



# **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Corporate Parenting Plan**

**2022-2025**

## **Introduction**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture is a unique institution offering access, advanced, under-graduate and post-graduate level courses solely through the medium of Scottish Gaelic. The College is a founding academic partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and is the lead/responsible partner for the management and delivery of UHI's Gaelic and Gaelic-medium undergraduate and post graduate provision. The College offers a full range of programmes at different SCQF levels, and these programmes can either be studied on-site or through distance learning.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is legally designated as a corporate parent under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. At present, many looked after children and care leavers experience some of the poorest personal outcomes of any group in Scotland. Low levels of educational engagement and achievement feed into high levels of poverty, homelessness, and poor mental health.<sup>1</sup> Barriers to education which care experienced young people face include lack of funding, disrupted schooling, an unstable home environment, and accessing further and higher education at a later age than their non-looked after peers.

This plan will work alongside the UHI plan to form the partnership's approach to meeting the duties, and as part of this, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of care experienced young people.

## **Corporate Parenting**

The definition of corporate parenting is "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."<sup>2</sup>

The Act places a duty on all Universities and Colleges to produce a plan which outlines how we will support care leavers and looked after children and young people and deliver on our corporate parenting responsibilities. For the purposes of the Act, a care leaver is an individual who was 'looked after' up to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday before leaving care. Under the new legislation, an individual can now be considered a care leaver up to their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In addition, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will produce detailed reports based on the actions and outcomes of the plan, collaborate with other corporate parents, and provide relevant information to Scottish Ministers.

It is noted that under the Act the whole organisation is responsible for fulfilling corporate parenting duties, not just specific individuals or teams.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (published annually) *Children's Social Work Statistics*, Edinburgh; Meltzer, H, et al (2004) *The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in Scotland*, London: TSO.

<sup>2</sup> Definition from Statutory Guidance on Corporate Parenting (2015), p.7

## **Our Vision**

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig are committed to ensuring care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us, to enable them to successfully complete their course and undergo a worthwhile experience throughout their student journey. This support also extends past graduation with further assistance offered, for a fixed period, to enhance their career development and ambitions.

In addition to supporting care experienced students, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will also ensure staff are provided with training opportunities and materials which will both raise awareness of the difficulties these students may face and enable them to provide direct practical support.

To achieve our objectives Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will continue to work closely with relevant external agencies as well as our academic partners. Internally, preparation and consultation work will continue to be done through the College's Buidheann Cùraim who will then report to the SMO Management Committee with relevant updates on legislation and procedures.

| Area                                     | Criteria  | Current Activities  | Actions  | Owner   | Timescale | Projected Outcomes   | Corporate Parenting duty  | Progress   |
|--|---|---|--|---|-----------|--|---|--|
| Management and Delivery of plan/outcomes | Continuous enhancement of provision for care experienced students                 | Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will be kept informed of relevant developments via the UHI Care Leavers Group who will liaise with external agencies, including Who Cares? Scotland, CELCIS, and the College Development Network, to ensure we are kept up to date with current best practice and training. | 1. Attendance on the cross-partnership Care Leavers Group and associated activities. This includes sharing of best practice, discussion of issues affecting care experienced students, and relevant staff training. The group meet on a bi-annual basis. | Head of Support Services<br>Student Services & Engagement Coordinator | Ongoing   | Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students   | 58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent | Ongoing  |
|  |   |   | 2. Sharing of best practice within Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and across the partnership (via UHI Care Leavers Group)   | Head of Support Services<br>Student Services & Engagement Coordinator | Ongoing   | Improved cross partnership working and communication to ensure equivalence for care experienced students   | 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent<br>60:2 (a,b,c) to share information, provide advice or assistance, and coordinate activities  | Regular reporting to the Buidheann Cùraim.   |
|  |   |   | 3. Consider care experienced students during strategic and operational planning  | Senior Management Team (SMT)  | Ongoing   | Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students   | 58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies  | Referred to in College Outcome Agreement   |
|  |   |   | 4. Extend College Safeguarding Group remit to include Corporate Parenting responsibilities   | Deputy Director of Studies  | Completed | Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students   | 58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent | Complete   |
|  |   |   | 5. Organisation of relevant training for staff   | Director of Corporate Affairs   | Dec 2017  | Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students through greater awareness amongst all staff           | 58:1 (a) to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent | Online training module, which is mandatory for UHI staff and the majority of the academic partners. Priority Groups Forum will continue to monitor training needs. |
| Raising aspirations and                  | Raising awareness of the support services available for care experienced students | SMO have created a Care Leavers section on the main website, which provides full details of the support offered to care experienced students both centrally and at academic partner level, along with contact details. Also listed are links to relevant external agencies.                   | 6. Include contact details of Student Services and a link to the UHI Care Leavers information page.  | Head of Support Services  | Complete  | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and increased awareness of the services and support available to them | 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services  | Completed  |

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| pre-entry outreach |   | Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has a variety of services available and will provide additional support as required for Care Experienced students.  | 7. Raise awareness of services available for Care Experienced students at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig  | Head of Support Services<br>Student Services & Engagement Coordinator                       | Ongoing | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and increased awareness of the services and support available to them                             | 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services   | Ongoing     |
| Application        | Establish admissions processes that offer increased opportunities for care leavers to enter HE                        | Students who declare care experience at time of application are flagged on the data management system and application form marked. This alerts interviewer/decision maker of the student's situation to enable them to take this into consideration.  | 8. Review the wording on direct application forms so as to be as positive as possible, including relevant questions in all application forms.<br><br>Improve liaison between admissions and Student Services to ensure that care experienced young people are identified and information is passed on effectively and efficiently.<br><br>Ensure that care-experienced students can self-disclose when applying for discretionary funding. | Admissions Staff  | Ongoing | Admissions processes that are designed to support widening access  | 58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies   | In progress |
|                    |   |   | 9. Ensure Academic Staff with responsibilities for access are clear about the College's policy regarding widening access to Care Experienced students  | Deputy Director of Studies  | Ongoing | Admissions processes that are designed to support widening access  | 58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this Part applies   | Ongoing     |
| Pre-entry          | Provide timely information re funding for courses (HE).   | The College maintains a funding section on the main website, which provides full details of the financial support available to all students, including those who are care experienced.  | 10. Maintain College specific information on the website. Promote the existence of the webpages, and individual bursary scheme and scholarships as required  | Admissions staff<br>Student Support Staff<br>Sgoilearachd Committee                         | Ongoing | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses   | 58:1 (d) to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing | Ongoing     |
|                    | Ensure that care experienced students have access to useful materials to provide help and guidance prior to enrolment | The College has created an online resource, Essential Student Skills, which includes a module designed to be accessed prior to enrolment. This provides information on the university, thinking about learning, collaborative learning, and new to blended learning, which are all specific to pre-entry. | 11. Contact all Care Experienced applicants within three weeks of them accepting an offer to welcome them and explain services to them, including the University's Essential Study Skills online module.   | Student Services & Engagement Coordinator<br>Head of Support Services                       | Ongoing | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and improved retention rates following commencement of studies                                    | 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services   | Ongoing     |
|                    | Help to ensure that care experienced students have access to appropriate accommodation                                | The College has residencies on campus for up to 85 students during term-time.   | 12. Ensure that 365 day accommodation is available for care experienced students. The university have also agreed to act as guarantor for care experienced students if their local authority is unable to do so.<br><br>Arrangements will need to be monitored to ensure that needs are met in a timely manner.  | Deputy Director of Education<br>Head of Support Services<br>Hospitality & Residency Manager | Ongoing | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses; Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience | 58:1 (c) to promote the interests of children and young people to whom this part applies<br>58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services   | Ongoing     |

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|                              | Ensure that all staff are aware of the duties and processes for Care Experienced students throughout the application cycle | Ensure that all staff are aware of the duties and the processes for Care Experienced students throughout the application cycle   | 13. Ensure relevant staff are aware of their duties and that clear processes and procedures are in place.   | Head of Support Services<br>Admissions staff           | Ongoing | Increase in the number of care experienced young people applying for our courses and increased awareness of the services and support available to them | 58:1 (e) access opportunities and make use of services              | Online training module now mandatory for UHI staff and the majority of academic partners. External training sessions to be arranged. |
| On Course Support            | Provision of a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) to provide additional support for care experienced students                   | SMO coordinates the support and training available for Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) who are based across the network. The PATs are a single point of contact for care experienced students and can provide academic support as well as signposting for additional support services. | 14. Maintain online resources for PATs to ensure they remain current and useful. Organise training and development days. Share good practice, disseminate relevant information, and provide a point of contact. Advisory input into the management of the PAT role. | Deputy Director of Studies                             | Ongoing | Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience   | participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing       | <b>PAT session is in programme for Staff Development week</b>  |
|                              | Access to an online counselling service  | Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has facilitated the creation of an online counselling service, which may be accessed by students. This provides additional support for care experienced students, wherever they are located.   | 15. Continue to offer an online counselling service from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and to raise awareness of this through student information packs and the website.  | College Counsellor<br>Head of Support Services         | Ongoing | Improved retention rates for care experienced students and enhancement of the student experience   |   | <b>Completed</b>   |
| Communication                | Raise awareness of the duties in relation to Corporate Parenting and arrange staff training                                | The university is working with external agencies to provide an online training module for all staff in respect of Corporate Parenting.   | 16. Ensure all staff complete the training which will be disseminated by the university.  | Head of HR   | Ongoing | Enhancement of the student experience and improved retention rates for care experienced students through greater awareness amongst all staff.          | 58:1 (f) to take action to improve as a corporate parent            | Online training module now mandatory for UHI staff and the majority of academic partners.  |
|                              | Ensure information on the full range of support offered to care experienced individuals is readily available online.       | Information about student support, including for care-experienced individuals is currently available on SMO website.<br><br>Student support staff are aware that additional support is available for care-experienced students and that special consideration be given to their needs. | College marketing materials should highlight commitment to vulnerable learners.   | Marketing Manager<br>Head of Support Services          |         |  |   |  |
| Monitoring of plan/outcomes  | Meet Government requirements for reporting on Corporate Parenting Plans/Actions  | The university will produce a report every three years which will provide information regarding the Corporate Parenting Plan and the actions within it.  | 17. Adhere to the university's monitoring and review system so as to meet legislative requirements  | Deputy Director of Studies<br>Head of Support Services | Nov 22  | Adherence to legislative requirements  | 59:1 to prepare, and keep plan under review<br>59:3 to publish plan | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
|                              |  | The university will produce a report every three years which will provide information regarding the Corporate Parenting Plan and the actions within it.  | 18. Produce a report on the Plan for the SMT by March 2018.   | Deputy Director of Studies                             | Ongoing | Adherence to legislative requirements  | 59:1 to prepare, and keep plan under review<br>59:3 to publish plan | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
| Last updated: 08/11/2022 KNA |  |  |   |  |         |  |   |  |