



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland

Corporate Parenting Impact Assessment Summary Report

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

Social Security Scotland is a Corporate Parent

Under section [58\(1\)\(c\)](#) of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) Corporate Parents have a duty to listen to the needs of people with care experience.

This means as a service provider or employer we should maximise positive impacts for people with care experience and prevent creating negative, unintended consequences.

This document details what we found and how that influenced the development of our second Corporate parenting plan.



How we completed the Equality Impact Assessment process

- We gathered a small group together and allocated tasks
- We contacted different organisations
- Conducted a literature search with help of Scottish Government Library
- Completed research by reading articles
- Discussed our findings with colleagues and at meetings

Data Sources

- [Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2018-2019](#)
- [The Digital Divide: The impact on the rights of care leavers in Scotland](#)
- [Looked after children: education outcomes 2018-2019](#)
- [Social Security Scotland - Social Security Scotland Client Survey 2018-2020](#)
- [Scottish Prison Service - Young People in Custody 2015](#)
- [Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection - Homelessness and care experience](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of the Child](#)
- [News article - Racism in the foster care system is depriving kids of support](#)
- [Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights - It's time to talk about Care Experienced People of Colour](#)
- [Providing a secure base for LGBTQ young people in foster care: The role of foster carers](#)
- [Scottish Prison Service - Prison Survey 2019](#)
- [National Confidential Forum | National Confidential Forum](#)
- Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system.

What we know

The Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2018-2019 published on 31 March 2020 outlines the latest data on young people looked after, on the child protection register and in secure care in Scotland, as at 31 July 2019.

14,262

children in Scotland were looked after

2,599

children in Scotland are on the child protection register

551

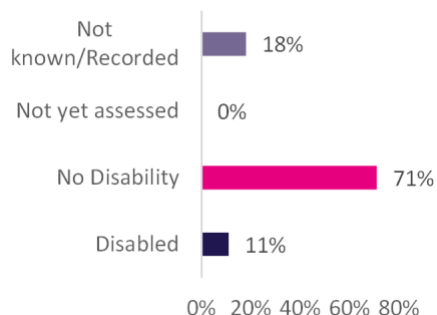
children in Scotland are both looked after and on the child protection register

Gender

46% Female

54% Male

Disability



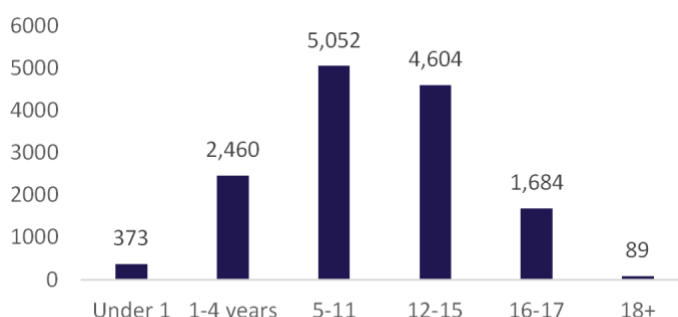
Less than 2%

of children in Scotland were being looked after by local authorities or on the child protection register

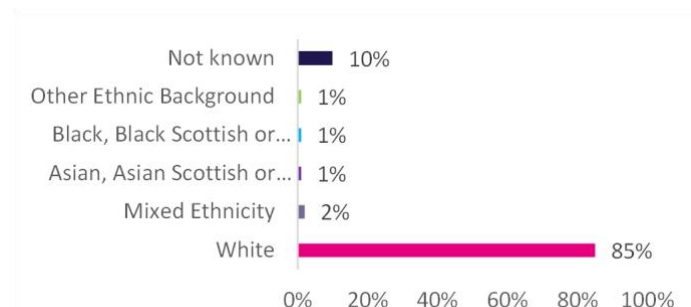


84 young people were in secure care accommodation

Age Group



Ethnic Group



Type of accommodation



90% reside in the community

10% are in residential accommodation

Education



35% looked after school leavers leave with 1 or more qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level 5 compared with **85%** for all pupils

What our Client Survey tells

Clients are people who apply for any of the benefits we provide. The survey was open to everyone who had received a decision on a benefit from September 2018 to July 2020.

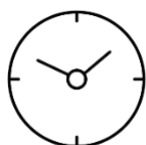
Overall experience

91% of care experienced respondents said their overall experience of Social Security Scotland was “very good” or “good”



86%

understand what Social Security does



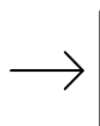
88%

felt Social Security Scotland had not wasted their time



85%

felt they could trust Social Security Scotland



11%

experienced some sort of barrier in getting help from Social Security Scotland



2%

felt discriminated against during their experience with Social Security Scotland



69%

felt Social Security Scotland is an open organisation

92%

felt they were treated with dignity



88%

felt they were treated fairly



91%

felt they were treated with respect

RESPECT

Rating experience with staff



93%

Very good or good

2%

Neither poor nor good

5%

Poor or very poor

Making contact with Social Security Scotland



84%

Very easy or easy

8%

Neither easy nor difficult

8%

Difficult or very difficult

What we found

Gaps in equality data

- As a new organisation we are still building our information sources and analysis capability. Our information history is limited which has affected our ability to accurately establish benchmarks in our workforce data on people with care experience.
- The Social Security Experience Panels have established a research programme specifically with seldom heard groups. One of the five strands of the programme will focus on people with care experience people, findings are expected to be published online in 2021.
- We have found it difficult to find out about experience of older people with care experience.
- The Independent Care Review noted that though we have data on the care system, its inputs, processes and outputs we lack information on the experiences and outcomes of the people who live in it and around it.

Age

- In discussions with Who Cares? Scotland we heard that the impact of care doesn't just stop when someone reaches a certain age.
- The Independent Care Review stated that there must be an understanding that the responsibility Scotland has for children for whom it has had parenting responsibility and whose family life has been disrupted by the decisions of the State is ongoing. In the same way that parents seek to provide care and support for their children beyond the age of 18
- Many respondents to the [National Confidential Forum](#) spoke of lifelong adversity as a result of their care experience.

Race and Religion or Belief

- Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states when considering care solutions "due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background."
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights confirms research within Scotland on the experiences of people of colour in the care system is hard to find but suggests that a lack of Black and Minority Ethnic foster carers results in transracial placements which can have a negative impact. Being placed in with a family of different race or heritage has resulted in children being given or deprived of certain foods and can make them feel like an outsider and makes it difficult or confusing when trying to create their sense of self.

Sexual Orientation

- [LGBT Youth Scotland's Youth Commission on Care Experience](#) highlights the need for a safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people, accepting of all identities. Awareness training should be mandatory for carers and policy makers to ensure care experienced people have a supporting and understanding environment and all homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying should be taken seriously.
- For care experienced young people it's critical they are able to build relationships with those involved in their care and have someone they trust to come out to when they are ready.

Disability

- We found limited information on care experience and disability. In the most recent, Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland report 11 % of those in care had a disability.

Gender

- In the most recent, Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland report 54% of those in care were male and 46% were female.

Educational Achievement

- Over the past 6 years educational outcomes for care experienced children have improved but there are still large gaps in comparison with all children.
- Research shows only 35% of care experienced school leavers have 1 or more qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 5 in comparison to 85% of all pupils in 2018/19. In addition, 71% of care experienced school leavers have a positive follow up destination in comparison to 93% of all pupils.
- Care experienced children tend to leave school at earlier stages, 42% left in S4 or earlier in comparison to 12% of school leavers more generally.
- Only 7% of care experienced young people go to university compared with 39% of their peers.
- Recent research from Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection states that care experienced people who have had their schooling disrupted may have missed mainstream opportunities to develop digital knowledge, skills and competence

Housing and Homelessness

- Young people with care experience are more likely than other young people to become homeless or experience housing instability. In discussions with our Champion's Group, the Prince's Trust confirmed the issue of "sofa surfing" is also an issue for care experienced people.

- Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection confirms a lack of suitable housing can create barriers to participation in education, employment and training and to accessing other services such as registering with a GP.
- Who Cares? Scotland also emphasised that frequency of accommodation placements can cause shame and trauma. Some care experienced people could have over 10 different addresses over a two year period.

Digital Exclusion

- In discussions with Prince's Trust we learned that a large number of young people only have use of mobile phones which limits interactions with certain organisations. This has increased during Covid-19 restrictions. As a result it would be very difficult to complete a job application or access benefits on a mobile.
- Many young people access information via social media and therefore may miss out on key messages or information if organisations do not use social media platforms regularly to communicate.
- Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection confirms the additional challenges faced by people with care experience including lack of equipment, high cost and poor access to stable broadband or Wi-Fi and gaps in digital confidence and literacy.

Recruitment & Employment

- Prince's Trust highlighted reluctance to engage with government organisations because of their past experience.
- Who Cares? Scotland found many parents with care experience often lack IT skills and have limited access.

Offending

- The latest Scottish Prison Service Survey, published October 2020 states that 25% of prisoners had been in care and of these 60% had been in care at the age of sixteen. 64% were cared for in a residential home and one third spent time in a secure unit.
- Who Cares? Scotland states that lack of placement stability, poor educational attainment and negative social or family relationships are often the reasons for this figures.

What actions will we take

Our focus for the 2021 – 2023 Action plan is on the Access and Opportunities [duties](#).

Learning and Understanding

- Develop a mandatory e-learning course suitable for all colleagues and non-Executive members.
- Develop additional learning and development opportunities for key colleagues (those in a position to promote interests).
- Build relationships with key stakeholders and people with care experience through partnerships and Local Delivery teams.
- Engage with The Promise Team within Scottish Government.
- Co-ordinate allocated volunteering days.

Corporate Parenting Champions

- Create a Corporate Parenting Yammer Group.
- Hold monthly Champions meetings and maintain Connect workspace.

Evidence and Data Gathering

- Equality Impact Assessments to include impact on people with care experience
- Seldom Heard Research – learn from and promote findings.
- Client Panels – ensure representation and promote feedback.
- Liaise with Social Security Programme during benefit design phase.

Engagement and Joint Working

- Partnership with Skills Development Scotland
- Partnership with Disclosure Scotland
Build links with NHS Scotland and wider health partnerships

Mentoring, Work Experience and Employment opportunities

- Create a programme of opportunities to be developed ranging from: one off, 1:1 career chats, mentoring, work experience, paid internships to recruitment workshops.