



SQA Corporate Parenting Report 2019–22

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Introduction

SQA is a proud corporate parent. We believe that all children and young people deserve the opportunity to realise their potential and achieve their ambitions, whatever their start in life. We are committed to the vision of a Scotland where all children and young people with experience of care are understood, believed in, and given every opportunity to thrive.

In this report, we set out highlights of our corporate parenting work and explain the progress we made during 2019–22 to meet our responsibilities to young people with care experience.

SQA helps individuals to realise their potential and achieve their ambitions, no matter what their background, by providing a wide range of high-quality, internationally recognised qualifications and associated services. We work with schools, colleges, universities, and training organisations to develop, deliver, and accredit qualifications and assessments. We don't work directly with young people, but our work has an impact on all young people in Scotland.

Summary of progress

Outcome 1 — SQA understands and is alert to the needs of care experienced children and young people to inform its policy, planning and practice.

Our partnership with Who Cares? Scotland allow us to keep informed of the issues which impact on the life of children and young people in care. We also continue ongoing dialogue with MCR Pathways and review publications, case studies and evidence to ensure we are informed and consider any support SQA might be able to offer. We aim to ensure our Corporate Parenting Action Plan remains a live document that is updated to reflect the ongoing feedback we receive.

Consultation and collaboration

We welcome every opportunity to listen to care experienced children and young people, and those people and organisations who represent their views. We work closely with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways and make efforts to participate on different external corporate parenting collaboration forums. The learning and good practice from these forums is shared with our internal Corporate Parenting Steering Group and SQA employees.

We represent the national corporate parenting agenda in our Annual Business Plan and Corporate Plan 2020–23. SQA's Corporate Parenting Plan sits under one of our Strategic Outcomes: 'We have a sustainable business operating model that is appropriately resourced in order to deliver our remit now and in the future', which is alongside other aspects of SQA work designed to promote equality and improve life chances for learners.



Corporate Parenting Forum 2019

It is a pleasure for SQA colleagues to be involved in a variety of activities to support Who Cares? Scotland. Through continuous internal communications, promotion and awareness raising, SQA staff have developed an understanding of Who Cares? Scotland and the work they do.

We made a commitment to:

- ◆ support the Young People's Champions Boards, engage with other corporate parents, and support organisations and charities
- ◆ use what we learn, along with feedback and survey results, to make sure that our plans, policies and promises are relevant and meaningful

We continued to participate in virtual corporate parenting forums throughout lockdown where possible. Colleagues in our Responsible Business Team continued to represent SQA at virtual Midlothian Champions Board meetings throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



COVID-19 – Monitoring the impact on Scotland’s care experienced community

During the pandemic, we were very much aware there were people and communities that were hardest hit. We understood many care experienced people were without the support network they needed to cope with the impacts of social distancing, self-isolation and the unprecedented effect on their employment and financial stability.

We kept in contact with Who Cares? Scotland to offer support. We contributed to the Champions Board (People Achieving Change – PAC Group) 'Care PAC' ages' during lockdown. Care packages were put together to support young people at home during lockdown and included crafts, games and gift boxes. (The name Pac'ages was used by the PAC Group). We shared posts via social media about the details of Who Cares? Scotland's helpline and other useful information, and promoted the Who Cares? Scotland emergency appeal in response to COVID-19.

SQA’s Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG)

In 2018, we formed SQA’s Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG). Our Steering Group is chaired by SQA’s Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, with membership from our Qualifications Development Directorate, Responsible Business Team, Policy, Analysis and Standards Team, Equalities Team, Operations, Human Resources, Organisational Development and Change Team, and Communications colleagues.

CPSG provides a forum for discussion, information sharing and communication. Members have responsibility for supporting SQA in meeting its responsibilities and promoting and advocating increased organisational understanding of SQA’s Corporate Parenting responsibilities. They support regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting against our Corporate Parenting Plan and oversee the work to review our commitments. Updates on CPSG and notes from meetings were shared with SQA colleagues via our intranet site. CPSG continues to meet quarterly and attended virtual events/collaboration with external corporate parenting forums during the pandemic.

Replacement Certificate Service

Children and young people in care can experience a number of different placements and/or movement from one placement to another which can include change between residential care homes or multiple foster carers. This regular change of address for a number of SQA's learners can often mean they never receive their Scottish Qualifications Certificate when it is issued by SQA. Unfortunately, in some cases, it is never forwarded to them at their new address by their previous carers.

Movement between placements can also often lead to severe disruption in the life of a care experienced child or young person who has had multiple placements, and a disturbed care journey. Since 2016, SQA has provided a replacement certificate service to care experienced children and young people free of charge (following confirmation of their status).

In 2019, we made improvements to the replacement certificate service to remove unnecessary barriers and to ensure care experienced learners (aged 26 years and under) can make a request for a replacement certificate without being charged, and can do so quickly and easily. Information is available on our [replacement certificate](#) and [corporate parenting webpages](#). [Guidance](#) has also been published to explain how learners can validate their care status with us and to avoid learners having to contact social work teams. These improvements were made in response to feedback received from children and young people.

Return of coursework

We continue to offer the return of coursework (for example, artwork) without charge for any care experienced learner (aged 26 years and under). More information is available here: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41345.html>.

The Promise: Scotland's Independent Care Review

In February 2020, SQA pledged its support to Keep The Promise. The Care Review delivered a powerful and clear message: care must have love and nurture at its heart. Keeping The Promise means ensuring all children grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential. We will ensure The Promise informs development of our next Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26.



The Care Review
@TheCareReview



Thank you to @sqanews for making a strong commitment to support care experienced young people with a #CareReviewPledge.

Any individual or organisation in Scotland can make a pledge to support positive change on the Care Review website: carereview.scot/pledge/



SQA CPSG members, February 2020

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

Under the Equality Act 2010, SQA considers the impact our policies have on people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are age, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity. As a public body, we must ensure that our policies, and services deliver in the best interests of children and young people. We aim to ensure care experience is given equal regard as the 'protected characteristics' covered by the Equality Act (2010). As part of SQA's Equality Impact Assessment process and staff training, we aim to ensure employees are alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people in care.

The EqIA is an effective tool for mainstreaming equality. By ensuring that all policies have equality impacts identified we will ensure SQA's policies and procedures are equitable and that we are considering both positive and negative impacts on children and young people. By training policy owners and encouraging them to engage with the EqIA process, we are building expertise throughout the organisation. By monitoring actions from EqIAs, we are ensuring that there are tangible benefits and positive impacts, owned by staff across the organisation.

Employment support

Following work to complete EqlAs of SQA's employment policies, we identified a number of opportunities to enhance the employment support we offer people with experience of care, and SQA line managers. We want to better understand the barriers care experienced people face in relation to employment and will take measures to develop the support they need to gain, stay and progress in employment. We are currently exploring a range of methods to ensure we better understand the employee lifecycle and barriers for care experienced people.

Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs)

Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs) are an effective tool for ensuring that the impacts on the rights of children and young people are considered in SQA's policies and practices.

The completion of CRWIAs for arrangements around the 2022 diet takes a children's-rights-based approach in decision making across the organisation. SQA is committed to ensuring the integration of considerations of children's rights in all key aspects of organisational core business.

Who Cares? Scotland training

In November 2020, Who Cares? Scotland Education and Training Team delivered detailed virtual training to SQA's CPSG (a group who has responsibility in SQA for the review, implementation, monitoring and reporting of SQA's [Corporate Parenting commitments](#)). The training and facilitated discussions have supported work to review and update SQA's Corporate Parenting commitments and action plans. This work is ongoing and will inform the development of our next Corporate Parenting Plan: 2023–26.

Outcome 2 — Care experienced children and young people benefit from access to a range of SQA services designed to meet their emotional and physical needs.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SQA implemented significant changes to its working practices very quickly. We established our Business Continuity Co-ordinators Forum to monitor the impact of the pandemic on employees and services. Following the cancellation of the examination diet in 2020 and 2021, three qualifications-related EqlAs and CRWIAs have been carried out and published between March 2020 and March 2021, focusing on:

- ◆ the Alternative Certification Model in 2020
- ◆ proposals for course modifications in Autumn 2020
- ◆ the Alternative Certification Model in 2021

The impact on care experienced young people was considered as part of these assessments.

Care experience in qualifications design

We are committed to ensuring that care experienced young people benefit from a range of SQA services designed to meet their needs. We aim to ensure the views of care experienced young people are considered when designing qualifications to meet their care needs and to ensure their experiences and interests contribute to the thinking and design of care qualifications for the care sector. Where qualifications are being developed for the care sector, we want to ensure the views of care experienced people contribute to the development process to ensure their voice is heard and that the qualification takes due account of their care needs.

Designing inclusive assessment training course

SQA staff and appointees are encouraged to complete the SQA Academy course on Designing Inclusive Assessments. This full and detailed course provides guidance, with exemplars, on how to design and write assessment materials to be as accessible as possible.

A comprehensive review of the course content is underway, to ensure it remains up-to-date and is fit for purpose. We are also considering how to ensure that SQA Qualifications Development staff and appointees engage with this course and apply the guidance to their question papers and assessment materials.

Assessment Arrangements

Under the Equality Act (2010), SQA provides guidance to centres to ensure assessment arrangements are provided to disabled children and young people and/or those with additional support needs to access our qualifications and to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in assessments. In addition, SQA has a duty to consider reasonable adjustments, based on the needs of individual disabled children and young people and/or those with additional support needs.

We advise schools, colleges and training providers to think about the specific needs of the individual child or young person who may require assessment arrangements for each subject and level. We recognise that every child or young person is different — even if a learner has the same type of diagnosis or identified difficulty as their peer, they may not need the same type of support. We take a ‘needs-led’ approach.

We have revised our assessment arrangements guidance materials to ensure they reflect the interests of people with experience of care. We will continue to work with Who Cares? Scotland to ensure our guidance is improved and that we promote the need for accessible and appropriate assessment arrangements to all centres.

[Further information on assessment arrangements for children and young people](#) can be accessed from our website.

Additional Support for Learning

We updated SQA’s *Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements in Internal and External Assessments: Information for Colleges* guidance to reflect the needs of care experienced children and young people. This guidance supports staff in colleges to ensure that they have evidence in place and that the appropriate assessment arrangements are provided for those learners who need them.

Who Cares? Scotland Teacher Resource

During 2021–22, in collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland, SQA supported the creation of a *Teacher Resource — Care Experience and Corporate Parenting: a Guide for Scotland’s Teachers*, to raise awareness of the lives of care experienced learners and the responsibilities of a corporate parent. Development of the guide was a suggestion received from members of Who Cares? Scotland’s National Representative Body and we were delighted to support its creation.

The guide shares information about Scotland’s care experienced community, where care is delivered, why young people may be taken into care and includes case studies of care experienced learners at school. Also included is information about SQA’s commitments and work as a corporate parent. We have plans in place to promote this resource to ensure it reaches as many teachers and lecturers across Scotland as possible.

Learner Advisory Group

In October 2020, SQA established a Learner Group who meet monthly. The Group is made up of a range of learners and includes members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and College Student Representatives. We sought the views of the Group on a range of issues relating to the awarding of qualifications throughout the pandemic including the Alternative Certification Model, communications and appeals. In January 2021, SQA contracted with Scottish Youth Panel to run the Learner Advisory Group on our behalf.

We also engaged with other key partners including Young Scot, Enquire, Who Cares? Scotland, Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (Sparqs) and Scottish Youth Parliament.

Learner engagement strategy

SQA’s 2021–22 learner strategy builds upon our existing communication and engagement with learners and their parents/carers and will help to reposition SQA so we stand side by side with young people.

SQA’s learner strategy not only sets out the importance of learner engagement, but it will allow us to identify new opportunities to hear from our learners and continue to build on current momentum. All colleagues in SQA have responsibility for embedding and supporting the strategy.

Our strategy will help address some of the immediate challenges faced by our organisation but has also been devised with longer-term change in mind. It will also help set high standards and strong principles for learner engagement in SQA’s successor body.

The strategy has been developed by SQA’s Learner and Parent Engagement Team and has drawn on information included in the UNCRC, Scottish Government National Outcomes, SQA Performance Framework and SQA Corporate Plan, and feedback from organisations representing young people.

Engaging with parents and carers

We understand that parents and carers have information needs, including being kept up-to-date with changes to qualifications and assessments. We have engaged with parents/carers and their representative organisations for many years, and we will continue to build on this.

We are in regular contact with Connect (formerly called the Scottish Parent Teacher Council) and the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) to hear feedback from our parent and carer audience.

NPFS also has representation on SQA's National Qualifications (NQ) Steering Group and NQ Comms Group.

Gaelic language

SQA is committed to the objectives set out in the National Plan for Gaelic and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which recognises Gaelic as an official language of Scotland.

In our work, SQA seeks to:

- ◆ encourage the increased use of Gaelic
- ◆ promote the acquisition and learning of Gaelic
- ◆ promote a positive image of Gaelic

SQA recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life, and that education plays a vital role in minority language revitalisation.

We support Gaelic Medium Education, where a child's education is delivered through the medium of Gaelic, through our [Gaelic Language Plan 2022–25](#). The Plan sets out how we will use Gaelic in our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic. To ensure progress is being made against the commitments outlined in SQA's Gaelic Language Plan, we have established a Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group. This Group monitors actions taken throughout the duration of this Plan. Progress reports are delivered internally, as well as an annual monitoring report made to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. We aim to consider activities and opportunities for Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people and will continue to support this through our Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group.

Who Cares? Scotland works with SQA

During the pandemic, we worked closely with Who Cares? Scotland to support better understanding of the Alternative Certification Model and the appeals process for 2021 and how this might impact care experienced learners. Who Cares? Scotland have [published a response to the news that SQA are being replaced by a successor body](#):

<https://www.whocaresScotland.org/members/update-on-our-work-with-the-sqa/>.

Outcome 3 — The ambition and achievements of care experienced young people are supported, recognised and acknowledged by SQA.

Results Day Celebrations 2019

We appreciate that many care experienced young people don't have a network of support in their home life — someone to congratulate them when they pass an exam.

In August 2015, we made a commitment to host an annual celebration event for care experienced young people. In August 2019, we hosted our fifth celebration in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways to celebrate with a group of care

experienced learners as they opened their results for their SQA examinations, courses, and awards. That year we were joined by, then, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, MSP. These events have been an excellent way to give young people a platform to have their achievements recognised.



Results Day 2019

Our [Results Day Celebration video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7UKmNI-A1Q) is available on SQA's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7UKmNI-A1Q>.

Results Day 2020

On Results Day 2020, we celebrated the achievements of care experienced young people across Scotland. SQA colleagues were invited to get involved in sending notes of congratulations. We produced [messages in a video](#) which was sent to care experienced young people across Scotland: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukthbiwHznl&t=13s>.

Results Day 2021

In August 2021, we marked the achievements of care experienced learners — in what was another challenging year for all learners — through another [congratulatory video message](#) from SQA staff and their families. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, and representatives from Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways shared a message of congratulations. Read more about [SQA's virtual results day celebration for care experienced learners: https://blogs.sqa.org.uk/nationalqualifications/sqa-virtual-results-celebration-for-care-experienced-learners](https://blogs.sqa.org.uk/nationalqualifications/sqa-virtual-results-celebration-for-care-experienced-learners).

A message from Carly, a care experienced young person:

'In care, a lot of the time, no-one really cares when you've done well in your exams or had a success. So, I think it's really important for SQA as a corporate parent to do things like this, because the young people know that they are worth something...it's the small things that matter.'



Harvard summer school

In 2019, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and local authorities, SQA supported two care experienced young people to attend a seven-week residential programme at Harvard University's summer school.

2019 was the tenth year Who Cares? Scotland had supported students to Harvard for the summer, giving care experienced young people the opportunity to experience student life at an Ivy League university.

Both students, Lauren Tenn-Mills and Andi Stannard, each achieved the full credits for the courses they were studying.

Speaking about their time on campus, Lauren said:

"Summer 2019 has been the best; I don't think anything will top it. Coming away from my Harvard experience with new friends from all around the world, with all eight credits achieved in my studies, and a greater understanding of how to live independently. What more could I have taken away from my experience?"

Like any corporate parent, we take great pride in the achievements of the young people we encounter. The Harvard Summer School programme will show young people that there are fantastic opportunities out there, and their background should not define their future.



Lauren Tenn-Mills, 18, from Bo'ness in West Lothian and Andi Stannard, 17, from Orkney getting ready to depart for their seven-week residential stay at Harvard University's summer school programme



[Heading for Harvard 2019](#)

Andi and Lauren, two Care Experienced young women will be spending their summer at the prestigious Secondary Summer School programme at Harvard University in Boston ...
vimeo.com



[All about Harvard with Andi](#)

"An opportunity like this is in an experience. It's not strictly based on if you get straight As – it's what you take from it." Andi shows us what life is like ...

[vimeo.com](#)

National Care Day 2019

Care Day is an opportunity to celebrate the rights of care experienced young people and to show support to help them achieve their dreams.

As a proud corporate parent, we shared a [special video on National Care Day in February 2019](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BzjYjDJzqQ&feature=youtu.be): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BzjYjDJzqQ&feature=youtu.be>.

National Care Day 2020

We also shared a [video message of support on National Care Day in February 2020](https://twitter.com/sqanews/status/1230827972602535936): <https://twitter.com/sqanews/status/1230827972602535936>.

Outcome 4 — Improve engagement with those organisations who support care experienced young people and create better awareness of the different opportunities to work with SQA.

Modern Apprenticeship recruitment

2020 was a year where young people were significantly impacted by the impacts of COVID-19 and therefore SQA wanted to provide an additional opportunity for young talent to join the organisation. In October 2020, SQA was delighted to announce the launch of its new one-year Business and Administration Modern Apprenticeship programme starting in January 2021. The programme was designed to be inclusive for all young people between 16 and 19 years old and up to age 29 for anyone with experience of care.

The approach also supported the Scottish Government agenda for economic recovery and, as a public body and responsible business, we were pleased to implement new ways to invest in young talent and continue our commitment to developing the young workforce. Unlike the traditional model, the new programme had no academic or work experience requirements, ensuring an inclusive and accessible opportunity.

An inclusive programme requires an inclusive recruitment process and some changes were made to ensure a fair and equal process:

- ◆ Application forms were changed from a statement to questions around the core skills of the role to make it easier for the young person to share their skills and experience.

- ◆ Shortlisting applicants was a collaboration with colleagues across the business including HR, Business Systems and Business Development.
- ◆ Informal interviews with our current and former MAs were planned for one week before the formal interview to help the young person get comfortable with interviewing on Teams.
- ◆ Interview questions were situational to level the playing field for applicants to talk about not what they have done, but what they would do if they had the opportunity.
- ◆ Meaningful feedback was captured at each stage and feedback sessions were offered to every candidate as an additional piece of their learning journey.
- ◆ All colleagues involved in the interviews completed training with Project Scotland, focusing on intergenerational awareness and unconscious bias.

We also promoted these opportunities through our various networks to reach as many care experienced young people as possible. We were pleased to welcome a young person with experience of being in care as a modern apprentice in 2021, and offered them support to join our CPSG.

Young Talent Strategy

Since November 2021, we have established a Young Talent Strategy based around our Young Persons' Guarantee, which promises that we will do everything we can to source and recruit, develop, and retain young talent to:

- ◆ support the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee initiative
- ◆ provide work experience to help prepare young people for the world of work, with additional opportunities for young people with barriers to work — such as a vocational apprentice programme with no entry requirements, and additional internship opportunities with no academic entry requirements
- ◆ ensure no young person is left behind in the economic recovery and impact of COVID-19. This specifically includes disabled young people and care experienced young people, and drives our decision to work with partner agencies such as the Robertson Trust, Inclusion Scotland and Who Cares? Scotland in providing internships, work experience and apprentice opportunities. We use the strategy to advance opportunities for young disabled people and young care experienced people to join the organisation

Career Ready

SQA is working in partnership with [Career Ready](#) and welcomed our first intern in 2022 ready for their SQA work experience. Career Ready are a social mobility charity who connect young people to the world of work through internships and mentoring partnerships. As an employer committed to the Young Persons Guarantee and developing Scotland's young workforce, this partnership is a great addition to the routes available for young talent to join SQA, experience the world of work and find support and growth for their career ambitions. We continued this partnership into 2022–23 and committed to the programme for four young people from across three schools, including an additional support for learning school, to our mentoring programme.

Talent Tasters

During 2019, our Responsible Business Team worked with MCR Pathways to support a group of young people from local schools to undertake work experience in SQA's Customer Contact Centre, as part of their Talent Taster programme. SQA supported the Talent Tasters with social media, news articles, Centre News, and internal comms.



Claire O'Hara, Creative and Talent Taster Development Manager, said:

'We are delighted to be working with SQA to provide Talent Tasters for young people interested in administrative and customer-focused roles. The young people got to experience a real flavour of what working in a fast-paced office environment is like. We are grateful to SQA and all of our partners who offer Taster sessions to young people that may not otherwise get these experiences. It has been a pleasure working together to build new and inspiring opportunities for our young people.'

Work Experience Programme

We continue to promote SQA's Work Experience Programme — available to all young people from schools in Glasgow and Midlothian. The programme was developed into a virtual modular programme on the SQA Academy and is now available to all schools. Our Responsible Business Team promote work experience opportunities via MCR Pathways to ensure care experienced young people are aware of the opportunities available.

Outcome 5 — SQA employees and appointees understand and are aware of the needs of care experienced young people and SQA's corporate parenting responsibilities.

Training for SQA employees

We aim to ensure all employees are aware of SQA's duties as a corporate parent and understand that corporate parenting is everyone's responsibility. We want to ensure that

those who work for us, and with us, are aware of the needs of care experienced people. We are updating our online corporate parenting training for all staff and have plans in place to explore bespoke training for different teams across SQA.

Our corporate induction programme includes information about SQA's Corporate Parenting responsibilities, commitments, and the services we offer to support care experienced young people.

Responsible Business Team

SQA makes a difference to the communities it serves through a shared understanding and a sense of being a responsible business that delivers and sustains a positive impact on its customers and communities. As a responsible business, our objectives are to create positive changes and make valuable contributions that support our local communities, environment, customers and employees.

Our Responsible Business Team look after the operational delivery of SQA's responsible business strategy and associated Giving Something Back Initiatives. SQA staff get involved throughout the year across a variety of activities to 'Give Something Back' to our local communities. Developments have been made to ensure that our community support initiatives fit with the new hybrid working model for colleagues and young people venturing into the world of work. Staff can choose to use up to 21 office hours per year to undertake volunteering.

We ensure options for volunteering to support care experienced young people are available and promoted to all staff.

MCR Pathways mentors

We continue a working relationship with MCR Pathways — a charity that connects disadvantaged, often care experienced, young people with volunteer mentors to help them find, grow and use their talents. For these young people, it can be difficult to do well in school when home life is chaotic. Mentoring provides the extra support and encouragement that can help these young people reach their full potential.

Our Responsible Business Team work closely with MCR Pathways to support and encourage SQA colleagues to take up mentoring opportunities with MCR Pathways. In 2019–20, 12 mentors across SQA supported care experienced young people.

Support for Who Cares? Scotland

Throughout 2019, SQA volunteers continued to support Who Cares? Scotland pack around 1800 envelopes to send their 'Speak Out' Magazine to their care experienced members across Scotland every quarter.

In 2019, colleagues came together to support this fantastic work. Colleagues across SQA donated vouchers, wrote Christmas cards and wrapped presents to ensure care experienced young people had a memorable Christmas Day. During the pandemic, we continued to support Who Cares? Scotland's Christmas Campaigns where possible.

Care experienced Week and Love Rally 2019

On Saturday 19th October, [SQA colleagues](#) took to the streets of Glasgow to show their commitment to a lifetime of love for all care experienced people. The Love Rally marked the start of Care Experienced Week, an annual celebration organised by [Who Cares? Scotland](#).

We published an [article as part of Care Experienced Week](#):
<https://twitter.com/sqanews/status/1186256375887863811>.

On Saturday 19th October 2019, [SQA colleagues](#) took to the streets of Glasgow to show their commitment to a lifetime of love for all care experienced people. The Love Rally marked the start of Care Experienced Week, an annual celebration organised by [Who Cares? Scotland](#).



In taking part in the rally, we were demonstrating our support for care experienced people — not just on that day, but all year round



SQA colleagues giving something back

In 2020 and 2021, we supported Who Cares? Scotland's virtual Love Rally. Our Responsible Business Team publish articles to promote Care Experienced Week to all staff in October every year.



Care experienced Week 2019



Who Cares? Family Christmas with Alistair Wylie

In 2018, Alistair volunteered to help with the Who Cares? Scotland Christmas Party. This involved driving people to the venue, attending the party and helping everyone have a good Christmas Day. And in 2019, Alistair volunteered to help on Christmas Eve. Alistair told us:

“I was one of the ‘Christmas Elves’ whose task was to set up the venue in advance of the Christmas Party. The venue was SWG3. I arrived on Christmas Eve around 12 noon to meet the other volunteers, including some SQA colleagues, to find an empty warehouse and a succession of vans that had to be unloaded. Over the space of 4 hours, the busy team of Christmas Elves helped with a wide variety of tasks to transform the open space into the ultimate Christmas Party venue.

We also had to sort out the mountain of donated gifts so that each and every one of the over 100 attendees receive their very own personalised gift sack from Santa. Every young person who attended on the day was also able to choose a quilt. There were over 100 quilts gifted for this purpose and each one was handmade and completely unique. These were on display at the main stage.

I would thoroughly recommend getting involved. Christmas Eve is very much a “behind the scenes” day while Christmas Day requires you to be “front facing” and engaging with all in attendance to give everyone the best experience. Overall, a great experience and one which definitely gives something back.”



Christmas Eve preparations

Kiltwalk

Since 2016, we have supported the Kiltwalk in Glasgow. Colleagues across SQA have been involved in fundraising.



SQA colleagues supporting the Kiltwalk 2019



SQA colleagues supporting the Kiltwalk 2019

Next steps

Care experienced young people are among the most vulnerable in our society, and all too often their life chances are restricted. We know that outcomes for care experienced young people are still consistently poorer than for their peers without experience of being in care; and much more can, and must, be done to better understand and address this. The challenges faced by many care experienced children, young people and adults have been further compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the responsibility is on us all, as corporate parents, to do better for Scotland's young people.

As we reflect on the progress we have made, we have identified areas for improvement and have considered this as part of the work to revise and update SQA's Corporate Parenting commitments for 2023–26. In August 2023, we will carry out extensive consultation internally and externally to revise and update our commitments.

Our revised Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 details the outcomes we will work towards and the action we will take to meet our responsibilities and make a difference to the lives of Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults.