

Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2022-2025



Contents

Introduction	01
Challenges for Care Experienced People	02
The role of the College	03
Our Care Experienced Students	04
Partners	05
Action Plan 2022-2025	06
Monitoring and Reporting	17



Introduction

West College Scotland is proud to be a Corporate Parent. Enhanced support arrangements are in place for anyone with lived experience of being in care at any time in their life (care experienced) and while it is a great privilege to work with each individual, it is also a significant responsibility which we take seriously as a College.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan outlines both existing support practice and our ambition to ensure we complete our role to the best of our abilities for our care experienced students - potential, current and in the future.

At WCS we support inclusion and opportunities for all, our College plays a key role in supporting our local communities, providing educational and training opportunities across different subject areas with full-time, part-time,

evening and distance-learning options available from access to degree level. Our curriculum supports success and progression, enabling all our students to reach their full potential.

We also work collaboratively across the tertiary education sector, industry partners, other Colleges, and Scotland's Corporate Parents to widen access and promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), guided by our EDI Statement of Fairness, Opportunity and Respect.

West College Scotland's Corporate Parenting Plan sets out how we aim to ensure everyone opportunity for thrive and have success is achieved for our care experienced students from across our region.

Challenges for Care Experienced People

Studies have shown that care experienced people are more likely to become vulnerable to a range of socio/economic disadvantages including offending behaviour and health problems which significantly reduce life chances and opportunities.

For example:

- Around 40% of young people in custody report that they have been in care however, it is widely acknowledged that this statistic is likely to be significantly understated.
- Educational outcomes for care experienced people are poor compared with their non-care experienced peers. For example, in 2019/20 64% of all school leavers had 1 or more qualification at

SCQF level 6 or better, whereas only 14% of school leavers that were care experienced in the same period had qualifications at that level.

- Care experienced young people are less likely to be in positive destinations nine months after leaving school. Figures from 2019-20 show that only 75% of school leavers that were care experienced were in positive destinations. This is compared to 92% of all school leavers.

- Care experienced young people are more likely to be unemployed nine months after leaving school. 22% of school leavers who were care experienced in 2019/20 were unemployed, compared to 7% of their non-care experienced peers.

Formal statistics on statutory homelessness state that 6% of local authority homelessness applications in Scotland between 2019-20 were from people who have been previously looked after by a local authority at some point, with 1,196 being homeless in 2019-20. This figure relies on self-declaration and does not include those who are sofa-surfing, or in unsuitable accommodation. Practitioners estimate this number could be as high as 30-50%.

The role of the College

West College Scotland is a Corporate Parent as defined by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. As Corporate Parents the College recognises we have specific responsibilities for our care experienced students during their time at college.

We must ensure that the support and opportunities provided by any parent to their children are offered by the College to students who have experienced care. Although the Act refers to care experienced people up to the age of 26, our Corporate Parent Plan is targeted at supporting all our care experienced students regardless of age.

Section 58 of the Act outlines six statutory duties for Corporate Parents which include:

- **Alert:** to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of a care experienced individual.

- **Assess:** to assess the needs of care experienced young people for any services or support provided.
- **Promote:** to promote the interests of this group of young people.
- **Opportunities:** to seek to provide care experienced young people with opportunities to promote their wellbeing.
- **Access:** to take appropriate action to ensure care experienced young people can access opportunities and make use of services available to them.
- **Improve:** to review, evaluate and improve our practice and procedures to Corporate Parenting.

As a Corporate Parent the College is committed to working towards the National Ambition and Vision set by the Scottish Funding Council 'for there to be no difference in

the outcomes of care experienced learners' comparative to their peers'. The College promise is to provide an environment where an individual's needs are met at all stages of their student journey to enable each person to become confident, responsible and an effective member of their community. We recognise that we are unable replicate some aspects of 'family' life, but there are many steps we can take to ensure our care experienced students feel genuinely supported during their time College.

To help ensure everyone has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, The Scottish Government describe wellbeing using eight indicators. The eight wellbeing indicators are commonly referred to by their initial letters - SHANARRI. The College uses the SHANARRI indicators to ensure that our Care Experienced people at College are provided with equality of opportunity to achieve their potential, realise their talents, ambitions and become successful.

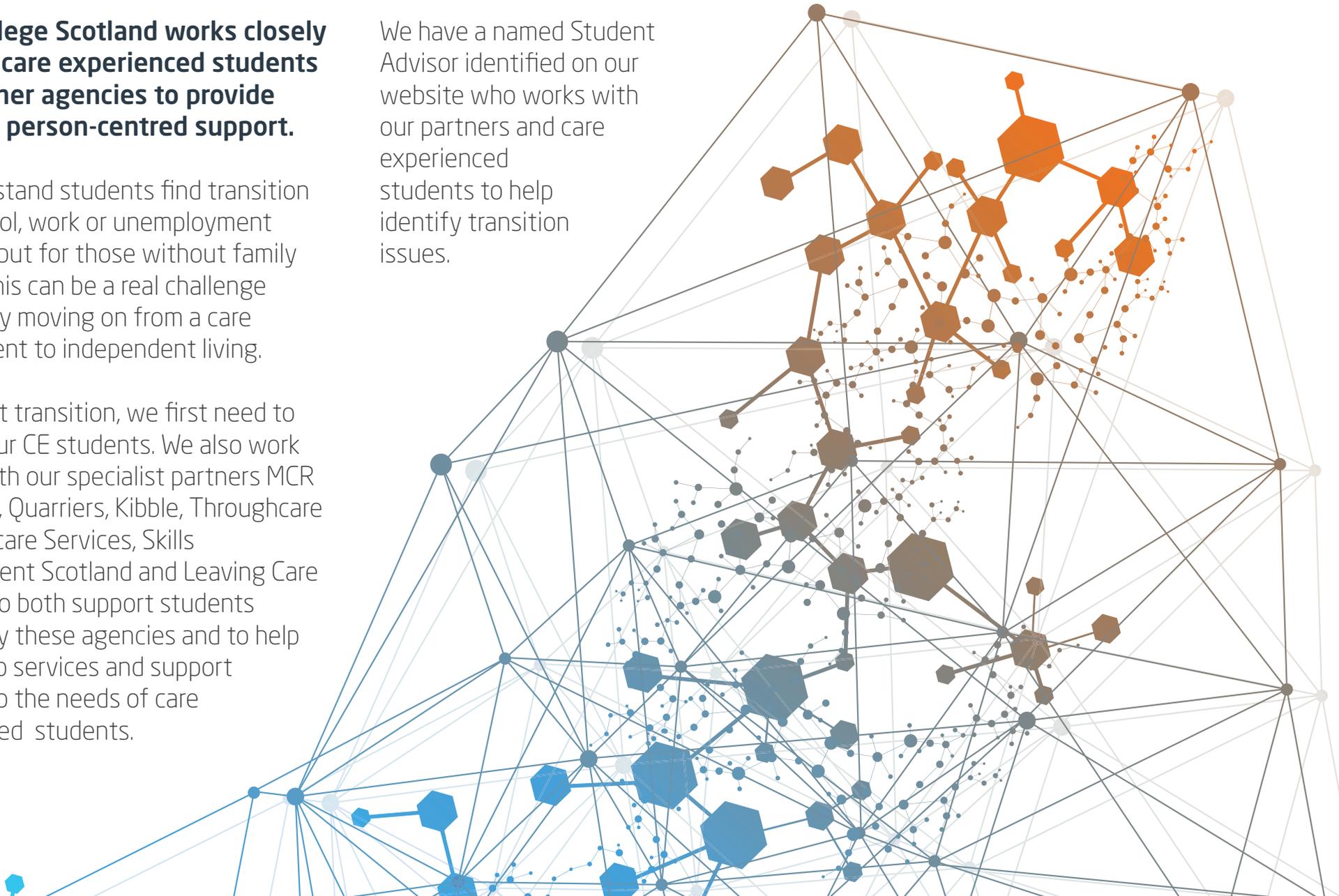
Our Care Experienced Students

West College Scotland works closely with our care experienced students and partner agencies to provide relevant, person-centred support.

We understand students find transition from school, work or unemployment stressful, but for those without family support this can be a real challenge particularly moving on from a care environment to independent living.

To support transition, we first need to identify our CE students. We also work closely with our specialist partners MCR Pathways, Quarriers, Kibble, Throughcare and Aftercare Services, Skills Development Scotland and Leaving Care Services to both support students referred by these agencies and to help us develop services and support relevant to the needs of care experienced students.

We have a named Student Advisor identified on our website who works with our partners and care experienced students to help identify transition issues.



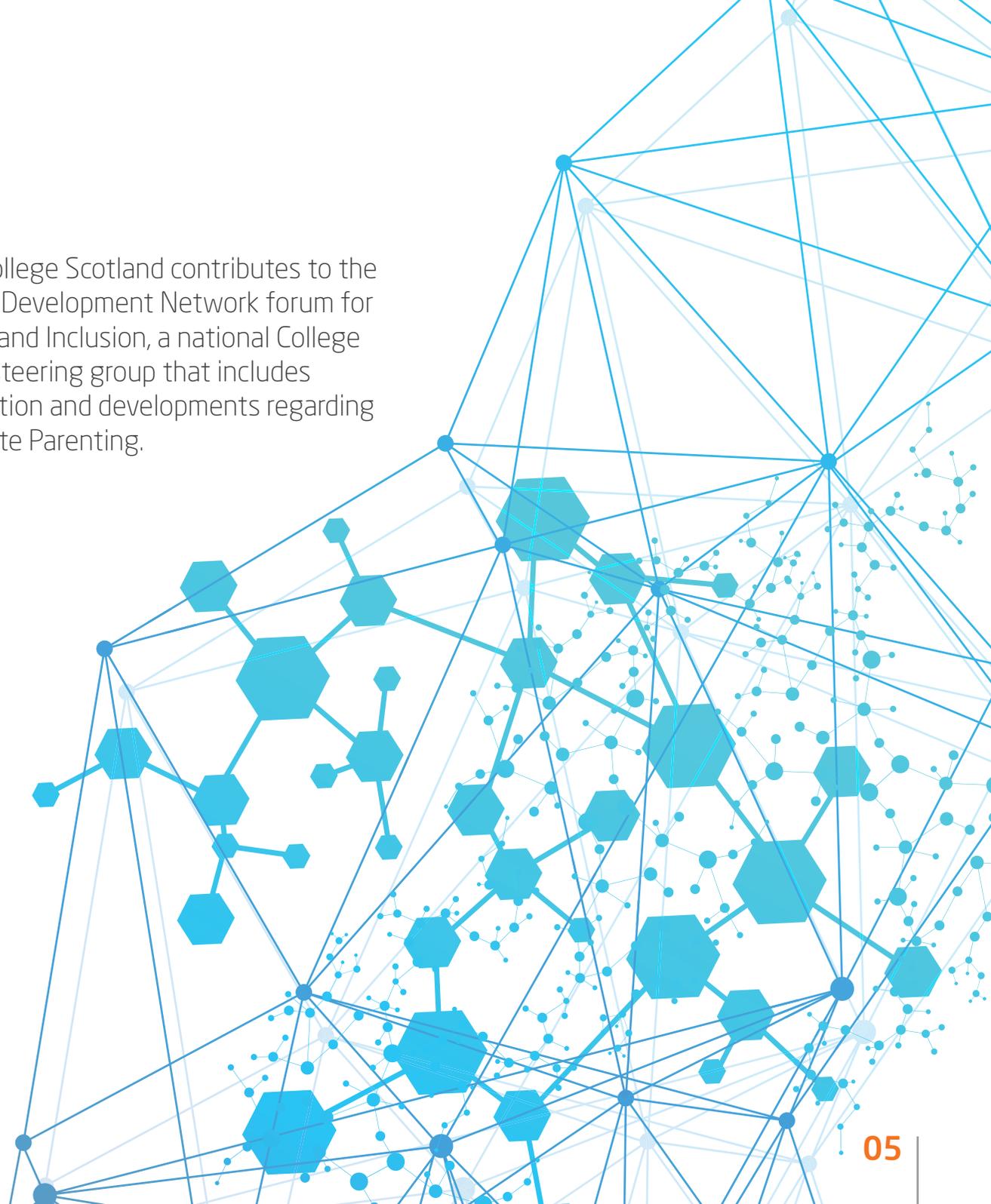
Partners

The College works closely with our partner agency and local authorities across the West Region and is represented on a number of Corporate Parent Forums which provide an opportunity to network and share good practice with other Corporate Parents.

Working closely with our local authority partners, we aim to support young vulnerable school leavers into positive destinations, including college.

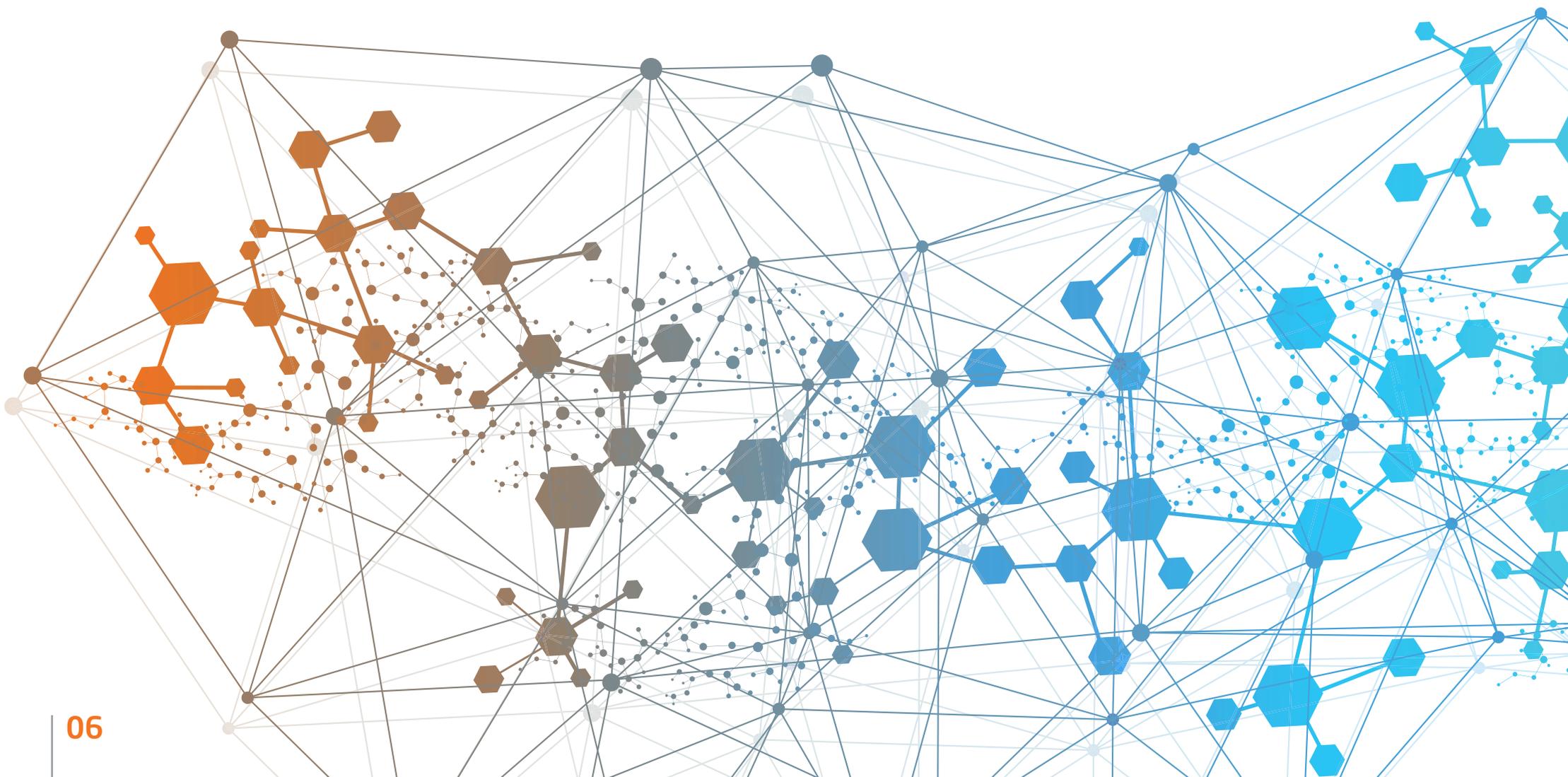
We are active participants in the West of Scotland Care FE & HE Experienced, Estranged and Carer Forum which brings named contacts for Care Experienced students at universities and colleges across west and central Scotland together.

West College Scotland contributes to the College Development Network forum for Access and Inclusion, a national College sector steering group that includes information and developments regarding Corporate Parenting.



Action Plan 2022-2025

Our Action Plan was developed with our Care Experienced students. The plan focuses on Section 58 of the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 and outlines our continued actions 2022-2025. This is a working document and is updated annually.



1

Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of a Care Experienced individual.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
1.1	Be alert to developments within the sector	<p>Continued membership within and attendance at local and national groups aimed at sharing good practice in regards to care experienced students.</p> <p>Continue to seek guidance from relevant organisations, such as Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS.</p> <p>Attend and be active in local and national organisations, boards and conferences to actively participate in discussions/decisions</p>	<p>Student Advisory Services</p> <p>Student Advisory Services/Student Life Manager / Head of Student Services</p>	Continuous and ongoing
1.2	Raise awareness of the college role as a corporate parent across college	<p>Introduction of a Board of Management and Senior Management Team awareness raising training – refreshed every 3 years.</p> <p>Introduction of mandatory online corporate parenting training module as part of all-staff integration. Completion rates are monitored and reported to LTQC annually.</p> <p>Deliver in-person training to front of house staff and frontline staff.</p> <p>Deliver in-person training to Heads of Sector and Curriculum Leads.</p>	Organisational Development/ Assistant Principal Student Life	December 2022 then all actions are ongoing

1

Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of a Care Experienced individual.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
1.3	Identify curriculum areas with high numbers of care experienced students and provide targeted support to curriculum staff	Proactively engage with Curriculum staff to outline support routes for care experienced students where clusters exist.	Student Advisory Services	October 2022
		The Inclusive College programme will embed inclusive practice within Learning and Teaching providing tools and knowledge to effectively support care experienced students within the classroom, with increased and dedicated wrap around support in enabling services	Enabling Services	September 2022
1.4	Increase care experienced student engagement with support services by 25%.	Engage students in Preparation for College pre-entry activities. Develop a newsletter and online materials targeted at care experienced students.	Student Advisory Services/ Students' Association	March 2023

2

To assess the needs of Care Experienced students for any services or support provided.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
2.1	Ensure that College internal referral procedures are clear to all staff involved in support and learning and teaching to ensure that care experienced students are provided with early and responsive support.	<p>Priority Group Referral Procedures (includes flag at application and enrolment stage) are followed by up by Student Advisory Services. Sectors are alerted to these procedures and have access to information and resources.</p> <p>Creation of an annual Preparation for College event for care experienced offer holders and their carers prior to courses starting provides an opportunity to attend information groups for induction to College services; complete outstanding funding applications and enrolment forms; and engage with support services. Participant feedback will inform development of future sessions.</p>	<p>Admissions/ Student Advisory Services/ Enabling Services/ Sectors</p> <p>Student Advisory Services/ Students' Association</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>August 2022 then ongoing</p>
2.2	External partnership working with other CPs supports the individual student and helps develop services (including social workers, local councils, local schools and guidance teachers).	<p>Support care experienced students to secure continuity of appropriate accommodation throughout the calendar year not only term-time and supporting care experienced students into their own tenancy.</p> <p>Build a strong working partnership with MCR Pathways and other supporting agencies, introducing support early in application process to engage them with services.</p> <p>Strengthen referral routes for school pupils working closely with local authority transition teams.</p>	Student Advisory Services	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2023</p>

2

To assess the needs of Care Experienced students for any services or support provided.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
2.3	The College provides professional, dedicated support for all care experienced students.	<p>Care experienced students are provided with an enhanced rate of Bursary.</p> <p>Care experienced students have a named student advisor dedicated to their support needs. This is enhanced by partnership working with such agencies as Local Authorities, MCR Pathways and other external agents.</p> <p>Care experienced student attendance is tracked to identify issues and offer early support.</p> <p>Care experienced students are directly contacted with information on additional support, services and opportunities which may be relevant to them.</p> <p>In AY 2022/23 care experienced students will be provided enhanced levels of careers guidance and advice using our partners to help guide and support. Numbers engaging in employability workshops will be reported as will numbers articulating to University</p> <p>Care experienced students are provided with enhanced levels of learning support.</p> <p>Report on student withdrawals who are care experienced on a term by term basis to the Educational Leadership Team (ELT)</p> <p>Care experienced students are considered in development of the College's Health Working Lives Activity.</p>	<p>Student Funding</p> <p>Student Advisory Services</p> <p>Enabling Services/Skills Development Scotland</p> <p>Student Advisory Services</p> <p>Students' Association</p>	<p>These elements are continuous and ongoing.</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Termly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

3

To promote the interests of this group of students.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
3.1	The College is a place where the interests of care experienced students are taken fully into account	Celebrate the success of care experienced students through College communications including social media.	Marketing and Comms	Annually
		Promote key dates such as Care Week, Care Day, Care Experienced History month, Become to staff and students.	Marketing and Comms /Student Advisory Services/ Students' Association	Annually
		Approach journalism and radio departments to promote care experience related articles, and features.	Marketing and Comms /Students' Association	Annually

4

To seek to provide Care Experienced students with opportunities to promote their wellbeing.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
4.1	Increase number of care experienced people making a successful transition from school to college.	Analyse application data to identify schools where care experienced students apply from, to target them early with outreach support.	School Liaison Support/Student Advisory Services	May 2022 and ongoing
		Establish clear routes for transition with partner organisations to support a warm handover for care experienced students.	Student Advisory Services	Continuous and ongoing
		Increase number of offer holders engaging in Preparation for College activities to aid affiliation and increase conversion rates/early retention for this group.	Student Advisory Services	Annually
		Conversion rates are reported on annually.	Admissions/ Student Advisory Services	Annually
4.2	Support the wellbeing of care experienced students exiting the college.	Increase number of care experienced students engaging with Careers Advisor for exit support to support a positive destination.	Student Advisory Services	June 2023
		Offer financial support to those while seeking/ applying for Universal Credit.		These are ongoing and continuous.
		Work with external agents to reduce risk of care experienced Students becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).		Annually
		Report on number of withdrawn students who are care experienced and report on annually to create actions for improvement.		Annually

5

To take appropriate action to ensure Care Experienced students can access opportunities and make use of services available to them.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
5.1	Ensure that care experienced students are aware of local, regional and national support available.	Work with external partners to ensure a network of support is available for this group e.g. Quarriers Life Coaching initiative.	Student Advisory Services	Annually
		Continue to identify appropriate referrals for care experienced students to engage with external partners that will improve retention to care experienced students at risk of withdrawal.	Student Advisory Services	Annually
		Work with partner universities to support students moving from College to University.	Students' Association/ Student Advisory Services	Ongoing
5.2	Ensure that care experienced students are aware of and have access to local health services and entitlements.	Ensure care experienced students are registered with their local health centre and if not, signpost to nearest service.	Student Advisory Services	Annually
		Create online resources with links and signposting to various health and wellbeing services including college services.	Student Advisory Services	Annually
		Plan and develop activities, which highlight safety in relation to social media, drugs and alcohol, which may have been missed at school or from family guidance.	Student Wellbeing team	December 2022

6

Collaborate with other Corporate Parents when exercising their corporate responsibilities.

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
6.1	Ensure that care experienced students are aware of and have access to local health services and entitlements.	Engage in feedback from partner organisations including CELCIS and Who Cares? Scotland to facilitate continuing improvement in support for this group.	Student Advisory Services	Ongoing
6.2	Provide opportunities for partner agencies to work collaboratively with the college to support either individual care experienced students or a group of care experienced people.	Provide opportunities to work with individuals or groups of students, in line with college policies and procedures. Support outreach work of partner agencies.	Student Advisory Services	Ongoing



7

To continually review, evaluate and improve our practice and procedures to Corporate Parenting

Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
7.1	Ensure college policies take account of and support the success of care experienced students.	<p>Review the process for Equality Impact Assessment to include care-experienced individuals. Include within the EQIA guidance.</p> <p>As an employer, include information for care experienced people in recruitment to highlight support available to this group.</p> <p>WCS currently has no specific widening access policy in operation within the College for special interest groups applying to mainstream programmes, consideration to be taken and a working group created to review whether we create a reserved place scheme, fast-track (priority) applications and reduced entry requirement for care experienced applicants, as well as summer schools to support transition to college and this to reflect all special interest groups.</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>AP Student Life and Skills/ Assistant Principal Performance and Skills/Head of Student Services/ EDI Manager/Students' Association</p>	<p>December 2022</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>December 2022</p>

7

To continually review, evaluate and improve our practice and procedures to Corporate Parenting

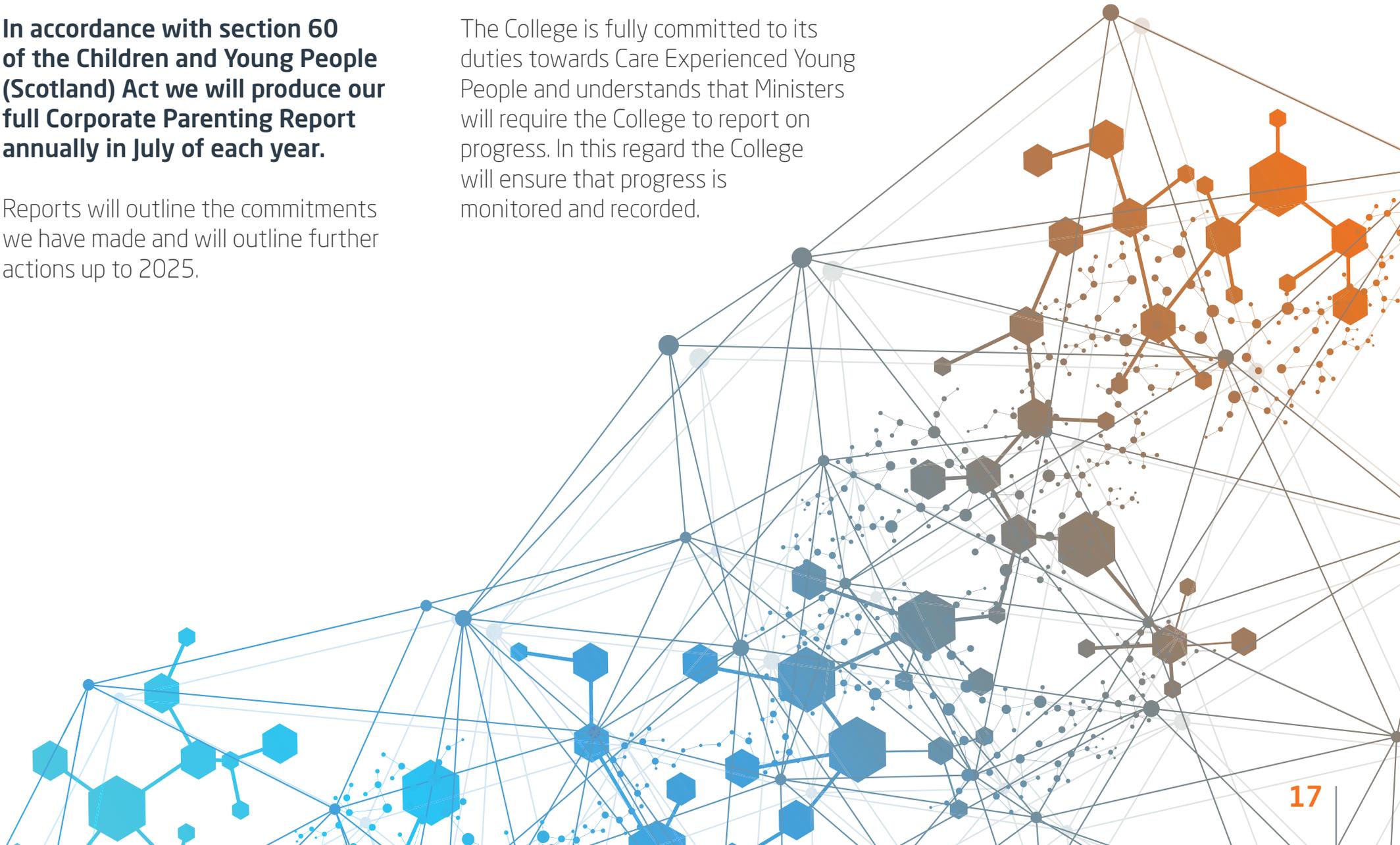
Point	Aim	Actions	Lead	Target date
7.2	Monitor and report conversation rates, retention and success indicators to ensure that PIs for this group are on track.	<p>Report to SMT and BoM and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Committee annually.</p> <p>Benchmark college performance with national average.</p> <p>Benchmark care experienced student performance with non care experienced student performance across a range of indicators.</p>	Assistant Principal Student Life and Skills	Annually
7.3	Publish results	<p>Publish the results for care-experienced students in the College Annual Report to include:</p> <p>% applications declaring care-experience.</p> <p>% success on course.</p> <p>% withdrawal</p> <p>% destinations</p>	Assistant Principal Performance and Skills/ Assistant Principal Student Life and Skills	Annually
7.4	Engage with care experienced students to review this action plan.	Engage care experienced students in focus groups to review operational actions connected to this action plan.	Head of Quality	Annually

Monitoring and Reporting

In accordance with section 60 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act we will produce our full Corporate Parenting Report annually in July of each year.

Reports will outline the commitments we have made and will outline further actions up to 2025.

The College is fully committed to its duties towards Care Experienced Young People and understands that Ministers will require the College to report on progress. In this regard the College will ensure that progress is monitored and recorded.





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