

# Corporate Parenting in Edinburgh

## Annual Report 2022-2023



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## Corporate Parenting in Edinburgh - Foreword

Corporate Parenting is not a new concept, and in Edinburgh there has been work ongoing for years to improve the support on offer to our Care Experienced Community. Our first Corporate Parenting plan was written in 2018, and the second in 2020. We are now creating our third iteration of the plan, but this time with a dedicated team, working hard to raise awareness, break down barriers and create more opportunities than ever before.

This report will include information on the review of the previous Corporate Parenting Plan; feedback on what has happened in the last year, since the Corporate Parenting Team has been up and running; statistics about those we have and have not managed to reach; and what the next steps are for Corporate Parenting in Edinburgh.

It is not always plain sailing. Throughout this report you will hear about some of the successes, and we will be celebrating some wins, but you will also hear about the challenges or the things that did not go according to plan. We are on a learning journey, and we hope to bring you along with us.

We have big aspirations for the future too, so although the Corporate Parenting Plan is not included in its entirety in this report, there will be references to different objectives throughout.

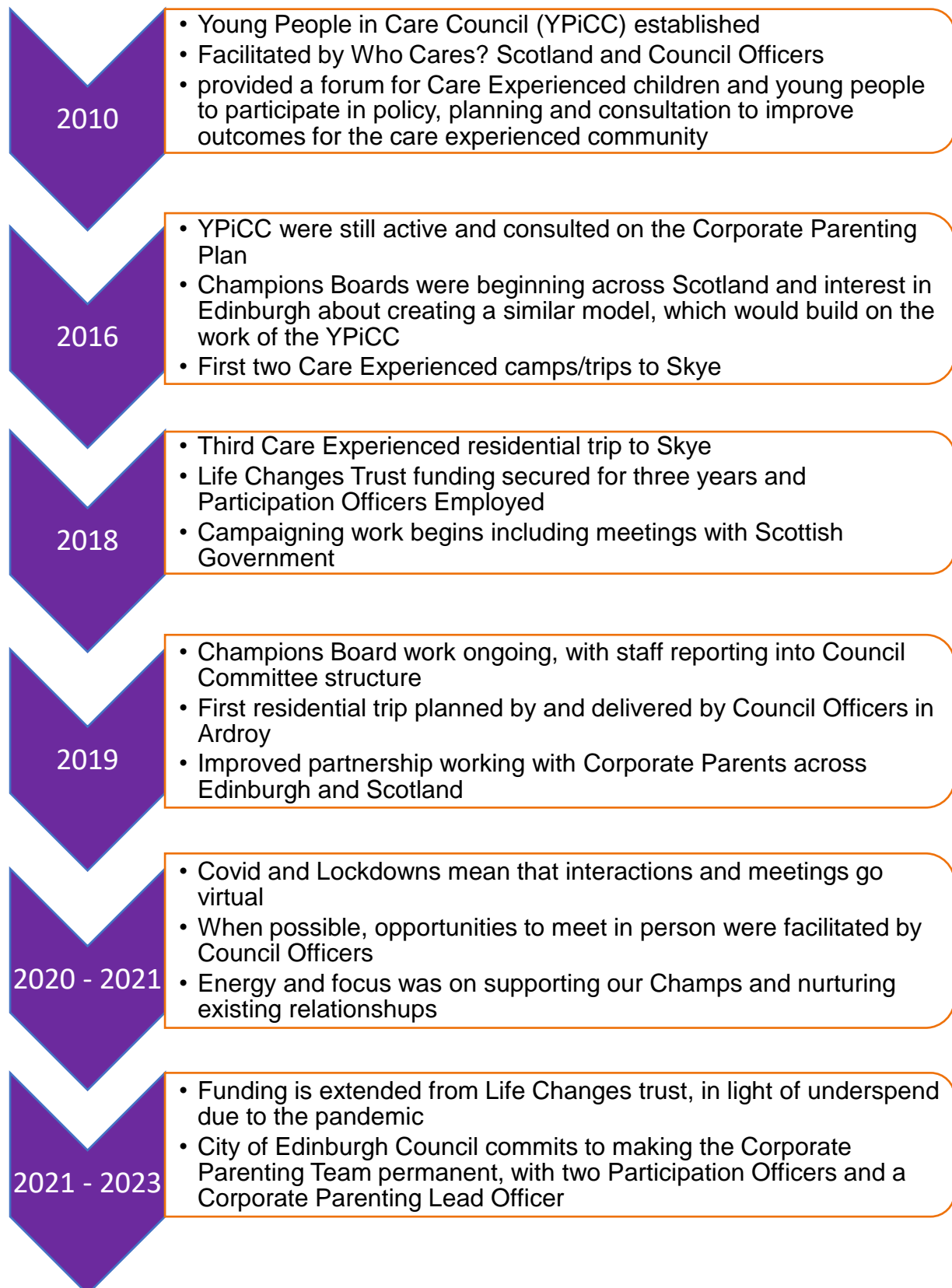
As always, the most important people involved in this work are those who live with Care Experience, who shape and influence all we do. Due a special mention are the Edinburgh Champs. We are privileged as a team to work alongside Edinburgh's Champions Boards, both Juniors and Seniors – two groups of Care Experienced Young People who tell it like it is and make sure we know when things need to change. Their generosity of spirit, ability to find the beauty in some of life's hardest moments, and drive to improve care for those that follow them, are staggering, and never cease to amaze us.

Thank you Champs, you are very much loved, every single one of you. x

The Corporate Parenting Team

The City of Edinburgh Council

## Corporate Parenting in Edinburgh - the Background



# Review of the City of Edinburgh Council Corporate Parenting Plan 2020 - 2022

In 2020, the Council's Corporate Parenting Plan was approved by the Children and Families Committee, detailing the planned Corporate Parenting actions that would be completed by the Council and its Corporate Parenting Partner Agencies. Below is a progress report, noting how each action has been developed over this time. The plan is laid out under three broad general headings, in line with the Children's Partnership Plan: Best start in life; Bridging the gap; Be everything you can be.

## Best Start in Life

### A1 – Develop and implement a communication plan

**To ensure awareness across the Council of Corporate Parenting**, an e-learning module is being designed for all staff to complete. This will be live by early 2023. Alongside this a video has been created by the Champions Board that discusses what it means to be a good Corporate Parent. This will be used alongside the e-learning module and will also be suitable for general awareness raising and other training opportunities. Symposiums for frontline social work staff have been held, to highlight the importance of Corporate Parenting and to allow space to discuss challenges in practice. A calendar of future events is being developed for teams across the Council.

In Education, over 6000 staff across 123 schools participated in professional discussions around The Promise and Corporate Parenting as part of our annual update on Child Protection. A toolkit on feeling Loved, Safe and Respected in Edinburgh's schools was produced which has contributed to staff being able to respond and react to children in a way that attunes to their individual needs. In line with The Promise a self-evaluation tool for schools was produced which contributes to school improvement planning.

Further training on The Promise, Corporate Parenting and how to support Care Experienced Learners was delivered to 11 schools through our Communities That Care partnership with Who Cares? Scotland. 1,360 pupils in P5-S2 participated in workshops on the issues care experienced children face and breaking down the stigma of being in care.

**To Promote Trauma Informed Practice across the Council**; Claire Ryan Heatley took up the role of Trauma Lead Officer in June 2022. The role sits within a multi-agency framework involving NHS Lothian and the Council. This work focuses on developing, implementing and evaluating trauma-informed services. Such an approach was successfully piloted previously within the Council's Justice Services. The aim of the pilot was to promote fundamental cultural change within the service, through adopting a trauma-informed model of service provision that recognises and centres the contribution made by experiences of trauma and its impact on service users. Learning has been taken from this very successful pilot and other service priority areas including Children and Family Social Work Services and Edinburgh Secure Services are to receive training and support. A key focus area will be

supporting workforce well-being, and ensuring we are trauma-informed with one another. We recognise that we can't look after others in a trauma-informed way if this isn't modelled within the service. In addition to knowledge and skills development we are working to create a culture that will "hold the hand of the person who holds the child's hand".

**Create a range of mediums to communicate with Care Experienced Young People.** A social media plan has been developed, with greater use of the existing social media channels, based on advice sought from the Communications Team. A mail drop is being planned to communicate with all children and young people currently looked after, with these mail drops occurring every 6 months going forward.

**A2 - Develop and Implement city-wide and locality structures between Social Work and Education to:**

- **establish single point of contact linking services**
- **track, monitor report and prioritise the wellbeing, attainment and attendance of care experience young people.**

There is a robust process in place to track the attendance and attainment of care experienced children and young people in Edinburgh Schools. Monthly monitoring is carried out by the Education We Matter team who report attendance statistics to Locality Children Practice Teams and individual Practice Team Social Workers with the intention that a multi-agency approach is used to promote attendance.

Custom reports on SEEMIS to track attainment are now embedded in practice across Edinburgh Schools and information is pulled every December and June. Based on curriculum for excellence levels and achievement of National Certificates in secondary, children's levels are recorded and monitored by a senior leader in each school.

**A3 - A broad range of care placements are available to provide a loving, stable and caring experience for children and young people who cannot live within their own family networks.**

An excerpt from the Balance of Care 2 Briefing Paper states – "There has been a twenty percent reduction in the number of Looked After Children since the launch of the Balance of Care initiative in 2015. Currently there are 1109 Looked After Children in the care of the City of Edinburgh down from a decade high of 1389. Building on this experience over the last five years, we intend to refresh and strengthen early intervention measures that support children and families in their communities and networks. A strength-based focus will help reduce the need to bring children into the care system and offer flexible help and support when required. Also, where possible, when accommodation is required, we will seek to ensure children are in the most appropriate placement to meet their needs, and in particular to try to keep them local.

Key initiatives in the original Balance of Care programme included an enhanced foster care recruitment campaign, significantly increasing City of Edinburgh Council Foster Care options as well as reducing the number of our children who went into out

of authority placements unless this was the most appropriate option to meet their needs. A dedicated Kinship Support Team was established, two Multi Systemic Therapy teams were put in place, and the capacity of the Family Group Decision Making team was doubled. Practice Teams increasingly adapted a restorative approach to working with families and two practitioners spent a year leading on Restorative practice across the council to help us to develop a restorative culture.

Since this work was delivered, there have been four significant changes. First is the arrival of a significant number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, who we have welcomed into our city, the second is Continuing Care legislation, the third has been the impact of Covid affecting the movement of children and young people as well as the availability of placements. This has resulted in us placing more children out of authority and has raised questions about the kind of service, support and provision we should design for these young people. The fourth is the Promise and the messages for us of the need to consider the lessons from care experienced young people.

We have in response begun to rethink our wider service provision and how we can support all our staff in their work with our most vulnerable children. Achieving the outcome of ensuring that children are in the right placement that meets their needs is about a whole system approach.”

Balance of Care 2 has now been launched and the briefing paper states the following – “We are just about to launch our Balance of Care 2 programme which will analyse the needs of our Looked After population and consider the best accommodation, early intervention and support options for our young people. All staff and Corporate parents will have a role in taking a plan forward and we will only be successful if we all work together.”

## **Bridging the Gap**

### **B1 - Ensure the development and reach of the Champions Board through:**

**Establishing dedicated staffing capacity of 1 x Lead Officer and 2 x Participation Officers**, who were in post from December 2021 (Lead Officer) and April 2022 (Participation Officers). One Participation Officer has been in post previously and so was able to continue with the work underway, and the other was a member of the Champions Board, who had a sound understanding of the work of Edinburgh Champions Board.

Increasing the number of care experienced young people directly and indirectly involved, through a clear recruitment strategy. This has included awareness raising across the Council; linking in with youth groups across Edinburgh; creating training and work opportunities for Care Experienced Young People; increased use of our social media channels; a residential experience for new members. As such we now have a Junior Champions Board (ages 13-17) and a Senior Champions Board (18-26). We also offer indirect links through opportunities shared via social media; one to one support from participation officers with care experienced young people; a planned mail-out with information on how to contribute to the care agenda in Edinburgh.

**Development of a Champions led workplan including identified actions and activities to build and establish relationships**, which has focused on restructuring of the Full Board. The Full Board now meets every six weeks, with representatives from NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, Education and Social Work. The Senior Champions Board identified key corporate parents that they felt should be in attendance and held interviews for Ambassadorship. The new Ambassadors will also sit on the Corporate Parenting Board for THE COUNCIL and will form part of the feedback loop between the Council and our Care Experienced Community.

## **B2 - Clear Monitoring and understanding of the progress and achievement of looked after children in education through:**

### **Quarterly reporting to CPMOG**

As part of Edinburgh's response to The Promise and the continued commitment to meet the needs of care experienced children, the current context of school exclusion(s) was explored to identify what works and where further support and intervention is required.

Professionals included school senior leaders and representatives from social work, educational psychological services, and additional support for learning services. Interviews focused on key themes including

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. All participants were asked the following questions: What sorts of circumstances surround an exclusion(s) and what was the impact of exclusions on children, young people, and their families? This led on to ask if money, time, and resources were not an issue, what would you do to promote inclusion and end school exclusions for Care Experienced children and young people? Nine recommendations have been highlighted as an outcome of these interviews along with participant ideas for small tests of change aimed to avoid exclusions through promoting inclusion, including restorative, emotionally supportive, rights-centred, and trauma-informed approaches through GIRFEC.

For those young people who are not accessing mainstream education full time, we have a package of supports and interventions including Growing Youth, Forest Schools, Youth 180, Gorgie Farm, Zoo and our college partnership.

**Annual Report** - guidance on Co-ordinated Support Plans for Care Experienced children and young people was produced for Head Teachers and Support for Learning Leads in schools. We are committed to ensuring that all currently looked after children are assessed for a CSP. This multi-agency discussion will take place in review meetings and will be coordinated through CPMS in school.

## **B3 - Partners work together to ensure education needs are identified and addressed through the CYP planning process**

Guidance on Co-ordinated Support Plans for Care Experienced children and young people was produced for Head Teachers and Support for Learning Leads in schools. We are committed to ensuring that all currently looked after children are assessed for a CSP. This multi-agency discussion will take place in review meetings and will be coordinated through CPMS in school.



## **B4 - Young People have access to safe and affordable Housing options**

The City of Edinburgh has embraced Continuing Care for our young people and is by far the Local Authority with most Continuing Care placements (171 as of September 2022). Whilst this is beneficial for our young people seeking continuing care, it has had a significant impact on the number of foster and residential placements available to other children, resulting in a number of young people being accommodated out with Edinburgh. It has also placed additional spend on the Council to pay for these placements from existing budgets. with Continuing Care placements retaining a relatively high cost.

The Housing Support Panel was a forum aimed at assisting our young people into supported accommodation. However, the Panel had some deficiencies, including becoming by default the go-to referral place for care leavers – even those who did not need or request supported accommodation. Therefore in 2021 a review of the Housing Support Panel began and is continuing. This has led to a root and branch review of purpose and process. Future development of a supported accommodation process is being led by the newly appointed Housing Development Worker. This will allow us to signpost effectively those young people who require/request supported accommodation, and those who simply require/request their own tenancy. We are advocating a 'Housing First' "" approach to our work.

Through the addition of the Exceptional Housing Award for our care experienced young people, we can offer young people quicker access to their own tenancies in localities they want to live in. Our young people are supported by Housing Officers who monitor whether they are bidding or not and will offer support.

## **Be Everything You Can Be**

### **C1 - The achievements and of care experienced young people are recognised and celebrated individually and collectively through:**

**Communications strategies** were discussed at length with the Communications team and an agreement reached regarding web and Social Media presence. We were advised that using Twitter for sharing the work of the board and reaching organisations would be best. Instagram and Facebook would be used for communicating with and getting information out to our Care Experienced Community. There is also now a Corporate Parenting Landing Page on both the Orb and external Council Website, with basic info regarding Corporate Parenting; links to external websites where you can find out more about Corporate Parenting; information regarding Edinburgh Champions Board, contact details for the Corporate Parenting Team; a link to our published/current Corporate Parenting Plan

### **Regular reporting to CPMOG and the Education, Children and Families**

**Committee** has been on hold since March 2022. There had been acknowledgement from members that the board was no longer meeting its function and needed to be reviewed. A proposal for the new Corporate Parenting Board was approved at the last CPMOG in March 2022. Planning is now underway to set the Terms of Reference for the new board, to be signed off by the Education Children and Families Committee on 15th November.

## **C2 - Extend and expand opportunities for young looked after young people in S4 to achieve positive destinations through:**

### **Pathways and transition programmes**

Guidance on supporting transitions for Care Experienced Children and Young People has been developed and cascaded to all Care Experienced leads in schools. City Wide Transitions teachers have been made aware of the guidance and the Quality Improvement Education Officer (QIEO) has met with the Transitions teachers to stress the importance of transitions for Care Experienced young people.

Through the "Care Experienced Fund" a number of projects have been funded to support health and wellbeing leading to positive destinations including

**Game On**, a project built around the attraction of football. and delivered a programme framed on experiential learning on different career and educational opportunities within the game and business of football, including sports coaching, sport psychology, marketing, media and communications, hospitality, event management, groundkeeping and administration. 14 pupils were engaged with the program.

**Columba 1400 programme** for 75 young people over 7 groups from secondary/those supported by through care and after care, along with staff from schools and social work, participated in a five day leadership academy. The focus was on building leadership skills, improved health and wellbeing through increased levels of self-esteem and resilience.

**MCR Pathways** supports over 200 care-experienced and disadvantaged young people between S1-S6 in Edinburgh. The project works in 9 secondary schools in Edinburgh. In S1 and S2, young people participate in weekly Group Work sessions facilitated by their Pathways Coordinator focusing on emotional literacy, wellbeing, teamwork, employability skills and self-awareness. From S3, young people are carefully matched with a mentor who meets with them for a period every week, for a minimum duration of one academic year.

**Cyrenians Mediation and Support** offers conflict resolution workshops and family mediation/support to young people and families with involvement in the care system.

**31 care-experienced young people** participated in six workshops to increase their skills in managing emotions, conflict and key relationships in their lives. Three young people also accessed further support and family mediation to support the young person to have meaningful conversations with a parent/carer to improve relationships and reduce the risk of homelessness and other negative outcomes associated with the care experience.

As well as those noted above, a number of other interventions were also funded through the Care Experienced fund to support health and wellbeing, attendance and attainment including:

- Spartans P7/S1 Transition Project
- Myadventure sessions

- Bridge 8 outdoor and team building sessions
- VTO, volunteer tutoring for primary aged children
- With kids – play therapy sessions in 11 primary schools
- Place to Be, mental health training for staff in schools
- Forest Schools over 100 places allocated to Care Ex children.

### ***Expansion of the Council's Family Firm commitment***

The Edinburgh Guarantee is the City of Edinburgh Council's response to support people seeking employment, especially those with barriers to employment including people with Care Experience.

The Edinburgh Guarantee aims to provide citizens with information on the range of support available in Edinburgh. Whether it's a job, training, education or employability support, there are organisations to support. Within the City of Edinburgh Council we manage the Edinburgh Guarantee and have a dedicated team that can work on a 1:1 basis with Care Experienced Young People to explore their options.

### **C3 - Develop a comprehensive data set to gather and analyse profile and wellbeing of Edinburgh's looked after children**

Initial discussions have been held about how we can better measure the outcomes of our Care Experienced Community in a more meaningful way. Options are being considered re: how we better reflect young people's views of the impacts of services on them and the outcomes and achievements that they have noted during their time in care. One option is to use the GIRFEC wellbeing Indicators and the Wellbeing Web (commonly referred to as SHANARRI). Scoring against each category would allow for monitoring of the progress of individuals and trends across the city.

### **C4 - Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young people are supported to:**

- **understand and make sense of their own life story through life-story guidance and training programme for staff**
- **have treasured memories stored safely and accessibly.**

There is a working group who have worked on and created a briefing paper that outlines best practice. They have delivered briefing sessions across children's services and the review team to share their findings and recommendations, reaching 150-180 frontline workers. There is a new life-story consultation service – will be screened every Tuesday and we will arrange case discussions on a rota basis. Further sessions are planned for more staff as well as foster carers. A toolkit is in development. There have also been pre-emptive discussions with the Care inspectorate about the use of a digital vault to store memories such as photos and videos.

A social worker has been recruited to work with people accessing their social work files where abuse has been identified. This role sits within information governance. A working group is looking at how we support any Care Experienced Individual to

access their information and a briefing paper is being prepared for senior management to consider possible options.

## Corporate Parenting Activity 2022 - 2023

### Edinburgh's Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board was re-established in December 2022. The previous Corporate Parenting oversight was undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Member Officer Group, established in 2003, and was a sub-committee of the Children and Families Committee. The initial purpose of the Corporate Parenting Member Officer Group (CPMOG) was to establish a common understanding with regards to Corporate Parenting, and the needs of children who are Care Experienced. People involved in the CPMOG over the years were passionate about supporting our care experienced community. They attended regularly and brought about significant change to the way children and young people experienced their services and support. In that time however legislation, research and policy had progressed. There was still a strong need to highlight inequalities experienced by those involved with the care system, but there was also a need to have a space where issues with moving practice on or accessing necessary resources could be brought, and solutions identified.

The large number of invitees and the style of the meeting had led to a top-down model of engagement and consultation. Officers were asked to evidence what had been done from meeting to meeting, with little engagement between CPMOG members or follow up regarding tasks between meetings. Feedback from members identified the formal style of the meeting was prohibitive of ideas and thoughts being shared with ease and the membership had become cumbersome and unwieldy.

To address the above, we dissolved the CPMOG with agreement from the Council's Children and Families committee and established a Corporate Parenting Board, designed as a solution-focused forum. It is no longer held as a sub-committee of the Children and Families Committee, to allow for a more informal approach to chairing and discussion. Chairing of the board is held between the different agencies, looking to each to take a shared responsibility for the group. There is a smaller core membership of around 20 people (with representatives from Police, NHS, City of Edinburgh Council Officers and elected members, the voluntary sector, Scottish Children's Reporter Agency etc) with interim membership extended to parties when their attendance would be helpful/relevant to specific topics. There are six Champions Board Ambassadors that also sit on the Corporate Parenting Board to create a feedback loop between the two platforms and ensure that the views of our Champs are brought to the fore during discussions. The first meeting was held in December 2022.

Updates are provided on Corporate parenting/Champions Board activity at each board meeting. The actions raised from the board meetings are held by the Corporate Parenting Lead Officer to follow up and report back on, prior to the following meeting. The board feeds into both the Capital City Partnership via the Children's Partnership (multiagency city planning groups) as well as the Children and Families Committee (part of the Full Council Structure).

One of the main tasks for the board is to oversee the embedding of the Corporate Parenting Plan into the work of all involved organisations. By tying this plan to other established work plans across the city, and our partner agencies claiming tasks and actions under the new plan, we can see more joined up working and a recognition of where there is work ongoing already, to avoid duplication. Ambassadorship allows the Corporate Parents to discuss the work of their organisations with our Champs and get clear and honest feedback about the work they are doing. This is reflected in their Corporate Parenting plans.

## **Edinburgh's Champions Boards**

Please see the following reports from our Participation Officers about the work of both Champions Boards over the last year.

### **Senior champs**

In the last 6 months senior champs have been busy, towards the end of last year senior champs had a relaxed December to enjoy the festive period. In December senior champs went to the theatre with junior champs to see Edinburgh's Christmas Carol and Zizi's for dinner this was a great opportunity for the seniors and juniors to get to know each other and create a bond. The seniors really took part in engagement with the juniors offering them a range of advice they could use in life and within the champ's board. Alongside this they spoke about what the junior champs could get out of attending the champions board and what to expect when they move on up to seniors.

The seniors had a session of their own to have a Christmas themed night. They sat down to dinner exchanged gifts around our Christmas tree and played Christmas games. There was also a cashless shop for the seniors to pick a gift for a family member as we had loads of donations left over from cash for kids. We also had a meet with senior champs inbetween Christmas and New Year to make sure everyone was okay and had a chilled session eating food, chatting and playing games. Christmas time can be a hard time for a lot of our champs.

We then moved into the New Year and began identifying our new priorities. The champions spoke about their frustration of young people being removed from legal orders before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and then not being able to access specific services and support. The group asked for the sessions to be focused on specific topics/services.

There were discussions about many young people falling through the gaps for a variety of reasons. Champions are keen to be involved with presenting/training for schools, colleges, and universities- particularly around mentoring care experience Students. We also had a full board meeting, and the ambassadors had some asks from the young people, and they are also happy to work on the asks throughout the year.

The agendas and focus of groups are driven by the Champions but Ambassadors are also encouraged to discuss their own areas of work and seek advice and input from Champions. Education and children services identified interview panels for education staff to always have a young people panel present given the success of previous young people panels. NHS asked for support to create their corporate parenting module. Police Scotland identified their pledge to care experienced young people had a flaw in terms of driving license requirements, and how this is a must to be able to join the police (this something that is UK wide and not just Edinburgh division so is difficult to change but they are keen to bring the awareness of this to Police Scotland and find a resolution). Family-based care expressed the wish to continue to push forward life story work and get the process of young people wishing to understand their childhood with softer information such as photos and memories

of their journey/childhood. The champs are happy to take all the above forward and continue to work on this.

We then had focus sessions around the TCAC service in its entirety, what is really working well, areas for improvement and what would they like to see. They decided that they would present this by using a tree with each branch section being a different section of the service i.e. Groups/staff. Great discussions flowed around the members and new ideas arose for the service for what they would like to see for themselves now but also for the next cohort of young people coming through. The TCAC sessions are still being worked on at present just now with the champs and we will continue to do this until it is finished.

Senior champs have also been involved in the interviews for Senior Managers in social work and they are really enjoying this as it gives them a say as to who will be employed by the Council. There are currently six members of the Board who attend every session, however, we do have more young people to meet up with. We are also taking new recruitment in for senior champs all year round. We have planned a residential for recruitment in August so hopefully we can bring our numbers up a bit more and get more voices heard within Edinburgh. We are also very mindful that senior champs have their own life, and they are all at different stages of life just now with some champs working full time and in college moving to their own accommodation etc. The door is left open for all new existing and old members to join senior champs and come when they can and when they want to 😊.

### **Junior Champs**

In August 2022, we set ourselves the task to form a Junior Champions Board with young people aged 13-18 years old. The aim of this was to form a group like senior champs, with young people who are currently in the care system. The goal is to reach all young people, but if not, most age ranges within the care system. This wasn't an easy task however we took on the challenge as a team with our main priority being to make a difference for young people in Edinburgh.

On the 8 August 2022 we took nine young people up to Lagganlia outdoor education centre. The aim of the residential is to work as a team, form relationships and have a fun time with new people that you don't usually see such as people out with your area School and social group. It is not mandatory that you come to the champions board after a residential. However, we do hope young people want to attend and be a part of our board after this. At the residential we took the same layout as previously been done at residential however we quickly learned and adapted this as the group we had needed more youth work-based ideas and activities. The residential was a good learning experience for staff and the young people.

We then came home from Lagganlia. As a team we sat down and agreed junior champs board would meet from 4pm to 6pm on the first Thursday of every month. We have had seven of the young people from the residential attend junior champs with an additional young person to join. The total amount of young people attending each session for the past eight months has been eight young people with more young people having an interest in junior champs. We hope to get these young



people along soon to take part in junior champs however with it being exam time and young people currently having other commitments it is likely they will join after the summer. The door has been left open so they can attend any time between now and summer as well.

As a board the junior champs decided in October that they would like to meet more regularly so we increased the timing and amount we meet. Junior champs now meet every second Thursday from 4pm to 7pm. Junior champs is run completely differently to senior champs - we run it with youth work-based activities and some games because of their ages and stages. By doing this we can pick up topics around the care system and feed it back to senior champs. Some of the topics that have been discussed are sibling contact, school, social work and how it feels to be a care experienced young person. We have also completed activities about trust and safety in all areas of your life such as school, with your social worker, in the community, champions board, in your house etc. When doing this it allowed the junior champs to express what areas in life needed to be improved. How could we help improve young people's experiences as Corporate Parents and members of the board, to make sure our young people are getting the best life possible. We are about to start a new project with the junior champs starting the 27 April 2023 with the Superpower Agency, writing a book about your first 24 hours in care or any other story they would like to write about. This will be published in a book. This will allow the champs and other care experienced young people and professionals to see what it really is like to be a care experienced young person. We hope this will be beneficial to both the workforce and our young people.

Going forward we hope that junior champs can expand, and we can involve more young people in our groups to make a difference to the care system 😊

## **The Corporate Parenting Team - General Activity**

Both Participation Officer posts and the Corporate Parenting Lead Officer post are now permanent, and as such the council has made a clear commitment to listening to and working alongside the Care Experienced Community. The team as it stands has been in place for just over a year and, as you have already seen, we have established and continued both Junior and Senior Champs. We have also used this year to work on Community engagement and embedding the work of the Champs Boards into the work of the council. We are also supporting our colleagues to continually strive for improvement in how we support our Care Experienced Community through the embedding of positive practice and improvement work across the council.

Training and events have played an important part in this work. Here are a few examples of the work the team has been involved in:

- Two Symposiums were held in early 2022 for frontline social workers. These events helped the team gather the views of staff directly supporting our Care Experienced community and helped to shape our team focus and priorities.
- We co-delivered a session for the newly elected members of Council in June 2022, following the 2022 local council elections. This session covered all elements of the Care System and the services that are in place to support them.
- We have delivered tailored training about Corporate Parenting to specific teams, including the Outdoor Education Team who worked alongside the Corporate Parenting Team to deliver the 2022 Champs Camp.
- A Corporate Video piece was created alongside the Senior Champions Board to highlight the importance of Corporate Parenting and the impact and role everyone has.
- An e-learning module is nearing completion that will be mandatory training for all City of Edinburgh council Staff. This includes a second piece of video work that follows the story of a Care Experienced Individual and helps bring the contents of the e-learning module to life.

We have attempted to reach as broad a care experienced audience as possible, including those who may not consider themselves to be Care Experienced. In this vein:

- We administered an Individuals Grants Scheme, to the value of £20,000 through Life Changes Trust funding. The scheme was designed and administered by Senior Champions who set the application criteria and made the grant decisions. Care Experienced Individuals over the age of 16 were allowed to apply for a grant and the types of requests were varied. 87 applications were received, and all applicants received some form of grant.
- We ran our annual Champs Camp, for the first time aimed at 13-17 year olds. This was a great success, and as already discussed in this report, these individuals have formed the founding group of Junior Champs.

- Sent Season's Greetings to all young people who were looked after at home with a gift voucher. The card explained who the champs are and the work that they do, to try and raise awareness of support for those who are cared for at home.
- Sponsored and attended the Kinship Christmas Party where we met and spent time with children, young people and their carers.
- Hosted Wellbeing events between January and May, that were free of charge and promoted Community engagement for all ages of Care Experienced children, young people and their carers.

Two new motions have been passed by Elected Members that have been directly focused on supporting the Care Experienced Community. The first has been to increase recognition and understanding of Care Experience, and how council services can be designed with the needs of the Care Experienced Community being considered. The update to the Integrated Impact Assessment is underway, as well as plans for further training for managers and Elected Members on Corporate Parenting and what factors should be considered when designing services.

The second is a Guaranteed Interview Scheme, which will support members of the Care Experienced Community to apply for jobs with the council, gain employment and be supported throughout their careers with the City of Edinburgh Council. A working group has been established to move this piece of work forward and a trial of the approach within Social Work recruitment has been positive.

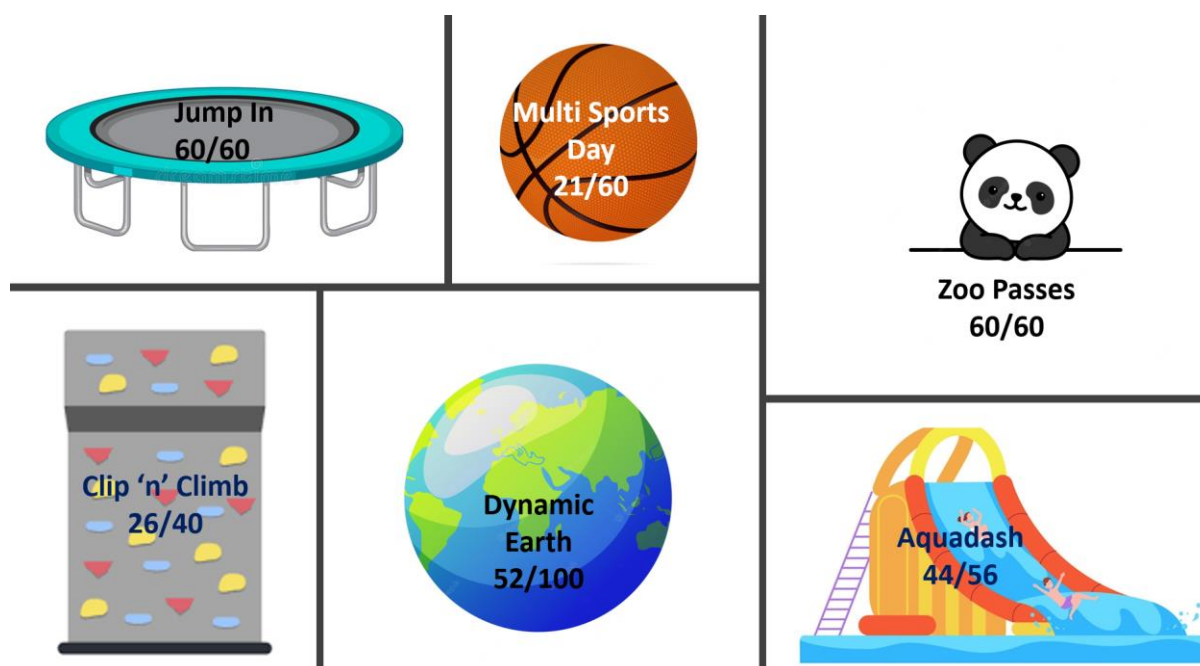
Peer Pairs, a peer mentoring scheme is in design at present. This is a scheme for young people to be paired up with a mentor with lived experience of the Care System. Mentees will be aged 12 – 18, and mentors aged 18 – 26. Mentors are to be paid for their time and we are working with our HR colleagues to put together job descriptions at present.

We are also working closely with our Community Benefits team to find opportunities to support our Care Experienced Community. To date this has given driving lessons, washing machines, laptops, paint, and other donations to our young people.

## Community Engagement Statistics

The Corporate Parenting Team held six different community engagement events from January to May 2023. These events were always fully booked but often there were high levels of drop off, or tickets booked incorrectly. We also found that activities booked on Fridays were less popular than weekends. Nevertheless, the events were well received and carers in particular spoke about the benefits of having activities that could be enjoyed by a community that understands one another. These events were provided through community benefits donations and partnership working with other agencies, including Edinburgh Leisure, and reached over 200 children and young people, as well as their carers and siblings.

Voucher type	Number used	Number available
Jump in	60	60
Multi-sports day	21	60
Zoo passes	60	60
Clip n' Climb	26	40
Dynamic Earth	52	100
Aquadash	44	56



Staffing of these events also needs to be considered as these events were staffed by a small team and all events were either at weekends or at times when staff do not usually work. Staff were supportive of the scheme, but it would not be sustainable to continue this scheme on the existing staffing model.



Throughcare & Aftercare  
141 vouchers



South West  
39 vouchers



North East  
46 vouchers



North West  
53 vouchers



South East  
46 vouchers

At the end of 2022 we sent greetings cards and gift cards to 325 children and young people who are looked after at home, having identified them as a group of people that we have had less success engaging with.

Area	Number of greeting cards and gift cards
Throughcare and aftercare	141
South west	39
North east	46
North west	53
South east	46

The £20,000 available through Life Changes Trust Funding, was paid out to 87 people. Here are some common requests.



Item/activity	Number of grants	Total value
Family days out	11	£1,544
Household items	35	£8,790
Holidays	6	£2,300
Gym memberships	3	£792
Clothing	8	£785
Football tickets	5	£300
New bikes	2	£500
Laptops	4	£2,000
Art supplies	2	£200
Christmas gifts	4	£400
Learning new skills	2	£760

As well as the scheme allowing the Senior Champs to support their peers, it also highlighted common themes and areas of need across the Care Experienced Community. In hope of stretching the funding to support as many young people as possible, we began conversations with other organisations, as well as Council departments. Ultimately this led to us making links with organisations and partner providers who are keen to support the Care Experienced Community, both with funding needs such as those highlighted by the Individual Grants scheme, but also through other avenues that are now being explored.

Here are some more of the links we have made and people we have reached this year.

### **Community Benefits**

- 10 washing machines
- £500 funding for zoo passes from Claremont Furniture
- £4,000 to support two young people to learn to drive
- £2,000 for laptops
- Pledges of support for the Corporate Parenting Hub

### **Kinship Party**

- 100 children and young people
- 55 kinship carers
- 1 Santa and lots of elves

### **Champs Camp**

- 13 Referrals
- 12 Spaces offered
- 9 Participants
- 6 Active Junior Champs members

### **Symposiums 2022**

- March – 20 staff
- May – 15 staff

## What's Next...

We have a busy year ahead of us, most noticeably will be the move into the new Corporate Parenting Hub.

There will also be Symposiums in May 2023 and tailored training for Elected Members and Recruiting Managers.

We are looking into taking on our senior Champs as Tertiary Employees, meaning we can pay them an hourly rate if they support facilitation of training or sit on interview panels. This helps them gain oversight of Council processes and gain valuable work experience, as well as allowing for meaningful rather than tokenistic engagement. We have also provided Introduction to Youth Work training for two of our senior Champs in the hope that they will cofacilitate mini and midi champs when they get up and running. This again feeds into our feedback loop model.

As mentioned previously we will shortly launch our e-learning module that will be mandatory for all City of Edinburgh Council employees. It covers the basics around child protection, the care system and the impact of being Care Experienced, as well as how all employees can make a difference for others through positive and considered actions and changes. We are in discussions about how we might share this with our partner agencies and potentially other local authorities.

There are plans in place to begin running mini champs (p1 – p3) and midi champs (p4-p7); groups for Care Experienced young parents and their babies and toddlers; a beyond care group, for adults who were previously cared for; special interest groups such as cooking, crafts, music etc. when we have full access to our Corporate Parenting Hub. We will prioritise groups for mini and midis, before moving onto the others, as staffing allows.

Our use of social media continues to spread the word about the work of the board, and with information about work the champs are undertaking, as well as information for Care Experienced young people both from ourselves or our partner agencies. We have information on the Council's external web pages about care experience and corporate parenting on the Council's web pages, alongside our current Corporate Parenting Plan.

We have begun making links with partner agencies that are not technically Corporate Parents, but that do want to support our Care Experienced Community. This has most recently been Edinburgh Zoo who have offered us a placement for one of our young people and also would like to offer a programme to support some of our young people who are struggling with school attendance. This and other conversations with community benefit providers has highlighted a real appetite for businesses to give back to communities and support our Care Experienced Community.