



**Heriot-Watt University**  
**Corporate Parenting Plan**  
**2018-21**

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# Heriot-Watt University Corporate Parenting Plan 2018-21

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1** Corporate Parenting refers to the responsibilities placed on the University in the performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.
- 1.2** Under section 58 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the University is legally obliged to publish and produce a statutory report on Corporate Parenting. The University must ensure that it is alert to the needs of care experienced young people, assess their needs, promote their rights and needs, provide opportunities, improve access and improve outcomes.

### **Corporate parenting responsibilities**

(1) It is the duty of every corporate parent, in so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its other functions—

(a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies,

(b) to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,

(c) to promote the interests of those children and young people,

(d) to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,

(e) to take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people—

(i) to access opportunities it provides in pursuance of paragraph (d), and

(ii) to make use of services, and access support, which it provides, and

(f) to take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those children and young people.

\* extract from [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/section/58/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/section/58/enacted)

- 1.3 Over 2016-18 Heriot-Watt University undertook a range of actions in response to our obligations as a Corporate Parent and reported on progress in March 2018. Details of our progress can be found at [www.hw.ac.uk/uk/student-support/care-leavers.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/student-support/care-leavers.htm)
- 1.4 This is our revised Corporate Parenting Plan 2018-21, building on the activities we have taken forward over the 2016-18 period and outlining how we will take forward further activities over the coming years.

## 2. Heriot-Watt Context

- 2.1 Heriot-Watt University is Scotland's International University. As well as over 9000 students studying at our Scottish Campuses in Edinburgh, Scottish Borders and Orkney, there are over 3800 at our Dubai Campus and around 1000 at our Malaysia campus. Students have the opportunity to 'Go Global' by transferring campuses.
- 2.2 Heriot-Watt University has a longstanding reputation for providing highly employable graduates, who have a distinctive, strong professional orientation. Our Graduate Attributes are aspiring; through their experience at Heriot-Watt University, all students will develop the skills and qualities of our four graduate attributes:
  - Specialist; Creative; Professional and Global
- 2.3 Our values describe our deeply held beliefs and our community spirit. They characterise not only how we are as a higher education institution but also frame how we want to be.
- 2.4 Our values are:
  - Valuing and Respecting Everyone
  - Pursuing Excellence
  - Pride and Belonging
  - Shaping the Future
  - Outward Looking
- 2.5 As a learning, living and working institution, we use our values as the building blocks of how we go about doing our work and how we conduct ourselves. They represent what binds us together as a University community and help us to become the best at what we do.

## 3. Our approach

- 3.1 Our approach to Corporate Parenting is based on the Scottish Care Leavers' Covenant and underpinned by the University's values, the attributes for which we aspire for our graduates, evidenced based practice and Scottish Government guidance. For example in our work with care experienced young people we draw on the wellbeing indicators set

out by the Scottish Government in the 'SHANAARI' model: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included.

- 3.2** By looking at the whole person and using these indicators the University can play its part in keeping our care experienced students safe from harm and able to contribute fully to society as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- 3.3** As part of our ongoing commitment Heriot-Watt provides funding support to Hub for SUCCESS (Support for University and College for Care Experienced in South-East Scotland) and is an active member of the Care Experiences, Estranged, and Carers East Forum.

## 4. Widening Access

- 4.1** In the 2014-15 Programme for Government the Scottish Government set out its ambition that every child, irrespective of socioeconomic background, should have an equal chance of accessing higher education.
- 4.2** This Commission on Widening Access was established to advise Ministers on the steps necessary to achieve this. A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access was published in March 2016. The Commission was conscious that the particular challenges faced by those with a care experience, both by their nature and magnitude, set this group of learners apart. The Commission acknowledged that Higher Institutions must be much bolder in their ambition for, and commitment to, those with care experience if we are to deliver fairness for this group of learners.
- 4.3** Heriot-watt University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council highlights that the University is conscious that those with care experience have a particular set of challenges when accessing Higher Education.
- 4.4** The University is able to identify and provide proactive support for care-experienced applicants and students. In recent years, as data collection has improved, we identify typically 20-40 such applicants, declaring various time-periods in care, and typically have 2-4 entrants per year.
- 4.5** Identification of these students occurs both as part of a disclosure on the UCAS application form 'ticking the box' and an additional disclosure opportunity when student matriculate with us. We encourage applicants to 'tick the box' on their UCAS application form, or come forward at any point. Information on a student's background will be treated in confidence, and only used to ensure support is in place.
- 4.6** Our Outcome Agreement ensures that our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are part of the strategic framework and are a core part of our student focused activities.

## 5. Definitions

- 5.1** From April 2015 any looked after young person (regardless of their placement type or the legal route by which they became looked after) who ceases to be 'looked after' on or after their 16th birthday is a 'care leaver'. Every young person who fits this description is therefore covered by the 'aftercare' provisions of section 29 of the 1995 Act, as amended and augmented by the Support and Assistance for Young People Leaving Care (Scotland) Regulations 2003, and Parts 10 & 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 5.2** The University uses the following definitions:
- Looked after - a child or young person who is looked after by a local authority, whether at home under a care order, in foster care, in local authority accommodation, or under kinship care, and including a young person in continuing care after the age of 16.
  - Care experienced - anyone who has been in the care of a local authority, whether away from home or in the home, will be considered to have a background in care, and therefore be eligible for support.
  - Care leaver - a person aged 25 or under who ceased to be looked after by a local authority on, or at any time after, their sixteenth birthday (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014). All looked after children can become care leavers, including young people who were classified as looked after at home and in formal kinship care.
- 5.3** Heriot-Watt recognises that care leavers from outside Scotland will have faced similar difficulties and is committed to providing the same framework of support to all care-experienced students, no matter where a care leaver comes from.
- 5.4** We have been taking steps to encourage our students to disclose information concerning their status so that we are able to identify and build successful relationships to support our students during their time at Heriot-Watt.
- 5.5** Care experienced status is collected via UCAS and Heriot-Watt enrolment processes. We will continue to collect and monitor this information as contained in the action plan.
- 5.6** We are committed to providing consistent and trusted support those students who are already enrolled with us and taking steps to grow the number of students who identify within the definitions outlined above.

## 6. Our Aims

**6.1** Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2018-21 is about making tangible impact at any campus location, recognising we have campuses across the globe. We are seeking to ensure:

- looked after children have an improved awareness of their options to learn at Heriot-Watt University
- parity of outcomes for looked after children and young people in terms of academic progression and employability
- equitable access to support services and learning opportunities for care experienced children and young people
- adequate resources for the recruitment and retention of care experienced children and young people
- collaborative working across the institution, HE sector and other Corporate Parents
- ownership and compliance with the University's Corporate Parenting Policy

**6.2** Our Action Plan overs 2018-21 and takes steps to ensure these aims are achieved. Many of our actions build on the progress we have made over 2016-18, recognising that we must continue to make improvements to the day-today work we take forward.

## 7. Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2018-21

No.	Action	Lead Area	Timescale (continuing requires review in 2021)
1.	HWU to sign and publicise commitment to Scottish Care Leavers' Covenant	University Secretary	2019
2.	Create accessible information sharing for anyone to access about corporate parenting	Student Wellbeing Services	2018 and continuing
3.	Create and update information for staff about corporate parenting requirements and expectations via intranet and internal communications	Equality and Diversity lead	2019
4.	Publicise named contact at pre-application	Student Recruitment	2018 and continuing
5.	Monitor care experienced status at application (UCAS)	Admissions	2018 annual thereafter
6.	Continue to provide outreach advice and guidance during pre-application and application	Student Recruitment	2018 and continuing
7.	Development of guaranteed offer process	Student Recruitment, Admissions and All Schools	2019
8.	Provide individual advice as required including areas such as accommodation, bursaries and wider student finance	All student facing areas – co-ordinated via named contact	2021
9.	Work with student groups, including the Student Union to build supportive environment	All student facing areas	2018 and continuing

<b>10.</b>	Encourage engagement with summer school through improved information targeted toward care experienced individuals	Transition Team/Student Experience Team	2018 and continuing
<b>11.</b>	Monitor care experienced status at enrolment (HWU)	Registry Services	2018 and continuing
<b>12.</b>	Offer pre arrival meeting and transition support, including signposting to essential services such as GP registration	All student facing services – coordinated via named contact	2018 and continuing
<b>13.</b>	Create page on SID (Student Information Desk) to include 'checklist' for post enrolment targeted toward care experienced individuals and used by all	Student Welfare Services	2019 and continuing
<b>14.</b>	Promote student retention for all groups via engagement with Student Success Advisors	Student Experience Team at various Campus locations	2018 and continuing
<b>15.</b>	Develop training and support materials, including mapping of existing and making relevant changes/additions (eg Personal Tutor training)	Student Welfare Services, Equality and Diversity, Student Recruitment	2019 and continuing
<b>16.</b>	Monitor and evaluate HWU continuing support 'Hub for SUCCESS' Support for University and College for Care Experienced in South-East Scotland	Student Recruitment	2021
<b>17.</b>	Create and maintain partnerships with other corporate parents and forums such as Care Experienced, Estranged and Carers East Forum to share and develop good practice	Student Recruitment	2018 and continuing