



University of the
Highlands and Islands
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar



Corporate Parent Plan 2016/17

West Highland College UHI Corporate Parenting Plan

“Our ambition is to be the education provider of choice in the West Highlands of Scotland, delivering excellence in learning, training and support for all students, businesses and rural communities”

Introduction

West Highland College UHI was created in 2010 as a result of merger of two legacy colleges in order to provide enhanced access to, and a more coherent provision of, tertiary education for the communities of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross. This area covers a sixth of Scotland’s landmass, with a population of approximately 40,000 people, and contains some areas of very high rurality. The college was created to meet the needs of learners, communities and businesses. In doing so, it seeks to address the very considerable historic gap in access to and opportunities for post-16 education in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross and aspires to reach and exceed the national average for participation in further education.

The college finds itself in an historic context of under provision of tertiary education where participation in further education is around 55% below national average. West Highland College UHI is a significant contributor in addressing this shortfall, not least through its membership of the University of the Highlands and Islands Having been granted fundable body status in 2012 by the Scottish Government, West Highland College UHI is now a single organisation which fundamentally changes the 16+ education landscape in this geographic area by vastly improving access to further and higher education. The college has a major function in contributing to strengthen the communities it serves, by helping to tackle inequality and helping individuals out of the poverty spiral by opening up many new opportunities.

The college has 10 centres equipped with some of the most advanced online learning technologies, bringing access to further and higher education to the entire area and population of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross - from Ullapool in the north, to the Isle of Skye and the extremely remote Ardnamurchan peninsula in the west, Fort William and Kinlochleven in the south.

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Our Curriculum Ambitions

The college has developed its portfolio of further and higher education courses significantly since merger in 2010. The college works in partnership with employers, local community planners, skills and employment agencies, schools and communities to ensure that its provision is accessible, demand-led, and sustainable. The present curriculum offers access to a broad range of relevant further education courses, which provide foundation skills to work, or progression to further and higher study. The flagship degree programme of Adventure Tourism Management has been consolidated, with student numbers rising year on year. The college seeks to build on its early success to ensure an even broader curriculum which facilitates access and progression in further education, and to build further capacity for higher education up to postgraduate level over the next few years.

The college's curriculum seeks to meet the needs of individual learners, communities and businesses and offers opportunities to study across a range of disciplines:

- Tourism and Hospitality, Leisure Industries
- Public Sector
- Transport and communications
- Energy (in particular Renewables), Water and Manufacturing
- Construction & Environment
- Maritime
- Agriculture and Aquaculture
- Creative Industries

It is in this context that West Highland College UHI will fulfil its duty as a 'corporate parent' under section 56 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The College has a duty to produce a plan, to show how we are going to deliver on our corporate parenting responsibilities for care-experienced people. We are committed to our looked after young people/care leavers and have developed this as a 3 year plan.

West Highland College UHI Corporate Parenting Plan

What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parenting is defined 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, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.”

Part 9 of the Act requires Corporate Parents to show how they are meeting the requirements outlined in Sections 58 to 61 and how they will report on their performance in relation to meeting those requirements. This plan indicates how we will achieve this.

The focus of our corporate parenting commitment will be on individuals who are:

1. ‘looked after’ in local authority care, and
2. care leavers.

The term **‘looked after’** includes any young person provided with accommodation by a council or local authority under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, or who is subject to relevant legal orders (such as a Compulsory Supervision Order) passed by a Children’s Hearing or Court.

A **care leaver** is an individual who was ‘looked after’ up to their 16th birthday, but who has subsequently left care. An individual can be considered a ‘care leaver’ until their 26th birthday.

(Further information on the definition of ‘looked after children’ and ‘care leaver’ is found in the ‘Definition of terms’ section of the Statutory Guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting), issued by the Scottish Government)

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 regardless of the specific job role of the individual member of staff. Colleges have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the rights and wellbeing of students who are care-experienced.

The term **care-experienced** is being used in this plan to include “looked after children’ and ‘care leavers’ up to their 26th birthday. It also includes those in kinship arrangements subject to local authority support.

Care-experienced people often have low levels of educational engagement and attainment, leading to poorer life experience, impacting on health and wellbeing. This is often caused by factors outside of their control, such as lack of stability in their care arrangements. Furthermore, ‘looked after’ school leavers are less likely to go into positive destinations after they leave school and although the gap is narrowing it is still far wider than is desirable.

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West Highland College Vision

The college is committed to ensuring that care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us, to enable them to successfully complete their course and to prepare them for the future by developing skills to ensure they leave us as:



For a young person to become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor, the 8 wellbeing indicators as outlined in the Scottish Governments National Approach - Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) need to be met. These indicators are referred to as SHANARRI and are identified as: *safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included*. This framework aims to support a holistic view of each young person, identifying their strengths and well as the barriers to their growth and development.

College will take its role in ensuring that the services that we provide will contribute to the young person's sense of wellbeing and achievement seriously and will commit to monitoring progress through its self-evaluation and review processes.

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To achieve this West Highland College will work with other partners and agencies and continue to develop effective networks to support positive outcomes for our care experienced students. The college has a strong collaborative partnership with Highlands Council's Resource Manager for Looked After Children and with Barnardos Scotland, Lifestyles and Action for Children and SDS. The college is also committed to providing training opportunities and materials for staff across the organisation to raise awareness of the difficulties and particular barriers that care experienced young people may face in accessing and sustaining a course of study and developing the skills and relationships required to be a successful student.

West Highland College was awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark for supporting care experienced students in March 2016 and aims to build on this by working in partnership with our students to sign up to the 'Who Cares? Scotland' Pledge. The college is part of UHI Care Leavers Forum. The College has a single point of contact at all its Learning Centres for all care experienced young people in the College and the Student Services Team are all trained to offer assistance across Admissions, Learning Support, Careers Guidance and Advice and Funding.

West Highland College UHI Corporate Parenting Plan

Corporate Parent Plan Actions 2016- 2017		
No	Action	Date
1	Membership of the cross-partnership Care Leavers Group and associated activities. The group meets on a bi-annual basis.	Dec -16
2	Share best practice across the partnership by actively seeking feedback from partners in relation to the development of literature and services.	Ongoing
3	Ensure care experienced students are considered during strategic and operational planning and that the impact of decisions on this student cohort are considered and mitigated where possible.	Ongoing
4	Create an internal reporting system and procedures to analyse data for care experienced students regarding recruitment, retention, and outcomes	Jun-17
5	Organise relevant training for West Highland College Board of Management and staff in relation to the college duty as corporate parents	Jun-17
6	Review all published information available to care experienced students to ensure it remains current.	Feb-17
7	Improve signposting to information on the website and in the prospectus on the support available for care experienced applicants by all frontline enquiry staff	Feb-17
8	Notify curriculum staff of the need for special consideration for care experienced students during interviews and the need for early decisions and notification	Feb-17
9	Admissions officer will review and monitor the system for arranging early interview dates for care experienced applicants to allow additional planning time.	Feb-17
10	Review published information in relation to student funding to ensure it remains current.	Jun- 17
11	Arrange to meet with partner colleges in relation to bursary allocation and to examine the proposal to ring fence discretionary funding to support emergency situations with regard to care experienced students.	Apr-17
12	Develop a new leaflet to outline services and supports available for care experienced students which will encourage disclosure.	Jan-17
13	WHC will support named care experienced residents by giving them a named person in relation to support for their tenancy.	Dec -16
14	Maintain information available to ensure it remains relevant and useful and train frontline staff to ensure appropriate signposting	Jun-17
15	Provide a named person to support all care experienced applicants and students	Sept -17
16	Increase awareness of the UHI on line counselling service to all students and staff across WHC.	Jan -17
17	Ensure that information on the WHC counselling service is included in the care leaver leaflet and that staff and students are aware of the referral process	Jun -17
18	Engage with Who Cares Scotland to devise and coordinate Board of Management and staff training via online module developed by Who Cares? Scotland	Jun-17
19	Establish a monitoring and reporting system to comply with legislative requirements	Apr-18