



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Corporate Parenting Plan 2022 - 2027





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Ambition and Vision

In June 2022, the National Network for the Education of Care-Leavers (NNECL) stated that “Care-experienced people comprise one of the most under-represented groups within higher education”. In September 2022, the University of Edinburgh welcomed its largest ever cohort of care-experienced students as a result of its ongoing commitment to widening access and participation for this underrepresented group.

Currently our provision for care-experienced individuals across the student lifecycle includes:

- Pre-application support from the Edinburgh Cares team
- Contextualised offers of entry (once care-experience has been verified)
- The Access Edinburgh award worth £5,000 per academic year
- Named point of contacts
- 365 days a year accommodation offer
- The Insights programme
- Staff mentoring.

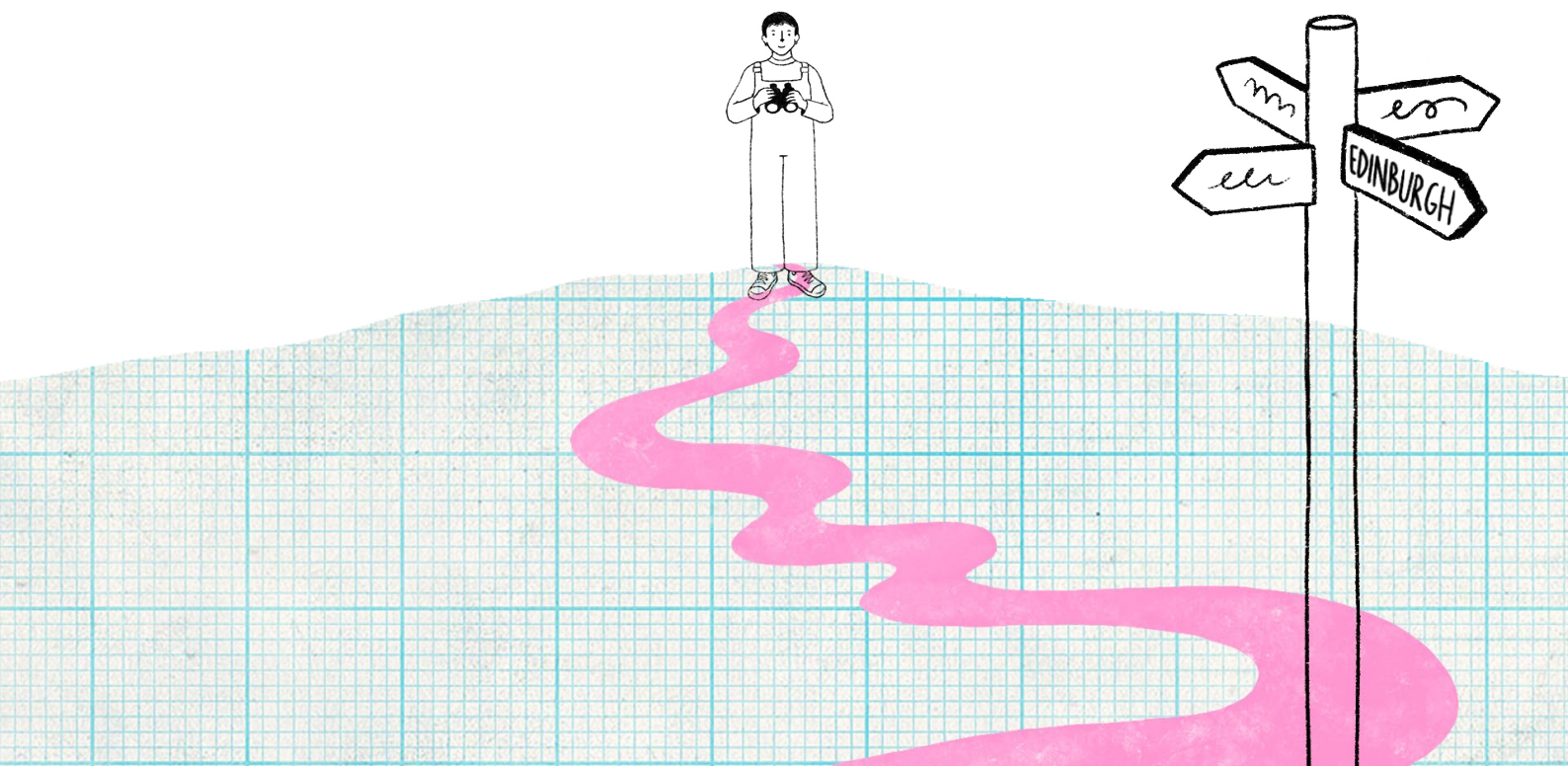
The University of Edinburgh is proud to be recognised as a global leader and highly selective research-driven institute. The University is also developing its reputation as an institution which welcomes applicants from care-experienced backgrounds and applicants who are estranged from their families. In our Widening Participation Strategy the University articulates that we ‘provide an exciting, inclusive and supportive environment in which all students can feel they belong and grow, thrive and succeed through their studies’.

Students with lived experiences are at the heart of our decisions within this iteration of the corporate parenting plan and we will build regular engagement with our students to ensure we are continue to be assertive where change is needed. We want to strengthen our current provision to reflect the needs of our growing community of care-experienced (and estranged students).

Our growing understanding and knowledge base means that we fully recognise that getting things ‘right’ for care-experienced and estranged students improves the whole University and our University experience for everyone. Our culture of compassion and care is improved, our understanding of the effects of trauma can inform our services, and our strategic vision and planning is inclusive and impactful.

Our guiding principles for the corporate parenting plan

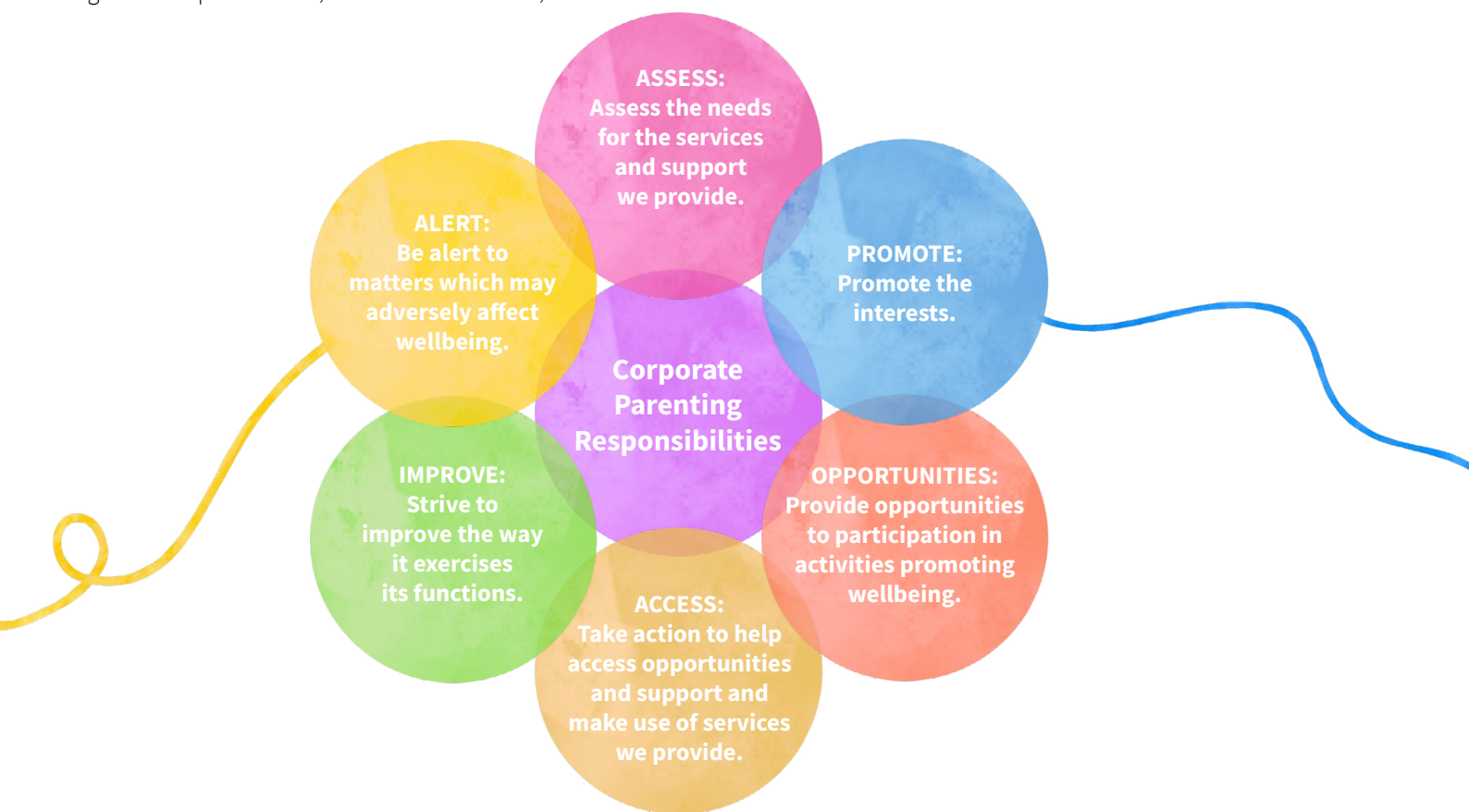
- Putting students with lived experience at the heart of our corporate parenting plan
- Establishing success across the whole student lifecycle
- Striving for excellence and demonstrating leadership in our commitment to being corporate parents
- Enhancing our evidence based approach to working with priority student groups.



Key duties

Corporate parenting duties are legislative duties that support care-experienced children and young people up till the age of 26. As part of our duties as a corporate parent the University of Edinburgh must produce and publish a corporate parenting plan. This plan details how we are going to meet our responsibilities.

Fig 1. Our responsibilities, Scottish Government, 2018



- **ACCESS:** We commit to taking actions that will enable care-experienced and estranged applicants and students to access opportunities and supports.
- **ALERT:** We are alert to internal and external factors that can adversely affect care-experienced and estranged individuals' wellbeing and opportunities for success.
- **ASSESS:** We will assess the needs of care-experienced and estranged individuals within the external and internal projects, programmes and services to enable high standards of provision.
- **IMPROVE:** We commit to improving our understanding of our own performance in supporting care-experienced and estranged applicants and students (and their supporters).
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** We will work to improve care-experienced and estranged students' learning experiences and well-being by providing targeted opportunities across the institution as well as inclusion in existing provision.
- **PROMOTE:** We will promote the interests of care-experienced and estranged individuals across the whole institution and in our local, national, and global work.

Our focus, approaches, and responses 2022-2027

We are taking a whole life-cycle approach (pre-application to graduation and beyond). Building on the findings of our research project in 2022, we as an institution are proactively working to ensure care-experienced and estranged applicant and student voice is included and recognised as 'expert' in all the work we undertake.

This enables us as effective corporate parent to:

- Ensure we receive real time feedback so we can respond compassionately and rapidly to emerging needs
- Ensure we are attuned to the priorities of these student groups and stay focused on what matters most to them
- Promote access and inclusion to all areas of University life so that these students enjoy their time with us, feel like they matter, feel cared for, sustain relationships, and can go forward to build successful futures.

Ultimately we are aiming to become sector leaders in our approach to supporting these groups; guided by those we champion and support.

Care-experience and estrangement: distinct identities and shared experiences

In this most recent iteration of the corporate parenting plan lived expertise was shared with us from care-experienced students and students who are estranged from their families. A research project took place between June and August 2022. A number of the students who participated in the research project describe themselves as being care-experienced and estranged.

Our care-experienced students have experiences that have involved social work intervention from before birth, being adopted, being fostered, living in kinship care, or having supervision orders. They have also experienced different levels of support and engagement from their local authorities and social workers, through care / after care teams. All of the care-experienced students we spoke to cite the transition from school or college into the University of Edinburgh as a source of excitement and of great uncertainty. Identifying as being care-experienced whilst applying through UCAS and to their student finance organisations was a cause of consternation for some. Other students report that they were more confident at ‘ticking boxes’ as they viewed this as a mechanism for accessing support should they need it.

Our estranged students may have become estranged from their family whilst still at school or college or have become estranged during their programme of study at the University of Edinburgh. Whilst not having experienced support or intervention from statutory services, estranged students can have experiences and perspectives which are similar to our care-experienced students in terms of navigating the transition from school or college into higher education and then navigating ‘student life’. Both groups of students identified living with trauma, issues with identity and ‘fitting in’. Additionally they also spoke of feeling isolated or stigmatised. These shared experiences and perspectives were also reported by both groups as meaning they possessed increased levels of tenacity and independence.

Therefore, the inclusion of estranged students in the research project and in this corporate parenting plan does not detract from the unique sets of circumstances that care-experienced children, young people and adults navigate. We fully appreciate the lifelong impact that care-experience can have. We want to enable an understanding of how current and future university provision can meet the unique and shared needs of both groups at each stage of the student lifecycle. Whilst corporate parenting is a legislative responsibility to our care-experienced applicants and students it can be argued that it is a moral issue to extend the same level of care to our estranged applicants and students.

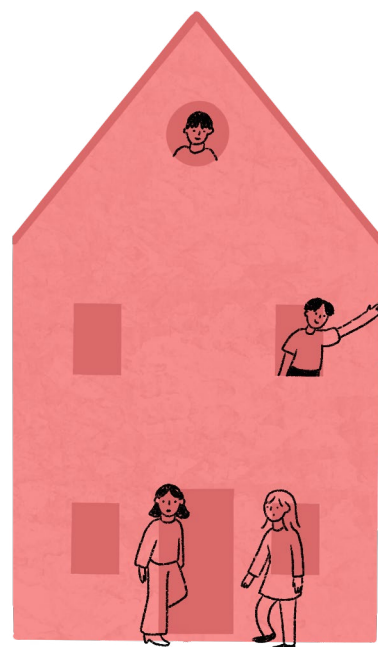
Fig 2.” Difference and Sameness” – developed through discussion with our care-experienced and estranged students.

Care-experience	Shared experiences	Estrangement
Local Authority intervention (sometimes from birth).	Stigma / Shame	Issues with identity / belief systems
Regular contact with statutory / legal services.	Isolation / loneliness	Inconsistent / harmful relationship with primary care-givers
Lack of agency in own life choices.	Missing family members (e.g. siblings)	Reliance on friends / extended family / school /college for support
Long term inconsistent / disrupted relationships with care-givers and / or support staff	Living with the effects of trauma	Navigation of systems and services without adult input
Invasion of privacy	Increased levels of tenacity and resilience	Push - Pull of family expectations
	Increased levels of independence	

Intersectionality and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

From those individuals that identify as care-experienced or estranged there may be those that require extra consideration and support - for example, young people coming directly from Local Authority care provision, individuals who will be under the age of 18 when they start their programme, individuals undertaking direct entry into year two of their programme, individuals from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, individuals with a learning difference or disability, and individuals who have a pre-existing mental health or physical health issue.

Intersectionality issues further highlight that whilst clear identification of student groups can be mechanisms for drawing down support, every applicant and student has different ways of expressing and experiencing individual needs.



An overview of key areas of work 2022-2027

These are the areas that the students who took part on the research project wanted us to consider and build from.

Provision to develop 2022-2027:

- Our Accommodation Offer – Exploring 12 month tenancies, preferential rent rates, and providing an improved culture of care
- Our financial support - Prioritisation of access to funds, more support for studying away, and support for the summer break
- Navigating the University - Better systems to prevent retelling of personal circumstances, peer learning opportunities.
- A student network – Creating a community of support and also a mechanism to feed into the Edinburgh Cares Committee / be a conduit to informing and influencing policies and provision.

Provision to communicate more effectively 2022-27:

- Staff mentor scheme – Continue to grow this and make sure every applicant and student knows it is available to them
- Peer mentor scheme – Ensure this is offered to every applicant and student from these groups
- Internships – Promote opportunities and grow what is offer for these students
- Participation grant – Effectively promote this to these student groups and ensure they are prioritised if funds are limited
- Community and external supports – Build links with organisations so we can promote them to our students.

Provision for creation 2022-27:

- Development of applicant supporter resources and training with a focus on how to ensure applicants experience a successful transition into Higher Education
- Development of student body and staff resources and training. This will focus on understanding trauma and improving the culture of care across the institution
- Active outreach to these student groups at programme, school, college, and central service levels.

Identified partners, policies, and strategies

Academic Leads - Accommodation Services - Admission teams - Careers Service - College Heads / Deans - Counselling Service – Development & Alumni, Disability and learning support service - EUSA - Programme leads – ResLife - Student Registry Services - The Advice Place - The Chaplaincy - The WP team and the wider Student Recruitment and Admission team(s) - Well-being advisors and officers.

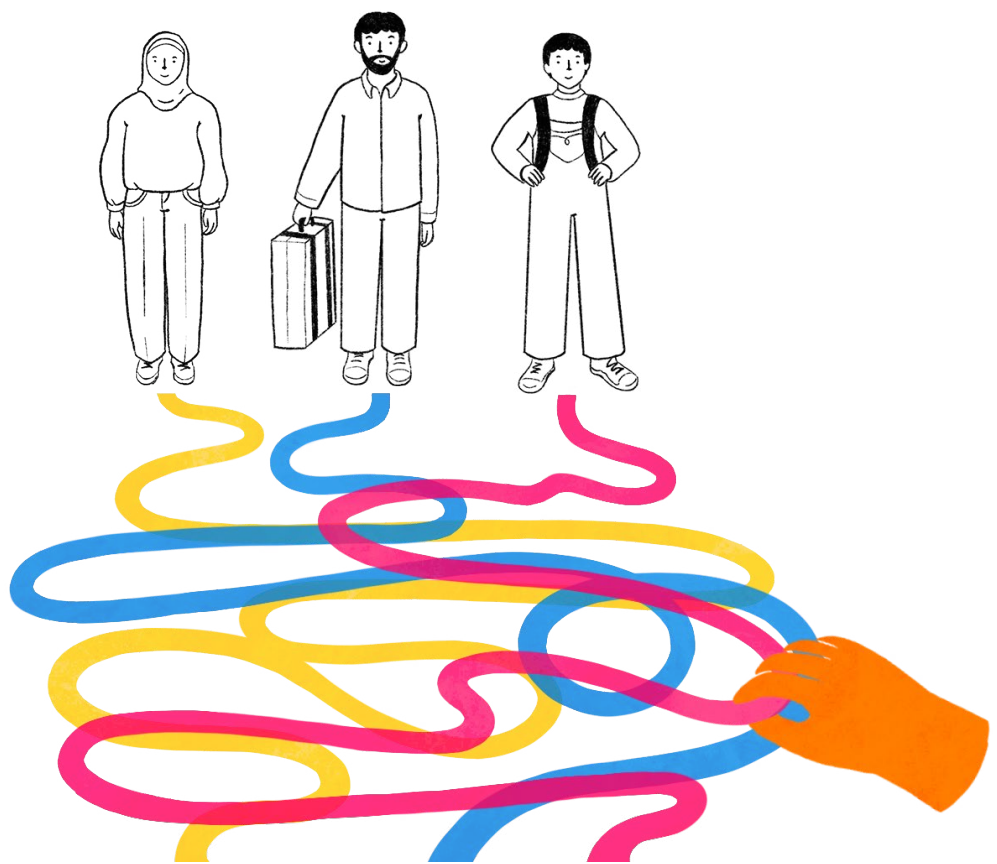
Whilst there are key people and services needed at different stages of the student lifecycle a whole institution approach is required for the ultimate success of this plan.

Connected policies and strategies:

- Code of student conduct
- Support for study
- Student mental health strategy
- Student support project
- University of Edinburgh Strategy 2030
- Widening Participation Strategy 2030

External agencies and organisations:

- CEECEF
- CELCIS
- Local Authorities
- SAAS
- SFE
- Stand Alone
- The Hub for Success
- Virtual Head Teacher Network
- Who Cares? Scotland



Projected student needs and potential areas of challenge across the lifecycle

Aspiration and early engagement - support to get in - support to succeed - support to progress

Aspiration and early engagement	Support to get in	Support to succeed		Support to progress	
Pre / point of application resources	Transition support resources	On programme resources during semesters 1 and 2 of each academic year.	Summer support resources	On programme resources study away	Graduation support and beyond
<p>Navigating UCAS and student finance applications</p> <p>Understanding contextual offers – eligibility & verification</p> <p>*Visiting the University for an open day or offer holder event.</p> <p>Meeting with Edinburgh Cares Team.</p> <p>Meeting with Programme Staff.</p> <p>Visiting Accommodation.</p>	<p>*Moving from current location to accommodation in Edinburgh.</p> <p>Welcome pack for moving into accommodation.</p> <p>Accessing a DLSS assessment.</p> <p>Registering with a GP</p> <p>Accessing and navigating UoE systems.</p> <p>The matriculation process.</p> <p>Attending welcome week activities.</p> <p>Selecting programme options and creating timetables.</p> <p>Navigating the UoE campus.</p> <p>Feeling connected at programme, school, college, and whole institutional levels.</p>	<p>Accessing / understanding support offered from DLSS.</p> <p>Needing proactive support from Student Advisor.</p> <p>Asking for Support from ResLife for community activities or for well-being support.</p> <p>Accessing / understanding the support from a Wellbeing Advisor.</p> <p>Accessing support from the Discretionary Fund.</p> <p>Applying for support from Extensions and Special Circumstances Service.</p> <p>*Getting support from an appropriate / bespoke psychological service (yet to be identified).</p> <p>Accessing support from the careers service.</p> <p>Identifying as care-experienced / estranged and responding to the Edinburgh Cares Team proactively reaching out with invites to activities and events or for 1-2-1 meetings.</p>	<p>Accessing accommodation support to stay with us over the summer break / no need to move for students already in accommodation.</p> <p>Accessing ResLife support for community activities in accommodation or for well-being support as needed.</p> <p>*Accessing the Discretionary Fund or a bespoke fund to help meet rent and food costs if unable to bolster finances through employment.</p> <p>Identifying as care-experienced / estranged and responding to the Edinburgh Cares Team proactively reaching out with invites to activities and events or for 1-2-1 meetings.</p> <p>Accessing paid summer internships.</p>	<p>*Accessing financial support to meet the upfront costs of visas, medical checks, securing accommodation and travel.</p> <p>Accessing wellbeing support like students 'on campus'.</p>	<p>Covering the costs of graduation.</p> <p>Having someone present to recognise achievement.</p> <p>*Financial uncertainty between finishing studies and moving on to employment or further study.</p> <p>Accessing enhanced/ tailored careers service support.</p>
<p>*The cost of travel and subsistence could be paid for by the UoE for qualifying students up to £100</p>	<p>*Support for moving to Edinburgh could be paid for by the UoE for qualifying students up to £200 OR early advance / part-payment of the Access Edinburgh</p>	<p>*Bespoke psychological support could be paid for by the UoE for qualifying students up to £25 per session</p>	<p>* A summer fund for students could be ring-fenced and accessed by students in need / students who do not qualify for the SAAS summer rent help up to £1000</p>	<p>*The extra costs incurred for study away could be paid for by the UoE for qualifying students up to £350</p>	<p>*The graduation bonus could be set at a rate of £750 for qualifying students and paid by the UoE</p>



Plan timescales

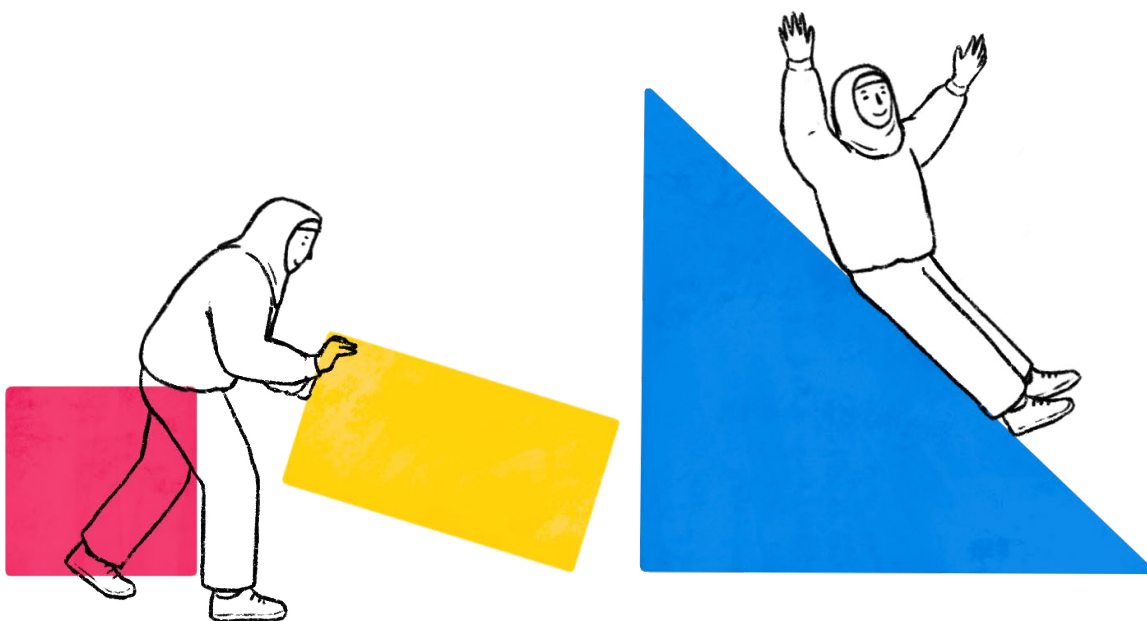
- Developing targeted outreach and pre-application programmes and systems: Work started in 2023 – pilot new ways of working 2024 - Improvements completed by 2027
- Improving the navigation and signposting experience: Work started in 2023 – Reviewed after each academic cycle - Improvements completed by 2027
- Improving our accommodation offer: Trialling new approaches in 2024 – Improvements completed by 2027
- Enhancing our financial support offer: Evaluation of delivery after each academic cycle – Pilot new approaches by 2025 – Enhancement completed by 2027
- Building a strong student community: Work ongoing from 2022 – Reviewed after each academic cycle - completed by 2027.

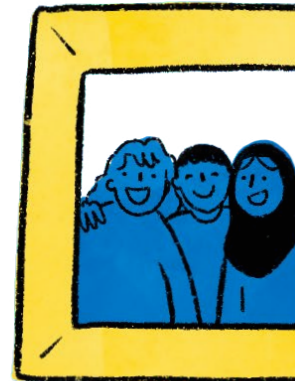
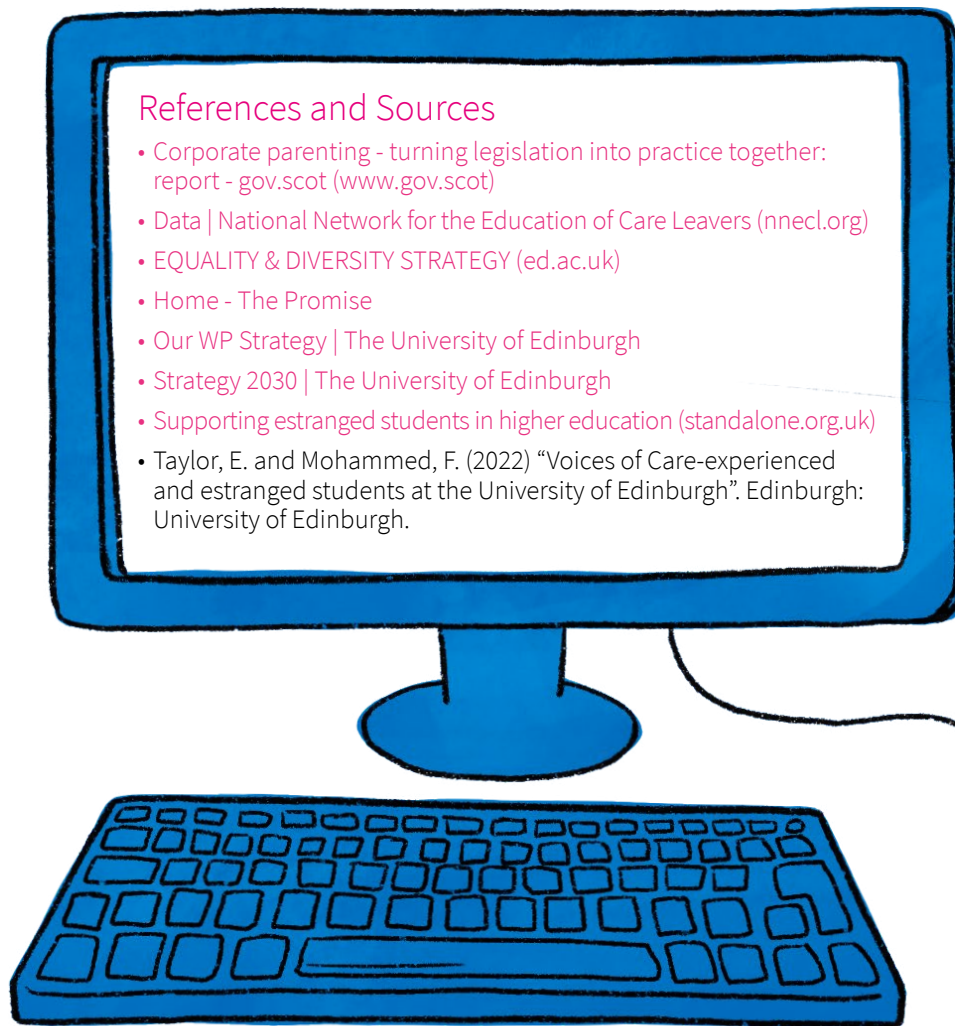
Corporate Parenting action and implementation plan 2022-2027

Priority area	Specific actions	What will success look like?	Timeline	Resources	Priority owners and contributors
Improving our 365 Day accommodation offer to care-experienced and estranged students	Explore the viability of 12 month tenancies.	Students reporting minimal moves and disruption. Reduced reports of student anxiety regarding securing accommodation / securing support to move frequently.	To be trialled by 2024 and if successful established by 2027.	Potential working group including ACE, ResLife, students, DLSS to explore a trial offer period, examine demand and viability under current allocation and support systems. ↓	ACE ResLife Students
	Establishing and embedding preferential rent rates.	Students able to budget effectively especially in times of crisis (including homelessness).	To be trialled by 2024 and if successful established by 2027.		
	Establishing an improved culture of care.	Students disclosing need for support before 'crisis' Students reporting that they feel their requests are respected Students reporting they feel at 'home' and that they 'matter' to the University.	To be trialled by 2024 and if successful established by 2027.		
Improving our financial support offer for care-experienced and estranged students	Prioritisation of access to funds	Students are prioritised when applying for financial help without being required to re-tell their story and with a full understanding of any assessment processes.	Processes being developed from learning in academic year 2022-23 and ongoing to be reviewed after each academic session.	Ongoing planning and training with the scholarship and finance team to be reviewed after each academic session.	Scholarships and Finance Team SRA Edinburgh Cares Team Student Advisors
	More support for studying away	Students able to access help for upfront or unexpected costs so that they can access the potential benefits of a study away experience. Increased numbers of students from these priority student groups participating successfully in study away schemes.	Processes being developed from learning in academic year 2022-23 and ongoing to be reviewed after each academic session.	Funds need to be identified and an administration system agreed. Data required from SWAY team / Edinburgh Cares team to assess need.	Development and Alumni team SWAY team SRA Edinburgh Cares Team Scholarships and Finance Team
	Support for the summer break	For students where the University of Edinburgh is their 'home' have the option to access financial and community support over the summer break. Reduction in students finding themselves in 'crises' over the summer break. Students starting semester one after a summer break in a strong financial position.	Pilot scheme in place by summer 2025.	Funds need to be identified and an administration system agreed. Data required from SRA Edinburgh Cares team and scholarship and finance team to assess need.	ACE Development and Alumni team SRA Edinburgh Cares Team ResLife Scholarships and Finance Team The Chaplaincy
	Participation grant: Effectively promote this to these student groups and ensure they are prioritised if funds are limited	Every eligible care-experienced and estranged student who applies for this grant is made an award. An increase in care experienced and estranged students accessing societies and sports.	Academic year 2023 and ongoing. Reviewed after each academic year.	Data required. Partnership working with SRA and Scholarship and Finance Team required. Surveys for students asking what activities, clubs and societies they are accessing as a result of the grant.	SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Scholarship and Finance Team

Priority area	Specific actions	What will success look like?	Timeline	Resources	Priority owners and contributors
Enhancing how care-experienced and estranged students navigate the university	Better systems to prevent retelling of personal circumstances.	Priority status is known to appropriate staff and they know what that status means in order to ensure students do not need to keep re-telling their story to access support.	System issues regarding student status and who can see and understand a student's status to be resolved by academic year 2024-25	A robust, secure system with associated protocols for sharing student status that can be accessed by key staff when trying to assist a student on a range of academic or wellbeing issues.	ACE Admission Teams DLSS SRA Edinburgh Cares Team Student Advisors Student Registry Services Wellbeing Advisors
	Increased visibility and representation	Students from these priority student groups will feel accepted, visible, and represented across the University.	Starting in academic year 2023 and ongoing	Undergraduate recruitment material, staff stories, recruitment wording, EDI campaigns, Programme, school and college materials. etc.	CAM SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Programme, school and college staff and students SRA
	Peer learning opportunities.	Students from these priority groups have the opportunity to learn from students from similar backgrounds who may be a few steps ahead on their learning journey.	Starting in academic year 2023 and ongoing	Data required from SRA Edinburgh Cares team to assess demand.	SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Programme, school, and college staff Students
	Students from these priority student groups get early / targeted engagement as appropriate at programme, school, college and central service areas	Students reporting that they feel that they belong, that they matter and that their needs are understood Improved relations between students and staff. Improved culture of compassion across the institution and within the student body.	Work beginning in 2023 and an improved whole institution approach developed and implemented by 2027 (or sooner)	A scoping exercise needs to be carried out to see what actions are already taking place across the institution and if there is practise(s) happening that could be rolled out. Initial scoping exercise to be undertaken by the Edinburgh Cares Team	ACE Edinburgh Cares Committee Edinburgh Cares Team ResLife Staff at programme, school, and college levels. Student Registry Services
	Edinburgh Cares staff mentoring - continue to grow this	Every care-experienced and estranged student who wants a staff mentor can access this support	Academic year 2023 and ongoing. Reviewed after each academic year.	Enhanced promotional material.	CAM SRA Edinburgh Cares Team Students University of Edinburgh staff
Build a strong student community	Creating a community of support	A resilient and empathetic student led network that is staff supported by staff from across the University	Work has begun in 2022 and a network should be well established by 2027. Progress reviewed after each academic year.	Ring-fenced time and financial resources from the SRA Edinburgh Cares Team and EUSA staff to establish the correct mechanisms and protocols for a student community and network to communicate and meet. Commitment and staff time required across the institution to recognise and support this network.	ACE DLSS SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA ResLife Student Advisors Student Registry Services The Chaplaincy Wellbeing Advisors
	Creating a mechanism to feed into the Edinburgh Cares Committee / be a conduit to informing and influencing University strategy	Student representation and voice being accessed by the Edinburgh Cares committee as a conduit to reaching University decision makers in order to influence the policy, practice, and culture of the University of Edinburgh	Work has begun in 2022 and a network should be well established by 2027 reviewed after each academic year.	Ring-fenced time and financial resources from the SRA Edinburgh Cares Team to establish the correct mechanisms and protocols for a student committee to communicate and meet. Commitment from staff across the institution to recognise and support this work.	Edinburgh Cares Committee SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA University Executive Team Students
	SRA/Widening Participation Peer mentor scheme	Every care-experienced and estranged student who wants a peer mentor can access this support.	Academic year 2023 and ongoing. Reviewed after each academic year.	Enhanced promotional material. Enhanced student recruitment drives. Time and resource ring-fenced for internship development and events.	CAM SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Students

Priority area	Specific actions	What will success look like?	Timeline	Resources	Priority owners and contributors
Employability and skills	Promote opportunities and 'grow' what is on offer for these students	Every care-experienced and estranged student who wants to access a paid internship can access this.	Academic year 2023 and ongoing. Reviewed after each academic year.	Enhanced promotional material. Enhanced student recruitment drives. Time and resource ring-fenced for internship development and events.	CAM Careers Service SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Students University of Edinburgh programme, school, and college staff
Development of applicant supporter resources and training	Development of resources and training (suitable for in-person and online delivery) for applicant supporters (family members, teachers, social workers, foster carers, etc.)	Successful transitions into the institution. Reported satisfaction with understanding UoE processes and systems at the start of the student lifecycle.	An initial pilot / launch for academic year 2025 (or sooner).	A short term working group created to identify what is needed and when and who could / would deliver training.	CAM SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA SAAS SFE Stand Alone Students The Advice Place The Hub for Success
Development of student body and staff resources and training building on previous professional services framework resources.	The creation of a resource and training package that has a focus on understanding trauma and improving the culture of compassion across the institution for students and staff	Students reporting that their experiences are understood through the lens of trauma. Improved relations between students and staff. Improved culture of compassion across the institution and within the student body.	An initial pilot / launch for academic year 2024 (or sooner).	Training developed and delivered in partnership with the student support team for student advisors and well-being advisors Develop and support work at school level as appropriate	CAM SRA Edinburgh Cares Team EUSA Student Advisors Students University staff at programme, school, and college levels. Wellbeing Advisors





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