced students.	Include all communication with special schools	Schools and Community Planning Officer Admissions Team	Schools & Community Planning Officer	September 2017
		Ensure students are aware of alternative routes if application is unsuccessful	Provide alternative course option or clear, specific advice on achieving target goal. Refer to named SDS representative.	SFL Team SDS	Access & Support Service Leader	April 2017
Induction	Meet with all college students and explain support on offer	Ensure students are aware of support on offer	Create fliers to distribute at induction	SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	August 2016
	Speak to key-worker if appropriate	Ensure students are aware of support on offer	Lecturers to ask students during first 3 weeks of term and refer if care experienced. Regular promotion of service by SFL team.	Lecturers	Access & Support Service Leader	September 2016
		Needs-assessment meeting to be arranged for all care experienced students	Lecturers to identify and refer to SFL team. Complete support plan	Lecturers SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	Ongoing

		Ensure students are aware of support on offer	MIS to encourage disclosure at enrolment	MIS team	Head of Quality & Learner Services	August 2016
		Link care experienced student with SFL team member and lecturer	Lecturers to identify and refer to SFL team	Lecturers SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	September 2016
		Ensure all involved with care experienced student are working together to support	Speak to key-worker or guardian if appropriate regarding support	SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	Throughout academic year
		Ensure relevant college staff are aware of care experienced student's needs	Tag in UnitE, student funds and record in student support plan	MIS Team SFL team Student Funds	Access & Support Service Leader	September 2016
On-going		Ensure care experienced students are aware of support on offer	Display leaflets and posters specifically for care experienced support	SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	Throughout academic year
		Provide on-going support for identified students	Carry out regular one-to-one meetings as part of support plan	SFL team	Access & Support Service Leader	Throughout academic year
		Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities	CPD for all staff	Staff Development Officer	Head of Quality & Learner Services	August 2016

Pre-exit / transition	Current provision for known care experienced students	Ensure known destinations for our care experienced learners	One to one meeting with SDS to ensure positive destination	SFL Team SDS	Access & Support Service Leader	April-June 2017
		Prepare our care experienced students for their next steps	One to one meeting with SFL team – link with SDS	SFL Team SDS	Access & Support Service Leader	April-June 2017
		Ensure our care experienced learners can attend Graduation.	Provide additional funding for all care experienced students at SCQF level 7 and above to encourage graduation ceremony attendance.	SFL Team	Access & Support Service Leader	May 2017
Reviewing and revision		How did we do? The student voice.	Annual review meeting for feedback from our care experienced students in relation to their College experience and support provided throughout their course.	SFL Team	Access & Support Service Leader	June 2017