



THE
HUB
FOR
SUCCESS



Strategic plan

March 2023-April 2025



Hub for Success (HfS)

Vision: Care experienced people have equity of opportunity in access to and participation in further and higher education.

Mission: We are the HUB for SUCCESS – a group of partners working together to ensure that care experienced people are inspired, encouraged, and supported to get in, stay in and return to further and higher education. We work to ensure that care experienced people's educational rights are understood and promoted. We will keep the Promise Scotland.

Values:

- › **Courageous:** We advocate for our learners' rights, and we challenge when we need to. We always stand up for our learners' rights.
- › **Collaborative:** We are a partnership. We involve, engage, and work together and with other stakeholders, we recognise that together we can achieve much more. We are unbiased in our approach and are open and transparent in all we do.
- › **Constructive:** We do things in a respectful way. We support and nurture each other and support care experienced people to reach their potential.
- › **Inclusive:** We enable all care experienced people to participate equally.

Our strategic aims:

This strategic plan will be delivered together with our Collaborative Corporate Parenting plan (CCPP)*. In this plan we will ensure:

1. Care experienced people receive accurate, up to date, information on educational opportunities available across the partnership and are inspired and supported to get in, stay in and return to education.
2. Policy in Education is reflective of our respective Corporate Parenting duties in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
3. Care experienced people's voices are listened to, respected, and influence the policy and practice which affects them in further and higher education.
4. Our impact and reach continue to develop, and we grow as a sustainably funded partnership.
5. Ensure that we Keep the Promise (Scotland).

Our strategies

We will develop and pursue the following strategies throughout 2023-2025 to ensure we achieve our strategic aims:

- 1. Care experienced people receive accurate, up to date, information on educational opportunities available across the partnership and are inspired and supported to get in, stay in and return to education.**
 - › HfS provides high quality one-to-one bespoke support to care experienced people of all ages helping them to get in, stay in and return to education. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
 - › HfS partners work collectively to drive professional development across further and higher education and understand how we can better meet the needs of our care experienced students. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
 - › HfS work together with paid student ambassadors with lived experience of care to drive and deliver our collaborative Corporate Parenting plan.
- 2. Policy in Scotland is fully implemented in line with our respective Corporate Parenting duties in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.**
 - › We work together to raise public and professional awareness of the HfS service and drive deeper understanding of care experienced learners' needs and rights. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
 - › We support each other to build our capacity and drive professional development across further and higher education. (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)
 - › We work to develop and test innovative ideas to lead best practice in implementing policy and influencing culture change across our partner institutions. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
 - › We aim to influence and inform policy and practice in relation to care experienced students across further and higher education to affect and direct policy to meet the duties within the 2014 Act. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)

Our strategies CONTINUED

3. Listened to, respected, and influence the policy and practice which affects them in further and higher education.

- › We value the work of our student ambassadors and support them to guide the HfS through a re-design process.
- › The HfS core team record the one-to-one work with care experienced learners and use this data (evidence) to inform the core operations and the partnership work. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
- › We combine the findings of our data (voice) and use this as our collective mandate for change. (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)
- › Consistently explore, embed and develop opportunities to ensure that care experienced people's views, experiences and concerns are listened to and acted on. Achieve this through the partnership and in working with key stakeholders. (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)
- › Bring learning from each other and seek partnership with social work and third sector to inform and develop the work of the HfS partnership. (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)
- › Promote and share our learning and good practice examples from within and across the key sectors (Education and Social Work). (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)

4. Our impact and reach to continue to grow, and we develop as a sustainably funded partnership.

- › Ensure operational compliance and good governance in all that we do.
- › Develop and implement a funding strategy that promotes a diversity of income sources, including support from government, charitable trusts and partners.
- › Develop our staff, student ambassadors and advisory board to ensure there is a strong foundation from which we can progress our mission. (CCPP 3. Improved partnership working)
- › Assess and measure our impact to ensure we learn from successes and challenges and use this learning to develop our approaches and strategies.

5. Ensure that we keep the Promise and deliver on our collaborative corporate parenting plan

- › Co-redesign the HfS, test the new design and relaunch the partnership. (CCPP 1. student retention and finance)
- › Work to strengthen and amplify learners' voices and their power to make change. (CCPP 2. Agree and apply common language of care experience)
- › Create a collaborative corporate parenting plan.
- › Lead and drive the collaborative corporate parenting plan and ensure we are achieving its aims together.
- › Grow as a learning organisation, acknowledging that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Background and history

The HfS was established in late 2018 and has developed into a hybrid partnership which works directly with people with experience of care alongside lobbying for change. It analyses the data it collects from its one-to-one work, combines this with partner data and uses this information to influence systemic issues getting in the way of progress.

Why a regional hub focusing on post-school education?

“Education outcomes for looked after children have improved over the last decade. However, there are still large gaps compared with all pupils”
[SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, 2022](#)

The educational outcomes for people who have spent a period being looked after are stark compared with their non-looked after peers. Figures show that young people in Scotland who have spent time in care continue to leave secondary school at a younger age and with fewer qualifications than their non-care experienced peers. With 37% leaving at the minimum age, compared with 11% of all school leavers. Moreover, only 8% of care leavers go directly from school to study at higher education, compared with 46% overall (Scottish Government, 2022).

There are several reasons for the low numbers of care-experienced people taking up post-school opportunities.

These include:

- › Disruption to education brought about by the experience of care and the care system.
- › The high percentage who are impacted by mental health issues.
- › Challenging personal circumstances, including family and accommodation issues.
- › Lack of good quality up to date information and support.
- › Low expectations and lack of aspiration across support networks.
- › A further and higher education system which is challenging to navigate without support.

In 2018 prior to the HfS being established the numbers going on to further and higher education – and, crucially, completing – further and higher education studies had not shifted in any significant way, despite efforts by individual schools, local authorities, colleges and universities. A different approach was needed – a more coherent, joined-up approach that serves the needs of care-experienced people and addresses this affliction of the poverty of expectation that undermines their life chances.

The need for a more joined-up in approach is recognised by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which calls upon Scotland’s public bodies to serve as Corporate Parents for care-experienced people and carry out their Corporate Parenting duties in a collaborative and holistic manner. As Corporate Parents, therefore, we – that is our universities, colleges, local authorities, schools, and public and third sector bodies – need to work together to inspire, encourage and support care-experienced people of all ages – and to expect the most of them regardless of their personal histories. Only by working together can we begin to address the complex needs of this group and by pooling resources, sharing learning and develop expertise we can drive systemic change which will impact on a much wider group than the HfS can via its individual work.

The HfS is different from other widening access initiatives. Unlike other widening access initiatives, the HfS is not focused on postcodes or ‘low progression schools’, as people with experience of care can live in any postcode in the region and attend any school. The HfS, rather, is focused on the individual, offering bespoke support for care-experienced children and young people from as young as primary 7 to mature adulthood.

WHEN COMMITMENT: WE WILL

HOW: COLLECTIVE ACTIONS/OUTCOMES

1

Improve our collective understanding of the relationship between good financial support and student retention

March 2024

- › All partners signed up to the Guiding Principles for administration of Discretionary Funds (Scottish Government) [ACTION]
- › Sharing of data on retention rates, collective solutions identified, balanced and proportionate approach to accessing funds [ACTION/OUTCOME]
- › Decrease in students dropping out due to financial issues [OUTCOME]
- › Increase in number of students progressing from college to university [OUTCOME]
- › Increase in numbers applying for and successful in discretionary funds application process [OUTCOME]
- › Collectively review the FE Care Experienced Student Bursary attendance policy, lobby, influence, apply change across partners [ACTION/OUTCOME]
- › Achieve a new National Policy for the Care Experienced Bursary in FE written by Scottish Funding Council.

2

Improve consistency of language. Ensure that no matter where Care Experienced Students are spoken to, or about, they see consistency.

For release of 24-25 Prospectus

- › Students experience consistency in approach across their place of study in policy, finance, academic and pastoral areas [OUTCOME]
- › Students experience consistency in language around what is on offer when articulating from college to university across partnership [OUTCOME]
- › Students more informed about their rights and how to reach out for support at partner institutions [OUTCOME]

3

Increase productivity of HfS through better connectivity between HfS Advisory Board and Steering Group

Increase opportunities to work collaboratively

Increase in professional development/ understanding of the needs of care experienced learners.

July 2024

- › Our advisory board and steering group members are clear on their respective roles and the function of each group and are better placed to drive the development of the partnership [OUTCOME]
- › Review terms of reference of the steering group and advisory board [ACTION]
- › The issues raised by learners and by partners are shared, explored at steering group with a view to driving change [OUTCOME]
- › Students receive good quality, trauma informed support [OUTCOME]
- › Solutions identified by steering group are raised with advisory board, for advice, direction, agreement, and implementation [OUTCOME]
- › The Hub for Success strategic priorities are reviewed, co-re-designed, and aimed at addressing systematic issues and barriers getting in the way of retention [OUTCOME]
- › Co-design and co-deliver a summit to share this plan [OUTCOME]
- › Share learning and good practice by delivering joint events aimed at driving professional development [ACTION]
- › Increased cross institutional participation in the HS work [OUTCOME]