

CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT 2017-20



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FOREWORD

I am delighted to present our corporate parenting report. Within this, we show progress in our developing areas of work. These focus on scrutiny, assurance and improvement support functions, participation and research.

It is important that, as the public body that looks at the quality of care in Scotland, we also reflect on how we deliver our core functions. We hold a responsible position as corporate parents and we regulate and report on the quality of support for young people by other corporate parents. We must also demonstrate what it means to be a good corporate parent.

This report provides assurance that we meet our responsibilities as corporate parents. It is important to us that the report is meaningful to our care experienced young people. To achieve this, we have created an accessible, universal version alongside this one. It sets out the high-level outcomes in our 2017-2020 corporate parenting plan and how we have met them.

This report aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNCRC report 2017-2020. It demonstrates how we protect and support the rights of children and young people.

We are very aware of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had upon our care experienced young people. This includes limited family contact, isolation and reduced face-to-face interaction. During the pandemic last year, we continued to make progress, and we will take our learnings from this forward.

With that in mind, we have produced an aspirational corporate parenting plan for 2021-23. Our plan reflects [‘The Promise’](#) and will continue to align with its implementation. We recognise that our care experienced community need to be at the heart of our commitment. They will continue to inform the plan and hold us accountable for the delivery of it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our young inspection volunteers, many of whom are care experienced. They have contributed heavily to this report and to our corporate parenting plan. They continue to bring important contributions and perspectives to our work.

Throughout this report we refer to care experienced young people as ‘our children and young people’. This reflects our values, responsibilities and commitments as corporate parents.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Macleod". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey background.

Peter Macleod
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people who are care experienced have among the poorest outcomes of all children and young people in Scotland. It is our job as corporate parents to improve these outcomes.

[Part 9 of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act, 2014](#) relates to corporate parenting. This applies to every child who is looked after by a local authority, and every young person under the age of 26, who was looked after on their 16th birthday.

As a corporate parent, we carry out many of the roles a parent would. Section 60 of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act, 2014](#) sets out our duty. This is to collaborate with other corporate parents and promote the wellbeing of our children and young people.

This may include :

- jointly funding activities,
- sharing responsibilities for any actions to support our children and young people,
- providing opportunities for education and employment
- providing advice and assistance.

It is important that in fulfilling our roles as corporate parents we enable our children and young people to have as much of a say as possible.

This report reflects how, from 1st January 2017 to 1st January 2021, we fulfilled our duties to complement and support the actions of parents, families and carers to deliver positive change for our children and young people.

To help us do this we are:

- **alert** to all matters that affect the wellbeing of our children and young people
- **strong** when challenging the disadvantages that our children and young people face
- **leaders** by driving improvements and working with other corporate parents to raise society's expectations for our children and young people
- **responsive** in how we assess the needs of our children and young people or any service or support provided
- **active** in providing our children and young people with real opportunities within our organisation, so that they grow and develop skills for the future.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Care Inspectorate Corporate Plan 2019-2022 shows that we take our role seriously. We work with our children and young people to create opportunities to support them to gain valuable experience – leading to further study and paid employment.

It is important for people who experience care, their families, carers and local communities to be involved in the planning and delivery of services. We ask for and listen to people's experiences and promote and share these to help achieve positive outcomes. Our 'working together group' (previously known as involving people group) and our inspection volunteers, continue to influence and shape what we do. As well as being involved in regulated care and strategic inspections, they make valuable contributions. For example, in developing new methodologies and policies, and in shaping improvement support interventions.

We are responsible for inspecting standards of care and supporting improvement in social work and social care services in Scotland. That means we regulate and inspect care services to make sure they meet high standards. We want young people to feel loved and secure in whatever setting they are in and to have meaningful connections. When these standards are not met, we can support services to improve. This is with full consideration of the impact services can have on a child or young person's life, in helping them to improve their life chances and become happy, healthy, safe and secure adults. We also carry out joint inspections with other scrutiny bodies to examine how well different organisations in local areas are working to support children and young people, improve their wellbeing and keep them safe from harm.

We play an important role in supporting improvements in the quality of care and reducing health and social inequalities in Scotland. The findings from our inspections and other work helps inform and influence local and national policy.

All of our work is informed by the [Health and Social Care Standards: My Support, My Life](#). We apply these standards in every element of our work.

These are the standards of care any person can expect, based around five main outcomes.

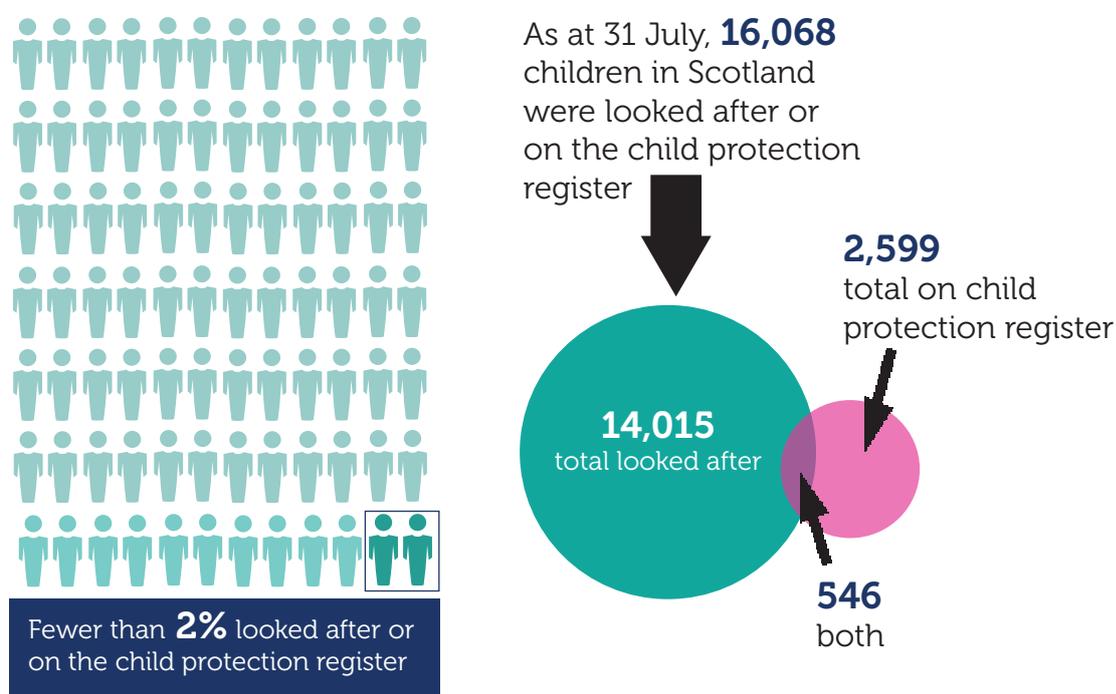
1. I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.
2. I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.
3. I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.
4. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.
5. I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

WHY OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IMPORTANT

Many of our children and young people have complex needs, reflecting backgrounds of trauma, loss and instability.

The [Scottish Government Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2018-2019](#) provide us with recent data on the number of young people. Figure 1 provides data for those looked after at the 2019 reporting year end.

Figure 1: taken from Children's Social Work Statistics 2018-19



As at 31 July 2019, 14,015 of our children and young people in Scotland were looked after; 84 of whom were in secure accommodation.

Scottish local authorities have a duty to provide 'aftercare' support to all eligible care leavers up to the age of 26 years of age. The local authority must undertake an assessment. If the care leaver is assessed as having eligible needs which cannot be met by other means, the local authority must provide them with such advice, guidance and assistance as it considers necessary. Eligible needs include financial support to meet essential accommodation and maintenance costs. Or other support in the form of information or advice to help the young person access education, training, employment, leisure opportunities or for the person's wellbeing ¹. The majority of those over the age of 21 years do not receive aftercare.

¹ Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

As at 31 July 2019, 3,868 (58%) of our children and young people eligible for aftercare services received them, whilst 2,782 people who were eligible did not take up these services (42%). Of the latter, 1,206 were over the age of 22. The [Scottish Government](#) suggests that may be expected as many of those in this age group may have moved onto adult services where required.

Continuing Care is the continued provision of accommodation and other assistance that was being provided by the local authority. Continuing Care enables eligible young people aged 16 or older to stay in the same kinship, foster or residential care placements.

As at 31 July 2019, only 162 of our children and young people who ceased to be looked after in the previous year received Continuing Care². In April 2020, to better support our children and young people into adulthood, Continuing Care allowed for all eligible care leavers to remain in their care setting from age 16 until their 21st birthday. These numbers should rise considerably over the coming years. Better informing our children and young people of their rights to continuing care and supporting them to access it is a priority within our corporate parenting plan 2021-23.



²This only includes those aged between 16 and 20.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR

In our corporate parenting plan 2017-20, we set ourselves seven outcomes:

1

Understand the needs and ambitions of young people.

2

Raise awareness within our organisation about the needs and challenges that care experienced young people face.

3

Raise our expectations of better outcomes for young people through our registration, inspection, and complaints work.

4

Communicate effectively with, and about, care experienced young people.

5

Increase the voices of care experienced young people in how we plan and carry out our work.

6

Improve opportunities for care experienced young people to develop skills, experience, and confidence to achieve their employment and career ambitions.

7

Work effectively with other corporate parents.

OUR PROGRESS

We present our progress under different themes, stating collectively what we said we would do and how we have delivered during the last three years. Where we still have some work to do, we recognise this, and will take it forward in our corporate parenting plan 2021-23.

We said we would:

Embed our responsibilities to our children and young people in our plans, our work and our staff. We said we would work in partnership with other corporate parents and public bodies to understand their needs and ambitions and help improve their experiences.

We have supported care services across Scotland to embed a rights-based approach which reflects the Health and Social Care Standards. We have produced new inspection frameworks that are based on the experiences of our children and young people. These frameworks help care services to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

During the last three years we have:

- **inspected** services for 10,245 children and young people to help ensure that they are safe, healthy, and happy
- **led** on eight joint inspections for children and young people in need of care and protection and three joint inspections of services for children and young people, with our young inspection volunteers, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
- **met** over 3,000 of our children and young people to find out about their care experiences and what was important to them. Young people were able to tell us about the issues that affected them. Such as how they have a say in their personal plans, contact with people who are important to them, education and relationships in their care settings. We were able to highlight the impact on their outcomes in inspection reports. We have consulted widely with care experienced young people in the development of the Health and Social Care Standards and in the review of our complaint functions.
- **investigated** 3,549 complaints about all regulated children and young people's services. This includes 315 complaints concerning residential care services, 56 complaints about fostering services, 22 complaints regarding secure care and 171 complaints regarding care received in residential schools. We recognise that only 36 complaints about foster care and residential settings were made directly by our children and young people. We are now looking at ways to reach more young people and make it easier to complain.

We continue to support work to improve children and young people's services. We know there is still a lot to do. We learn from and apply research findings and we regularly contribute to national policy, legislative and guidance review and development.

Secure Care Pathway Standards Scotland

We were involved in a programme of co-production of the **Secure Care Pathway and Standards Scotland**. We worked with care experienced young people who had stayed in secure care to take account of their lived experience. The standards are important. They provide a vision to drive forward transformational change to improve the experiences and outcomes for children who are in, or on, the edges of secure care in Scotland.

Personal care planning guidance

Children and young people have personal plans, which demonstrate how their needs, wishes and choices should be met. We met and spoke with 120 of our children and young people to inform guidance for care services to help them develop high quality personal plans.

During the last three years, we have published a range of new, or updated guidance to help services deliver high-quality care, including:

- [Matching Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services](#)
- [Guidance for services on the provision of continuing care](#)

Barnahus Standards

Together with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, we are developing Barnahus standards for the Scottish Government. Barnahus is an Icelandic word for '**children's house**' or '**bairn's hoose**'. It is a child-friendly way to support children and young people with experience of harm or abuse. Barnahus is about building safe relationships with the police and other professionals, so that children and young people can feel confident about talking about what happened to them in a comfortable and safe place. Having Barnahus in Scotland will mean that their story does not have to be told repeatedly.

Helping our staff understand their role in being a good corporate parent

Over the past three years the corporate parenting group have led on work to raise awareness of corporate parenting in our organisation.

We have worked with Who Cares? Scotland and our young inspection volunteers to develop and deliver training for all board members, executive group members and senior managers. The most recent development session took place with the Board in November 2020 on Microsoft Teams. Overall, this was very well received and we will continue to adapt content and methods of delivery in future.

Collaboration with other corporate parents

We have signed the pledge to become a [Friend of Who Cares? Scotland](#). This means that we have made a commitment to work with others to raise awareness and to help end discrimination that our children and young people face.

We are members of the [Scottish Care Leavers Covenant](#). This supports corporate parents to bridge the gap between policy and practice. It aims to create consistency across Scotland and help deliver the changes to address the disadvantages that often results from our children and young people's care experiences.

We are members of the Corporate Parent Collaborative, chaired by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and the participation network chaired by the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS). Through our involvement in these forums, we share learning and opportunities for our children and young people. We include them in delivering presentations and workshop sessions and in supporting the planning, content, and delivery of events.

We have continued to undertake our joint strategic inspections of services for children in need of care and protection, along with scrutiny partners who are also corporate parents. Our young inspection volunteers have informed the development of our methodology and become a key ally in our scrutiny activities.

We said we would:

Provide opportunities for our children and young people to develop their skills, experience and confidence to help them find employment and develop

Young inspection volunteers

We currently work with 15 young inspection volunteers. Our young inspection volunteers visit children and young people's services with us when we inspect and they support a range of our strategic scrutiny activities, including speaking with senior managers in partnerships. They are aged between 18-26 years old.

When young inspection volunteers join us, they spend five days together learning what happens during an inspection and they take part in training before they go out to a service. Then, four times a year, they come back together to share learning and develop their skills, such as preparing for inspection, communication and interviewing. This has helped to build the confidence of our young inspection volunteers. It helps them to work effectively in listening to our children and young people and helping to improve the services that support them.

We aim to involve more of our children and young people in a range of work through our organisation. This is a feature of our corporate parenting plan 2021-23.



One of our young inspection volunteers, Toni Twigg, was chosen to be First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's Mentee of the Year. She had meetings with the First Minister and shared what it was like to be a young person with experience of care.

Our young inspection volunteers were involved in designing resources and delivering workshops to staff at the Scottish Institute for Residential Childcare (SIRCC) conference and the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant Conferences in 2018 and 2019. These events covered topics important to our young inspection volunteers. They also covered subjects our children and young people have highlighted as important, such as the separation of siblings who are in care. The contribution of our young inspection volunteers was significant, enabling the voices of our children and young people to be heard.

Our young inspection volunteers regularly speak to us about their experiences of volunteering with us:

"Our work keeps us focused and on the right path."

"In our roles we feel safe, cared for and well looked after."

"It helps us to feel better about ourselves."

"We feel like a family and are supported through our volunteering work."

"We get to attend conferences and award ceremonies."

"We get the opportunity to see Scotland and other countries."

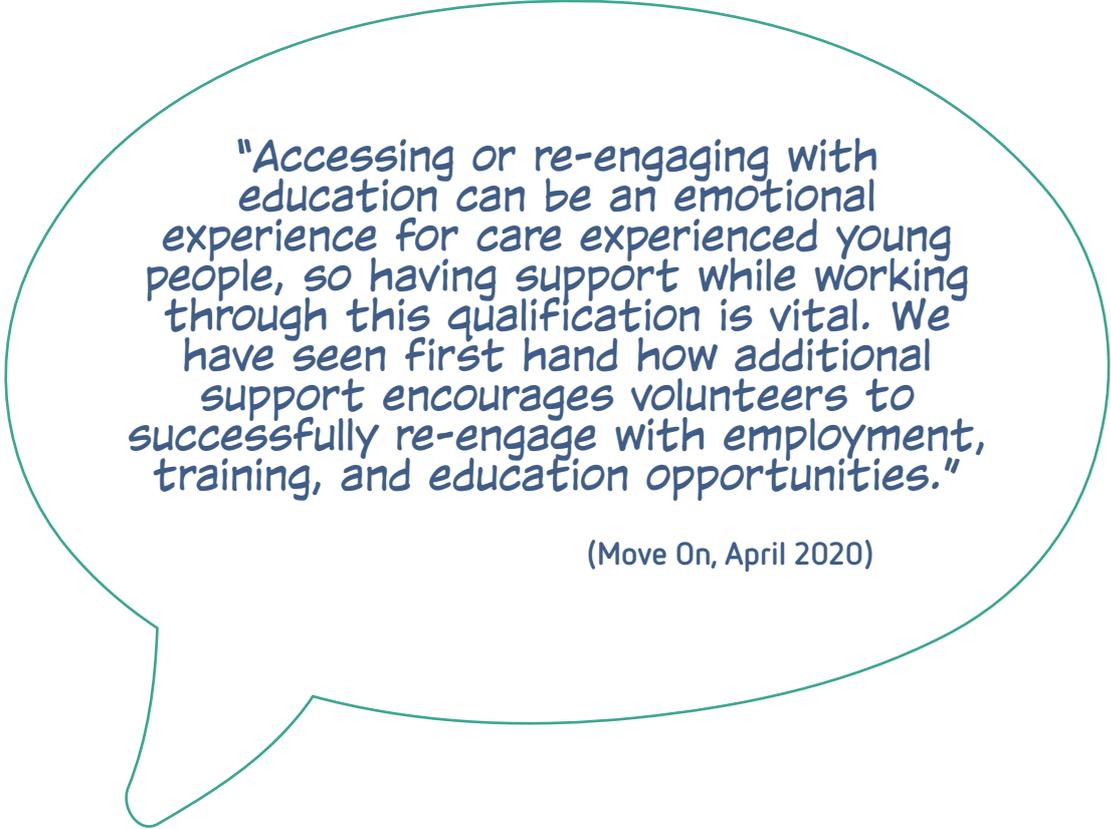
"Children and young people share more information with us, so information about care services is better as they feel more comfortable."

"We feel trusted and important."

We are part of an exciting partnership with Aberlour, Includem and CELCIS called Love Inc, funded by the Life Changes Trust. Love Inc has two care experienced participation assistants. The project lead supports them to undertake most of the direct work engaging with a range of young people and staff. We helped with the recruitment and induction of the participation assistants and have provided opportunities for them to engage directly with our inspectors. The participation assistants have been involved in contributing to the development of the Professional Development Award for inspectors.

Supporting a return to education

We have worked with Glasgow Kelvin College and Move On Scotland to support six of our young inspection volunteers to return to education. This has been very successful with five of them achieving their level six community achievement award in 2019. Three more young inspection volunteers were scheduled to start the level six award this year. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this has been delayed. All of our young inspection volunteers will be supported with 1:1 mentoring by the Move On Scotland team. This will help ensure that they are well supported in other areas of their lives including benefit support, literacy skills and emotional wellbeing before hopefully moving on to further education or employment.



"Accessing or re-engaging with education can be an emotional experience for care experienced young people, so having support while working through this qualification is vital. We have seen first hand how additional support encourages volunteers to successfully re-engage with employment, training, and education opportunities."

(Move On, April 2020)

Recruitment and selection

We have a responsibility to ensure that our staff recruitment and selection processes follow laws on equality. We were scheduled to review our processes during 2020, including how we recruit and place our modern apprentices. This is to ensure we do not present barriers to the employment of our children and young people. However, this work has been limited during the pandemic and will be carried forward into our corporate parenting plan 2021-23. This work will be undertaken collaboratively with our young inspection volunteers to help us understand what would make our jobs attractive and ensure that we do not discriminate against our children and young people in any way.

Our young inspection volunteers have taken an active part in interview panels for senior roles. An extension to this work was planned for this year, however, due to the pandemic, this has been carried forward into 2021. We anticipate that we will include young inspection volunteers in the selection process for more of our posts from late 2021. Our children and young people will also support our staff induction. This will ensure that the voices of our people are heard from the very start of everyone's career with our organisation.

Development of improvement support resources to help staff who work with children and young people

We created a range of improvement support resources to help staff work more effectively with children and young people. These are two pieces of work, which our children and young people celebrate.

Animal Magic is an online resource, which was published in September 2018. The short videos show how being around and caring for animals can make a big difference to children and young people's lives. Two of our children and young people who feature in the resource, Millie and Amber helped co-present the workshop. Carrie-Ann and Toni, two of our young inspection volunteers, were involved too. Carrie-Ann brought along her dog, Tally, who was a huge hit with everyone. They were all involved in pulling the workshop together and shared photographs. Our young people told us that they like and enjoy being around and caring for animals. Animals can help people to relax and encourage them to be more active. More care services now have pets, so that young people can spend more time with animals.





Our young inspection volunteers made a [short film](#) about the importance of promoting sibling relationships for young people who come into care. The film is about how important family life is for everyone and how important it is for young brothers and sisters to stay together whenever possible. The film supports the work of **Stand up for Siblings**, a partnership which our organisation is part of. This partnership project won a Herald Society award in November 2019.

Year of Young People

The Scottish Government designated 2018 to be the Year of Young People. It wanted to inspire Scotland through its young people by celebrating their achievements, valuing their contributions to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and on the international stage.

Melissa Young, one of our young inspection volunteers spoke at international conferences about her work. This included the European Social Services Conference in Seville and the International Regulators Conference in Glasgow. Our young inspection volunteers were invited to represent our organisation at the prestigious Young Scot Awards in 2018. They joined many other young people across the country to celebrate their success and achievements. They were shortlisted for **'Improving Children's Lives'**, a Herald Society Award and attended the award ceremony in Glasgow.



We said we would:

Communicate effectively with our children and young people, about our children and young people and make sure our children and young people can communicate effectively with us and others.

The delivery of this report and our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23

Our young inspection volunteers have been instrumental in the development and production of this report. As is clear throughout, they have contributed to a range of activities.

Our young inspection volunteers helped frame our priority outcomes and actions in the form of six high-level commitments in our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23. The plan ensures the continued involvement of our children and young people in a highly aspirational, but achievable plan, reflecting our commitments as proud corporate parents.

"I have been a young inspection volunteer since 2015 and really enjoy my volunteering role with the Care Inspectorate. I was nominated to attend the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh on the 4th July 2018 and I was absolutely delighted!"

Toni Twigg, young inspection volunteer



Involvement in shaping inspections

Our young inspection volunteers shape our methodology for our joint strategic inspections of community planning partnerships. They meet children, young people and the staff who work with them, helping us to understand the impact of services through the eyes of a young person. Our young inspection volunteers also meet with leaders. They look at how they work together and how they demonstrate the difference they are making to the lives of children in need of protection and for whom they are corporate parents.

Our involving people group met regularly throughout 2017 and 2018. The group was concerned with giving feedback, suggestions and ideas on important areas of our work such as complaints, business transformation and inspection methodologies. The group informed [Involving You!](#) - our 2018-2021 involvement strategy. Following feedback from our volunteers during 2019 we worked with volunteers to design and develop the new working together group. Members of this will work with staff on a range of longer-term projects. More short-term work and consultation opportunities will be formed through a new consultation network planned for 2021.

Creative communication

We have continued to work with our children and young people to develop ways to communicate that work for everyone. With our young inspection volunteers we use email, phone, virtual meetings and a WhatsApp group, depending on what we need to communicate and when. Up until the COVID-19 restrictions, we regularly met our young inspection volunteers face-to-face about their work and to provide social and personal support where required. We continue to maintain contact in the virtual environment as we find our way through new and innovative ways of working.

We already communicate with children and young people more widely through social media and our partners. We recognise digital engagement is an area for improvement and one which is carried forward into our Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23.

We have developed and launched a corporate parenting page on our intranet. This will help all our staff and board members to keep up to date with corporate parenting work across the organisation.

A more accessible complaints process

If our children and young people feel they are not receiving good care, it is important for us to provide easy ways for them to tell us. In 2018, we reviewed the number of complaints received and found that only a small number of young people had used our complaints function. Our young inspection volunteers have helped us make some changes so that young people have more user-friendly ways to make a complaint.

We had planned to launch the text complaints service in April 2020,, but this was impacted by the pandemic. It is now scheduled for early 2021. In the meantime, we have been able to use technology to meet with advocacy groups and raise awareness about our complaint functions.

Our young inspection volunteers have produced leaflets and posters so that our children and young people and those who support them are aware of their rights. We will review the steps we have taken and monitor their impact on the number of complaints we receive.

More accessible inspection reports

During the last three years, our young inspection volunteers have worked with strategic inspectors to produce questions and activities to involve children and young people in our inspection work. We have run a competition in each local authority area inspected between 2018 and 2020, for children and young people to design the cover of our joint inspection reports. This is to help make the reports appeal to a child or young person and their families.

Our communications team supported our young inspection volunteers to record videos of key findings from strategic inspections. These are available on our You Tube channel. This also makes it easier for children, young people and their families to learn about and understand the findings from joint strategic inspections. We will continue to develop this work in our 2021-23 plan.



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

We are pleased with what we have achieved during 2017-2020. However, we know that we still have more to do to become the best corporate parent we can be.

Our learning concludes that:

- we are in a position of strength to influence and support improvements in the care experienced by children and young people
- corporate parenting is not just something we do - it is who we collectively are as an organisation.
- we celebrate successes in how we work with young people on our inspections and projects
- we listen to the views of young people and use their ideas to support improvement
- there is a commitment in our organisation to support opportunities for our children and young people to show their skills and experiences as well as to learn new skills and build confidence.

"Being a young inspection volunteer takes me all over Scotland talking to children and young people. I have also been involved in training staff on corporate parenting to make sure everyone knows how important it is to be a good corporate parent. The Care Inspectorate listens to us and makes changes when we say things need to improve. I feel valued and know I make a difference, it is the reason I have been stayed for so long.

Carrie Ann, Young Inspection Volunteer



OUR SIX NEW COMMITMENTS

There are still areas in which we know we need to improve. These are covered in our **Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23** under six new high-level commitments. These reflect [The Promise](#) and are our pledge to our children and young people. We will listen to them, act on what they say and do our very best to help improve their life chances. Our action plan is based on these commitments and demonstrates how we will meet them. Our children and young people have informed the plan and will hold us accountable for the delivery of our commitments within it.

1

We will strive to meet the needs of our children and young people and promote their rights.

2

We will listen to our children and young people and we will learn how their experiences of the 'care system' can best shape our approach to scrutiny, engagement and improvement support to help improve the lives of others.

3

We will continue to inspect different services and partnerships and report on how well they work together. We will help services share what works well and learn from what needs to improve, to help make sure that our children and young people get the right support at the right time.

4

When one of our children and young people makes a complaint about the care they receive, we will take that complaint seriously and we will respond in a timely, thorough and proportionate way. We will always provide feedback to the person who made the complaint in a way that they will understand.

5

We will improve opportunities for our children and young people to develop skills, experience, and confidence to achieve their employment and career ambitions.

6

We will work with other corporate parents to make sure that together we can do our best for our children and young people.

Want to know more?

We hope you have found this report about our corporate parenting activities useful. If you would like to find out more, please email us at getinvolved@careinspectorate.com or call Patricia Smith on 01382 207100.

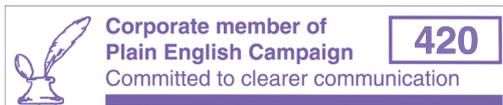
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