



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN

2023 - 2026

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
CARE EXPERIENCED AND CORPORATE PARENTING	3
NATIONAL CONTEXT	4
IN LINE WITH SFRS LONG-TERM FUTURE VISION	5
CORPORATE PARENTING AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS	6
CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN OUTCOMES 2023 - 2026	7
GOVERNANCE	10
APPENDIX 1	12
CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN 2023 - 2026 ACTION LOG	



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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023 to 2026. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) see our Corporate Parenting duties not only as a responsibility but an opportunity to have a positive impact and improve the life opportunities of people who are Care Experienced. We recognise that Care Experienced individuals should be at the heart of our commitment as Corporate Parents. Therefore, to shape this plan, we have consulted with people who are Care Experienced and organisations who represent those who are Care Experienced.

This plan reflects '**The Promise**,' the long-term change programme for the improvement of Scotland's care system spanning 10 years (2021-2030). We will continue to align with '**The Promise**' by operating from the perspective of what matters to children and families, listening, mitigating the impacts of poverty, embedding destigmatising language and practices and upholding children's rights.

Our last plan was published in January 2020 and our actions and the direction of our work was very much influenced by Covid. The needs and challenges for people who are Care Experienced differed during this time, with many facing further inequalities. The Service tried to be as innovative and flexible as possible in how we delivered our Corporate Parenting role, it is our intention to carry this innovative thinking forward throughout the delivery of this plan.

This Corporate Parenting Plan highlights our commitment to helping people with lived experience of care to fulfil their potential. We will harness the enthusiasm and commitment within SFRS to continue to improve life outcomes through our employment, service delivery, decision making and governance practices.

Joint statement by Chair of Board, **Kirsty Darwent** and Interim Chief Officer **Ross Haggart**

CARE EXPERIENCE AND CORPORATE PARENTING

What does Care Experienced mean?

We use the term 'Care Experienced' to include anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care or looked after at home with a supervision requirement. (Source: Scottish Funding Council (2019).

It should be noted that although the law defines children and young people as 'looked after children', 'Care Experienced' is the preferred terminology and is what will be used in this report (Source: Who Cares? Scotland 1000 Voices).

What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parents are the public bodies named in law as having responsibilities for children and young people who are looked after and Care Experienced. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 says that 24 public bodies, including the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, have a responsibility to understand the lives of Scotland's

looked after children and young people and respond to their needs as any parent should.

SFRS recognises that those who are Care Experienced may leave care but this does not mean that care leaves them – the impact can be lifelong. Therefore, we are committed to acting as a Corporate Parent to anyone who has care experience regardless of their age.

A Corporate Parent is intended to carry out many of the roles a loving parent should. While we may not be able to provide everything a parent can, we can still provide those we are responsible for with the best possible support and care.

It should be noted that the Promise Care Review heard that although the system uses the term 'Corporate Parent,' this term feels demeaning and is an example of cold, process driven relationships.' The SFRS will be mindful of this in how we approach and deliver on our outcomes.

As a Good Parent, the SFRS will do as much as we can to make sure people with Care Experience feel in control of their lives and are able to overcome the barriers they face.



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/ Unsplash Photo

Corporate Parenting Duties

On 1 April 2015, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service joined many other public bodies and organisations in Scotland to become a Corporate Parent under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This provides us the opportunity to improve the lives and futures of Scotland's Care Experienced children and young people. The duties under the 2014 Act mean that we must:

- Be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people
- Assess the needs of looked after children and young people for services and support we provide
- Promote the interests of looked after children and young people
- Provide opportunities for looked after children and young people to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing

- Take appropriate action to enable looked after children and young people access to these opportunities and make use of our services and support
- Take any other action we consider appropriate to improve our functions to meet the needs of looked after children and young people

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service embrace these obligations. We provide a range of services to help people lead safe lives in their home, at work, in public places and in education.

We also have the advantage of a well-respected and trusted corporate profile which allows us to offer positive role models to young people. In this regard, we understand that these duties are not only the responsibility of one department but for SFRS to be successful, the whole organisation needs to play its part.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The latest figures show that 13,255 children and young people in Scotland are currently in care (**Scottish Government 2022**). This includes those in foster care, kinship care, those who are looked after at home, residential care, and secure care or with prospective adopters.

While there currently may be less than 2% of children and young people in Scotland in care, thousands more people have previous care experience, having spent time in the care system in the past.

All children and young people need the same things to thrive and be successful in life but those who are Care Experienced are not being afforded the same supports for this to happen. Children and Young People who are Care Experienced, have the poorest outcomes of all children and

young people in Scotland – this is why we are committed to being a good Corporate Parent.

We understand that people with Care Experience may have different needs due to trauma and loss and may have had frequent placement moves and chaotic living arrangements. Lack of educational attainment can impact on an individual's prospects not just in relation to employment and financial security but it can also negatively impact on their health, mental wellbeing, their ability to interact fully in public life and access public services.

They may need extra help, and this has been at the forefront of this Corporate Parenting Plan.

We will continue to work with partner agencies and other Corporate Parents - together we can help to ensure that people with Care Experience get the support they need and deserve.

IN LINE WITH OUR LONG TERM VISION

Our Long-Term Vision is our route map for the future. It sets our high-level aspirations which we deliver through our three-yearly strategic plan.

To meet our Long-Term Vision, there are eight overarching priorities for the Service under the four principles of:

- Progressive
- Inclusive
- People Centred
- Connected

Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023 - 2026, relates to these principles as detailed below:

Progressive

Prevention will be at the heart of our service delivery model as it evolves to meet Scotland's changing needs.

We will be innovative in our use of technology, data, and information to change how we work.

The SFRS are aware that to deliver a successful Corporate Parenting Plan, we need to work with people who are Care Experienced and listen to their journey. We need to ensure that Corporate Parenting isn't just seen as the role of one individual or department but that we work across all departments and functions within the Service to meet our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

We will be more efficient, ensuring our resources are redirected to Corporate Parenting priority areas and are aligned to current and existing risks.

Research shows that digital access is a key rights and inequality issue for people who are Care Experienced which was amplified during the pandemic. We will explore solutions to improving digital inclusion for people who are Care Experienced in this Corporate Parenting Plan.

People Centred

We will be an organisation that works in agile and smart ways to support our employees to achieve a positive work/life balance.

We will invest in developing our leaders and train our employees to the highest standards.

In its simplest form agile working is about being innovative, informal, and flexible in the way we work and how we organise ourselves. We are committed to working in more agile ways so that employees can build work patterns around their family and personal lives. For employees who have caring responsibilities as a Foster Carer or Kinship Carer it can help promote and support a positive work life balance.

We will ensure that our employees have the adequate training, support and knowledge to deliver on our Corporate Parenting Plan. We will continue to update our Corporate Parenting learning resource area and work with partners to share learning experiences.

Inclusive

Partnership working will be at the core of how we work.

We will value difference of views, experiences, and backgrounds within and out with our organisation.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan can't be achieved working in isolation. We need to continuously identify and pursue opportunities to work with external partners and the community. We need to effectively 'co-parent' in promoting the wellbeing of people who are Care Experienced to enable them to achieve the best outcomes.

We will engage with people who are Care Experienced, organisations and co-parents to allow us to see the bigger picture and how we can play a role in this.

We will embrace inclusiveness and difference. We will reflect the characteristics and makeup of our communities and put their needs at the heart of what we do.

People who are Care Experienced are not a homogenous group with the same backgrounds

or needs. We will engage with people who are Care Experienced so that we can understand and meet these needs, which includes considering intersectionality.

Connected

We will be driven by a deeper understanding of the needs of our communities.

We will be a more environmentally sustainable organisation.

We will work with people who are Care Experienced and organisations to develop an

understanding of their needs and how we can contribute more to enriching their lives.

We are committed to working alongside our stakeholders and partners in pursuit of our shared prevention agenda to help increase the life opportunities of people who are Care Experienced in Scotland.

We will drive the message that it is not only a responsibility but an opportunity to have a positive impact and improve the life chances for people who are Care Experienced.

CORPORATE PARENTING AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's rights are unique in that many of them, although designed for the safety and protection of children, have to be provided for by adults.

As a public-sector organisation, we have a role to play in supporting the Scottish Government to integrate children's rights and welfare into policy and practice. As a result, you will see throughout our Corporate Parenting Plan, how we will adopt a rights-based approach contributing to upholding and respecting the rights of all children.

The Promise highlights that, 'Scotland must implement the rights of the child in a way that does not reinforce a focus on policy, process and procedure but supports the ability of children

and those around them to connect and develop relationships and cultures that uphold their rights as a matter of course.'

We will aim to ensure that everything we do both at a corporate and local level is grounded on respecting rights, is inclusive and supportive.

We now ensure that the needs of people who are Care Experienced are considered in our policy, planning and performance through our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process. This process includes considering children's rights as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This will continue throughout this Corporate Parenting Plan.



The Promise - Independent Care Review

Launched by the First Minister in October 2016, Scotland's Independent Care Review is a Scotland-wide commitment to bring about root and branch improvements in the care system, with input from 5,500 people who are Care Experienced.

The outcome of the review has been articulated in a series of seven reports, with 'The Promise' narrating a vision for Scotland, built on five foundations, which offer a shared purpose and a clear direction for change. These foundations are:

- Voice: Children must be meaningfully heard and listened to in all decisions about their care
- Family: Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay
- Care: Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters when safe to do so

- People: The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community
- Scaffolding: Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

The Promise, and in the immediacy, Plan 21-24 will be an important driver in the delivery of SFRS Corporate Parenting Plan, shaping how we can best meet the needs of people who are Care Experienced.

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN OUTCOMES 2023-2026

Our Corporate Parenting Plan for the years 2023 – 2026 takes a thematic approach and highlights our key outcomes as a Corporate Parent throughout that time. Our 6 outcomes consider both our statutory responsibilities and the priorities identified through our internal and external engagement.

Our outcomes are introduced in the section below, with indicative examples of what our activity may look like in practice and will be reflected in the supporting action plan. However, this is not an exhaustive list of forthcoming activity as we will endeavour to respond to any challenges and opportunities that arise in a timely manner.

Outcome 1: SFRS will have built relationships with organisations representing those who are Care Experienced. We will have listened to the voice of people who are Care Experienced and considered their needs in our policy, planning and performance activities.

This outcome aligns UNCRC articles 3 (best interest of the child), and 12 (respect for the views of the child)

We will...

- Scope where our policies can better support those who are Care Experienced
- Identify opportunities for Care Experienced individuals to co-design policy, practice and /or projects within SFRS
- Continue to use our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process to evaluate the impact of our policy and practice on Care Experienced individuals
- Explore opportunities to develop trauma-informed practice to inform the development of our services
- Scope how to best utilise existing forums such as the SFRS Young Person's Forum, our Youth Voice Structure and our Employee Networks to inform SFRS activity and decision making
- Ensure our future vision includes the voice and needs of people who are Care Experienced
- Scope our current relationships with organisations who represent those who are Care Experienced and build on these links
- Consider the needs of those who are Care Experienced through the social and community benefit elements of sustainable procurement
- Be mindful of the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Bill' and amend policy and practice to reflect any changes

Outcome 2: SFRS services and opportunities are known and accessible to all care experienced individuals, including care leavers, with no barriers.

This outcome relates to UNCRC articles 12 (respect for the views of the child), 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

We will...

- Produce accessible variations of the Corporate Parenting Plan
- Engage with people who are Care Experienced to identify if they are aware of the services offered by SFRS and what accessibility to these services looks like for them
- Explore how we can support the digital inclusion of people who are Care Experienced
- Keep up to date and informed of the issues that may impact on people who are Care Experienced and use this knowledge to advise our policy and planning
- Develop an over-arching Communications Strategy to promote our Corporate Parenting Plan and its actions both internally and externally, including #KeepThePromise Pledge

Outcome 3: We will work in collaboration with employees who have experienced care to develop improved internal support mechanisms to support their needs.

This outcome relates to UNCRC articles 6 (life, survival and development), 12 (respect for the views of the child), and 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

We will...

- Consult with our employees who are Care Experienced to avoid making assumptions about what they need
- Recognise those with care experience as experts whilst being mindful of their workloads and our asks of them
- Be mindful of confidentiality throughout our consultation and engagement with our employees who are Care Experienced
- Develop an overview of the support available to SFRS employees who are Care Experienced

Outcome 4: We will have work in partnership with other Corporate Parents and external organisations to improve opportunities for those who are Care Experienced to develop skills, experience and confidence to achieve their personal, employment and career ambitions.

This outcome relates to UNCRC articles 3 (best interest of the child), 6 (life, survival and development), 28 (right to education) and 29 (goals of education)

We will...

- Collaborate with other Corporate Parents to take a joined-up approach to addressing barriers that people with Care Experience can face
- Continue to engage with local Corporate Parenting networks to share learning and embed local partnerships
- Continue and expand on our partnership work with MCR Pathways
- Review our Youth Employment Strategy and prevention & protection initiatives to see how they might be utilised to offer positive opportunities to people who are Care Experienced people
- Identify what initiatives we can offer to Care Experienced young people and advertise this nationally through organisations working with those who are Care Experienced
- Scope the creation of leaflets for firefighters to hand out to residential homes to highlight what we can offer
- Revise protocols for local areas across the service as to how to engage with local Corporate Parenting initiatives and Champions Boards
- Implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for people who are Care Experienced, including considerations to monitor recruitment data

Outcome 5: SFRS colleagues, volunteers and board members are aware of their role as a Corporate Parent and understand how to be a good Corporate Parent in practice.

This outcome relates to UNCRC article 3 (best interests of the child)

We will...

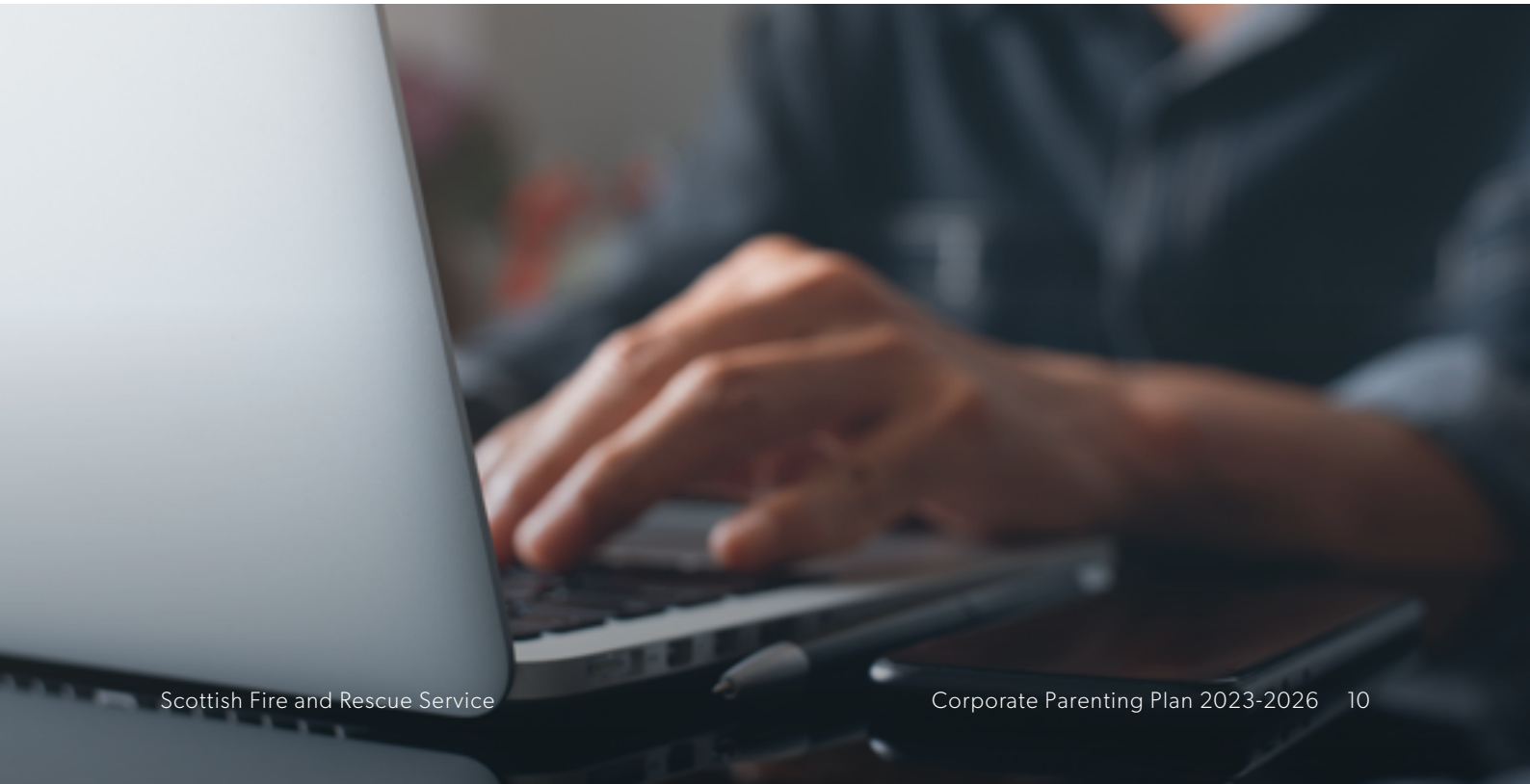
- Create a centralised intranet page to show what volunteering opportunities are available to staff which contribute to our Corporate Parenting responsibilities
- Review and refresh our training and courses to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose. We will review what support and training is available to employees whose role includes engaging with people who are Care Experienced
- Introduce an e-learning module on Corporate Parenting and make this available to all staff
- Deliver a re-fresher training course for senior leaders and board members on Corporate Parenting
- Explore the possibility of a Care Experienced person mentoring a member of our senior leadership team to enable the exchange of skills, knowledge and understanding
- Share case studies of good Corporate Parenting practice across the service

Outcome 6: We have developed measures to track our progress and determine if our outcomes are successful.

This outcome relates to UNCRC article 3 (best interests of the child)

We will...

- Explore how we utilise current business intelligence and service delivery data to inform decision making and the evaluation of actions within our Corporate Parenting Plan
- Identify and introduce indicators of success of our Corporate Parenting Plan activities and partnerships
- Scope what existing systems may be used to record relevant measures
- Implement a standardised approach to measuring the engagement with and success of Corporate Parenting initiatives
- Capture, evaluate and report the data collected to inform future decisions



GOVERNANCE

The SFRS's Board and Strategic Leadership Team are responsible for approving the overall approach and priority placed on Corporate Parenting initiatives. They have responsibility for the Corporate Parenting Plan and the Strategic Plan.

The Equality and Diversity Manager is the lead officer with respect to the co-ordination of our response to Corporate Parenting responsibilities. We operate a mainstreamed approach to equality where individual Directorates and Service Delivery Areas (SDA's) have responsibility for meeting and reporting on their equality obligations and this extends to the duties identified for corporate parenting. Being a Corporate Parent links to our Equality Outcome 6, 'SFRS will support Scotland's young people reach their full potential'.

The Corporate Parenting Plan will consider expanding the core membership of the Corporate Parenting Working Group to involve other key internal functions. The group will continue to

play a vital part in identifying interdependencies and developing the actions within the Corporate Parenting Plan, implementing these actions, and promoting the role of the members as key contacts within the Service. To underpin the corporate reporting framework the activities identified in the Corporate Parenting Plan will be reported every 6 months to the Good Governance Board with annual reports to the Strategic Leadership Team and Full Board. The format of the reporting will include progress against the action plan and relevant 'case studies' that illustrate progress towards improving the life opportunities for people who are Care Experienced. SFRS Board papers are available for access on our website.

Should you wish to get in touch regarding anything in this Corporate Parenting Plan or be involved in any of the activities - would love to hear from you. Please contact the Equality and Diversity Team

SFRS.Equality@firescotland.gov.uk







Ben Wicks
/ Unsplash Photo

APPENDIX 1 - ACTION LOG

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN 2023 - 2026

A rolling action log to record progress against the actions and activities to meet Corporate Parenting Plan outcomes.

The status of Actions are categorised as follows:

-  Task complete - to be removed from listing
-  No identified risk, on target for completion date
-  Target completion date extended to allow flexibility
-  Target completion date unattainable, further explanation provided

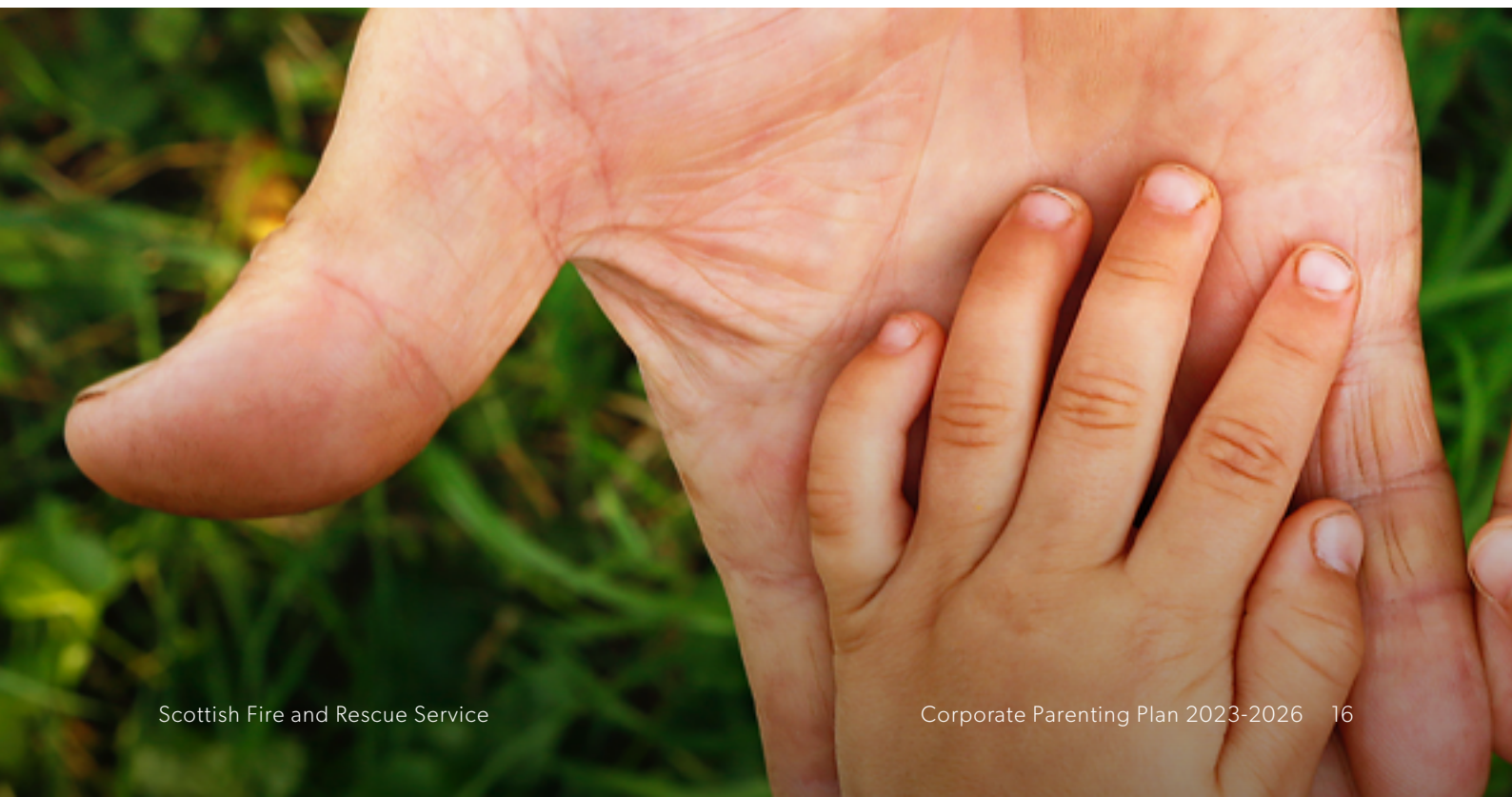
Outcome 1	SFRS will have built relationships with organisations representing those who are Care Experienced. We will have listened to the voice of people who are Care Experienced and considered their needs in our policy, planning and performance activities.			
Actions	Action Owner	Timescales	BRAG status	Position Statement
1. Scope where our policies can better support those who are Care Experienced.	E&D Team	Duration of the Plan		
2. Identify opportunities for people who are Care Experienced to co-design policy, practice and/or projects within SFRS.	E&D Team & CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
3. Continue to use our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process to evaluate the impact of our policy and practice on people who are Care Experienced.	E&D Team	Duration of the Plan		
4. Explore opportunities to develop trauma-informed practice to inform the development of our services.	P&P CPWG Members	January 2024		
5. Scope how to best utilise existing forums such as the SFRS Young Person's Forum, our Youth Voice Structure and our Employee Networks to inform SFRS activity and decision making.	E&D P&P SDAs POD	January 2024		
6. Ensure our future vision includes the voice and needs of people who are Care Experienced.	E&D Team CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
7. Scope our current relationships with organisations who represent those who are Care Experienced and build on these links.	E&D CPWG Members	June 2023 Duration of the Plan		
8. Consider the needs of those who are Care Experienced through the social and community benefit elements of sustainable procurement.	FCS E&D CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
9. Be mindful of the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Bill' and amend policy and practice to reflect any changes.	E&D CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		

Outcome 2	SFRS services and opportunities are known and accessible to all care experienced individuals, including care leavers, with no barriers.			
Actions	Action Owner	Timescales	BRAG status	Position Statement
1. Produce accessible variations of the Corporate Parenting Plan.	E&D P&P	June 2023		
2. Engage with people who are Care Experienced to identify if they are aware of the services offered by SFRS and what accessibility to these services looks like for them.	CPWG Members	January 2024 Duration of the Plan		
3. Explore how we can support the digital inclusion of people who are Care Experienced.	CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
4. Keep up to date and informed of the issues that may impact on people who are Care Experienced and use this knowledge to inform our policy and planning.	CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
5. Develop an over-arching Communications Strategy to promote both internally and externally, the actions of our Corporate Parenting Plan, including #KeepThePromise Pledge.	CPWG Members Comms Team	Duration of the Plan		

Outcome 3	We will work in collaboration with employees who have experienced care to develop improved internal support mechanisms to support their needs.			
Actions	Action Owner	Timescales	BRAG status	Position Statement
1. Consult with our employees who are Care Experienced to avoid making assumptions about what they need.	E&D Team CPWG Members	January 2024		
2. Recognise those with care experience as experts whilst being mindful of their workloads and our asks of them.	CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
3. Be mindful of confidentiality throughout our consultation and engagement with our employees who are Care Experienced.	CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		
4. Develop an overview of the support available to SFRS employees who are Care Experienced.	E&D Team	January 2024		

<p>Outcome 4</p>	<p>We will have work in partnership with other Corporate Parents and external organisations to improve opportunities for those who are Care Experienced to develop skills, experience and confidence to achieve their personal, employment and career ambitions.</p>			
<p>Actions</p>	<p>Action Owner</p>	<p>Timescales</p>	<p>BRAG status</p>	<p>Position Statement</p>
<p>1. Work in partnership with other Corporate Parent's and adopt a collaborative approach to addressing barriers that Care Experience people face.</p>	<p>CPWG Members</p>	<p>Duration of the Plan</p>		
<p>2. Continue to engage with local Corporate Parenting networks to share learning and embed local partnerships.</p>	<p>CPWG Members</p>	<p>Duration of the Plan</p>		
<p>3. Continue and expand on our partnership work with MCR Pathways.</p>	<p>CPWG Members</p>	<p>Duration of the Plan</p>		
<p>4. Review our Youth Employment Strategy and prevention & protection initiatives to see how they might be utilised to offer positive opportunities to people who are Care Experienced.</p>	<p>POD P&P</p>	<p>January 2024</p>		
<p>5. Identify what initiatives we can offer to Care Experienced people and advertise this nationally through organisations working with those who are Care Experienced.</p>	<p>POD P&P</p>	<p>Duration of the Plan</p>		
<p>6. Scope the creation of leaflets for firefighters to hand out to residential houses to highlight what we can offer.</p>	<p>CPWG Members</p>	<p>June 2024</p>		
<p>7. Revise protocols for local areas across the service as to how to engage with local Corporate Parenting initiatives and Champion Boards.</p>	<p>E&D Team CPWG Members</p>	<p>January 2024</p>		
<p>8. Implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for people who are Care Experienced, including considerations to monitor recruitment data.</p>	<p>POD CPWG Members</p>	<p>January 2024</p>		

Outcome 5	SFRS colleagues, volunteers and board members are aware of their role as a Corporate Parent and understand how to be a good Corporate Parent in practice.			
Actions	Action Owner	Timescales	BRAG status	Position Statement
1. Create a centralised intranet page to show what volunteering opportunities are available to employees which contribute to our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.	E&D Team Comms Team CPWG Members	January 2024 Duration of the Plan		
2. Review and refresh our training and courses to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose. We will review what support and training is available to employees whose role includes engaging with Care Experienced children and young people.	E&D Team CPWG Members	January 2025		
3. Introduce an e-learning module on Corporate Parenting and make this available to all employees.	E&D Team CPWG Members	January 2025		
4. Deliver a refresher training course for senior leaders and board members on Corporate Parenting responsibilities.	E&D Team CPWG Members	December 2023		
5. Explore the possibility of a Care Experienced person mentoring a member of our senior leadership team to enable the exchange of skills, knowledge and understanding.	POD E&D Team CPWG Members	January 2025		
6. Share case studies of internal and external good Corporate Parenting practice.	CPWG Members	Duration of the Plan		



Outcome 6	SFRS colleagues, volunteers and board members are aware of their role as a Corporate Parent and understand how to be a good Corporate Parent in practice.			
Actions	Action Owner	Timescales	BRAG status	Position Statement
1. Explore how we utilise current business intelligence and service delivery data to inform decision making and the evaluation of actions within our Corporate Parenting Plan.	CPWG Members	January 2024		
2. Identify and introduce indicators of success of our Corporate Parenting Plan activities and partnerships.	CPWG Members	January 2024		
3. Scope what existing systems may be used to record relevant measures.	CPWG Members	January 2023		
4. Implement a standardised approach to measuring the engagement with and success of Corporate Parenting initiatives.	CPWG Members	January 2025		
5. Capture data around positive action and engagement activities that are focussed towards people who are Care Experienced.	POD E&D	Duration of the Plan		
6. Capture, evaluate and report the data collected to inform future decisions.	CPWG Members	June 2025		





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