



# **SQA Corporate Parenting Report 2022–25**

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## Introduction

This report highlights our corporate parenting work and progress to meet our responsibilities to care experienced people.

Please get in touch with us if you have any comments or questions. We would love to hear from you.

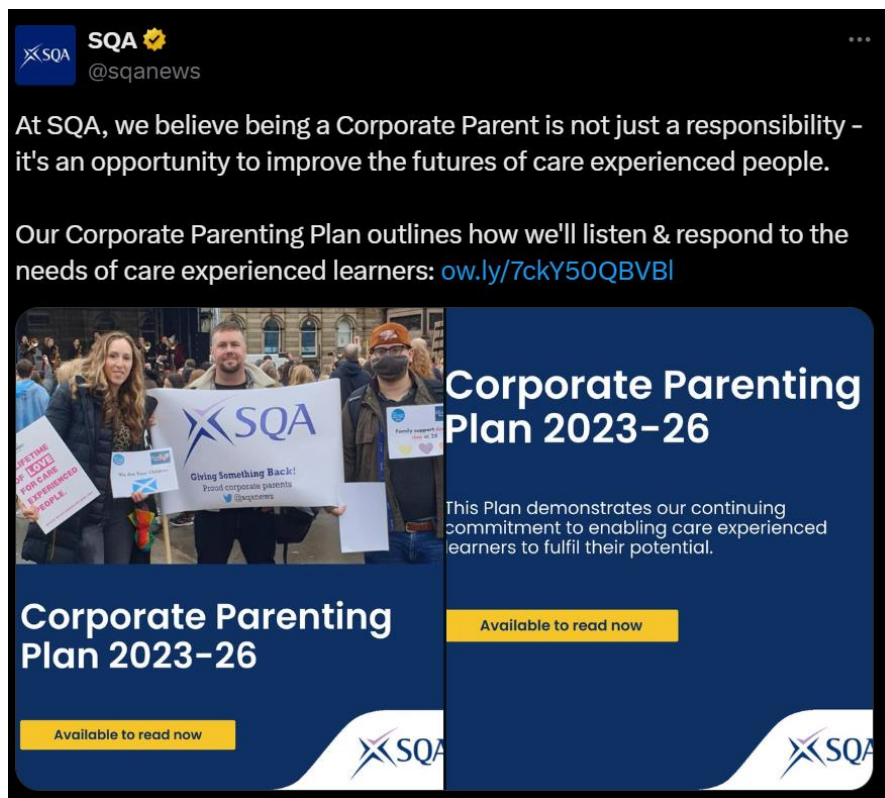
## Our new Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26

We published SQA's [Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26](#) in January 2024, following our six-week public consultation in September and October 2023 to encourage feedback from care experienced people and stakeholders on our corporate parenting commitments.

Our new plan was developed through our work with SQA's Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG) and [Who Cares? Scotland](#) to ensure we understand and respond to the needs of people with experience of care. We also considered the extensive research, evidence, and the recommendations from The Promise: Scotland's Independent Care Review.



We promoted our new plan via SQA, Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways social media channels and SQA centres to reach as many people as possible.



## Language matters

The Promise identified a need for organisations to commit to getting it right when it comes to language. This informed the development of our Corporate Parenting Plan and helped to shape the commitments we have made to care experienced people.

We committed to using destigmatising language and practices in our work, and our Corporate Parenting Plan includes a section focusing on language matters. We want to get it right when it comes to how we talk about care experience, and we know The Promise and Each and Every Child are about telling a new story.



Our Inclusive Language Guide for all colleagues, developed in 2024, includes a dedicated section on care experience. We treat care experience as a protected characteristic alongside ones under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to raise awareness and meet our commitment.

## Care experience as a protected characteristic

As a corporate parent, SQA must uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of care experienced people, which includes tackling discrimination faced by this community.

We know there are different ways to consider care experience a protected characteristic. We wanted to act and acknowledge this was possible without a change to the Equality Act 2010. This would also help us meet our existing statutory corporate parenting responsibilities. We are committed to ensuring that:

- Care experienced people, like other equality groups, have the same protection from discrimination and harassment due to their care identity.
- We raise awareness about the discrimination faced by care experienced people.
- We take seriously the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with experience of care and foster good relations.
- The protection and support for care experienced people is lifelong.

In our [Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26](#), we committed to ensuring the voice of care experienced people is at the heart of SQA decision-making. We achieve this by using our Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process to monitor and evaluate the impact of our policies and practices for care experienced people.

We made a continued commitment to ensuring SQA policies consider care experience as a protected characteristic.

We updated our EqIA process and guidance to consider the needs of care experienced people. SQA's corporate parenting work and equality and diversity work overlap, and we ensure these workstreams and responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 are closely aligned.

SQA's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) module, launched in 2024, includes a section to raise awareness of our [corporate parenting responsibilities](#) and to ensure colleagues are reminded that SQA considers care experience a protected characteristic.

As a public body, we must ensure that our policies and services are delivered in the best interests of children and young people. SQA's EqIA process and staff training ensure colleagues are alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people in care. By training and supporting policy owners and encouraging them to engage with the EqIA process and consider the needs of care experienced people, we are building expertise and raising awareness of SQA's corporate parenting responsibilities to care experienced people.

Following work to complete EqIAs of SQA's employment policies, we identified 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 recruitment and employment and have made a commitment to develop the support they need to gain, stay and progress in employment. We are currently exploring a range of methods to do this and will explore 'Care Aware' employment practices. Who Cares? Scotland's [Corporate Parenting guide: A guidance document for Human Resource Departments](#) published in March 2025 will be a great support to this work.

## Prospectus for Change

We published [SQA's Corporate Plan 'Prospectus for Change'](#) in October 2024. Our new Corporate Plan provides a roadmap at a pivotal moment to the transition to Qualifications Scotland in 2025. The Prospectus for Change was developed through extensive consultation and engagement with learners, teachers, lecturers, employers, training providers and many stakeholder organisations, as well as SQA colleagues. This consultation informed the [Equality Impact Assessment](#) and ultimately the new EDI Deliverable within the plan:

*Deliver SQA's Equality Outcomes and mainstream equality throughout SQA ensuring SQA is a place where diversity is embraced.*

This demonstrates our commitment to EDI at a strategic level and directly links to the Scottish Government national outcome, 'We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination'.

Senior leaders have been actively considering EDI when developing their operational plans, and Human Resources and Organisational Development are reviewing our performance review process to specifically include an EDI objective.

This approach allows us to integrate an equality perspective and consideration of our corporate parenting responsibilities into our day-to-day work across all functions.

## Policy development and review

We have developed a new EDI policy which sets out our commitment as an organisation to an inclusive culture. Our EDI policy includes care experience alongside the protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to raise awareness and meet our commitment.

Through externally publishing our [Equality of Access to SQA Qualifications policy](#), we are also demonstrating our commitment to embedding equality in our decision-making relating to our qualifications and the steps we take to consider impacts on learners from equality groups.

## CPSG

Our CPSG continues to meet quarterly. The 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 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 from CPSG and notes from meetings are shared with SQA colleagues via our intranet site.



## Care experienced learners — celebrating success

Care experienced people are among the tens of thousands of learners across Scotland who receive their results from SQA in August each year.

As a proud corporate parent, we mark the achievements of these young people through a collaborative [congratulatory video](#) message each year. You can watch the congratulatory videos for Results Day [2022](#), [2023](#) and [2024](#) online. We share messages of support from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Who Cares? Scotland, MCR Pathways and SQA colleagues.



In our message to care experienced learners, we promoted SQA's learner hub with information and resources and our Candidate Advice Line.



## National Care Day

Each year we [celebrate](#) National Care Day and take the opportunity to raise awareness of our corporate parenting responsibilities and the support we offer care experienced people.

On [National Care Day](#), February 2024, we were delighted to promote our [Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26](#). We also launched our [Celebrating Success survey](#) in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways to invite feedback about SQA celebration events that care experienced learners have attended in the past and about their ideas for future. We used this feedback and our engagement with colleagues on Who Cares? Scotland's Collaborative Corporate Parenting Network to inform the support we offered around Results Day.



We also had the opportunity to attend Who Cares? Scotland's Carelith 2024 and meet many people from the care experienced community, as well as [Fatima Whitbread](#).



Rosemary (SQA), Fatima, Patricia and Joanne (SQA)



[National Care Day 2025 social media post](#)

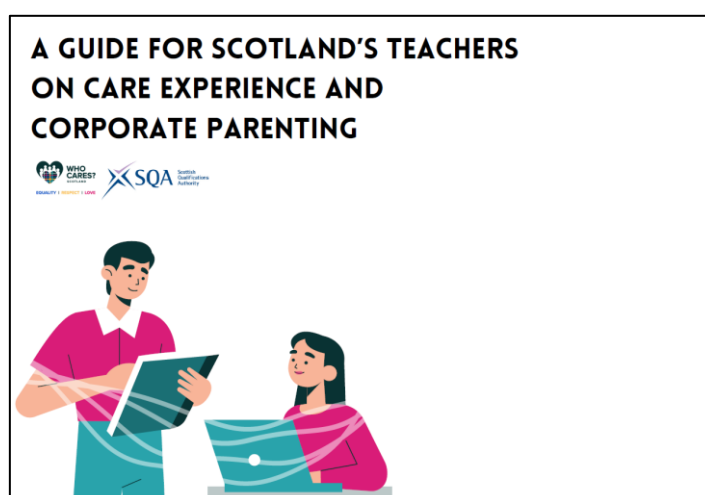


## Teacher resource — Care Experience and Corporate Parenting: a Guide for Scotland's Teachers

In partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, we supported the creation of the [Care Experience and Corporate Parenting: a Guide for Scotland's Teachers](#). The aim of the booklet is to provide Scotland's teachers with insight into the lives of care experienced learners and the important role teachers play as corporate parents.

All learners need positive and stable relationships with adults who believe in their skills, strengths and talents. It is important that teachers understand the specific barriers that care experienced learners face, and how their role as a corporate parent can mitigate against these barriers. With the right support at the right time, care experienced learners can thrive in education and achieve their potential.

We developed a communications plan to promote the teacher resource to secondary schools across Scotland as part of our commitments during Care Experienced Week 2024. In March 2025, we printed hard copies and distributed these to every secondary school in Scotland.



### Lifelong impact of care experience

We have specific duties and responsibilities towards care experienced people up to the age of 26 and we know many corporate parents go further and extend their support and policies to care experienced adults above the age of 26, recognising the long-lasting consequences being in care can have into adulthood.

Care experienced people of all ages must be seen and heard as a group of rights holders and given support and protection throughout their lifetime if we are to reduce the inequalities they face. We have made a commitment in our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 to ensure SQA fully understands the lifelong impact of care experience and continue to act as a corporate parent to anyone with care experience beyond the age of 26.

## SQA Replacement Certificate Service

We committed in our new plan to 'ensure SQA fully understands the lifelong impact of care experience and to continue to act as a corporate parent to anyone with care experience beyond the age of 26'. We aim to do this in support of [Who Cares? Scotland's Lifelong Rights Campaign](#) and recognise the long-lasting consequences being in care can have into adulthood.

SQA offered a free Replacement Certificate Service to any care experienced person under the age of 26. In 2024 we reviewed and improved the process to request a free replacement certificate and removed the age cap so that anyone with care experience can request a free replacement certificate. Information about the service is included on our [Replacement Certificate Service](#) webpage and our [Corporate Parenting webpage](#).

## Haus of Seisay

In March 2024, we had the pleasure of visiting [Haus of Seisay](#) hairdressing academy (an SQA approved centre). Haus of Seisay's vision is a world where stigma surrounding care experience is eradicated, replaced by an environment that fosters understanding, support, and equal opportunities. Thomas and Tony Seisay are creating opportunities and empowering care experienced young people — it was amazing to learn more about the work they do.

Maureen Wallace, SQA Regional Manager, who arranged the visit, joined a meeting of our CPSG to follow up from the visit and explore other ways SQA could support Haus of Seisay. We also have plans in place to raise awareness of the excellent work Haus of Seisay and to publish a case study to showcase their great work.



As a corporate parent, SQA understands the unique support some care experienced people may need, and that the commitment to undertaking a full qualification might be overwhelming at times for some people. For these reasons, we support businesses to be able to enter care experienced candidates on a unit-by-unit basis, at no additional charge. Please contact [Maureen Wallace, SQA Regional, Business Development UK & Ireland](#) for more information.

## Who Cares? Scotland's Corporate Parenting Awards 2024

SQA was shortlisted for the Creating Transformation award at Who Cares? Scotland's Corporate Parenting Awards in August 2024. To mark the 10-year anniversary of the Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014 Act, Who Cares? Scotland hosted their first ever Corporate Parenting Awards.

We were delighted to attend the awards and to hear about the amazing progress corporate parents have achieved over the past ten years and how this has benefitted care experienced people. Who Cares? Scotland presented [14 awards](#) to winners. It was an honour to be shortlisted for an award, to attend the event and to meet other corporate parents, including very worthy winners Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority.



Joanne Lawrie (SQA) and Samuel Curran, Scottish Police Authority award winner



Joanne Lawrie (SQA), Lynsey Carey and Dionne Harty, Who Cares? Scotland

Read more about the positive corporate parenting practice, and about those nominated for an award in [Who Cares? Scotland's Awards Brochure](#).

## Who Cares? Scotland's Gala for Love 2024

In August 2024, we sponsored and hosted a table at Who Cares? Scotland's Gala for Love. SQA Board member Anna Davis hosted our table with SQA guests Jen Morrison and Laura Gemmell. SQA colleagues were joined by guests from, [Haus of Seisay](#), [Who Cares? Scotland](#), [MCR Pathways](#), [Career Ready](#), [Kibble](#) and [Glasgow Kelvin College](#).



Following the event Anna said 'It was a privilege to be representing SQA — Scottish Qualifications Authority at the Who Cares? Scotland Gala of Love. It's amazing the love and support which is provided to people who have experienced being in care. To have a feeling of love and belonging is priceless.'







Everyone needs a strong and supportive scaffold of lifelong support around them, and we know that as a corporate parent we form an important piece of the scaffold that surrounds care experienced people throughout their lives. Attending these events has provided the opportunity for us to learn from others and build connections, inspiring us in our dedication, commitment and role as a corporate parent, particularly as Scotland strives to Keep the Promise. [The Promise](#) is 'that all Scotland's care experienced children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential.' To keep this promise, all the conclusions of the Independent Care Review must be implemented, in full, by 2030.



## Love Rally

Each year we support Who Cares? Scotland's Love Rally. SQA colleagues take to the streets of Glasgow to show their commitment to a lifetime of love for all care experienced people. The Love Rally marks the start of Care Experienced Week, an annual celebration organised by Who Cares? Scotland. We publish internal articles as part of Care Experienced Week and share regular social media posts.



## Care Experienced Week

Care Experienced Week takes place at the end of October every year. It is a week to celebrate the care experienced community. As part of Care Experienced Week, CPSG members and Responsible Business Team promote the Love Rally to all colleagues. We also organised an MCR Pathways online information session to give colleagues the opportunity to learn about becoming a mentor and MCR's award-winning mentoring programme.



## Learning and development

Learning and development is essential to creating an inclusive workforce who understand the needs of our colleagues, learners and wider stakeholders.

To ensure an understanding of equality diversity and inclusion legislation and SQA's responsibilities, a number of information sessions have been delivered by Brodies, our supplier for legal services. This has included:

- the Public Sector Equality Duty and how that duty applies to SQA
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- SQA's role as a corporate parent under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- conducting impact assessments, including EqlAs and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments
- digital accessibility

These sessions allowed participants to ask questions around the legislation and how they can embed this into their day-to-day work. The sessions were recorded and available to all colleagues to watch back in our EDI learning resource area.

Our new EDI online training provides a base level of knowledge for all colleagues, at all levels of SQA. This has included the development of a reporting tool to enable managers to monitor completion levels.

## Care Experience and Corporate Parenting e-learning

In 2024, Who Cares? Scotland developed a new and updated 'Care Experience and Corporate Parenting' e-learning module. In November 2024, we launched this course to all colleagues. The module aims to help colleagues develop their understanding of care experience and improve their awareness of SQA's responsibilities as a corporate parent, given the role all colleagues play in improving outcomes for care experienced people. The module is intended for all SQA colleagues and is particularly relevant to policy owners. There are points throughout the module to encourage colleagues to pause and reflect, and to note down their reflections and ideas. We also encourage colleagues in their role, to take action to support the commitments in [SQA's Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26](#) and to explore how our corporate parenting duties are understood and implemented in their business area.

Who Cares? Scotland reports figures to the Scottish Government on the number of people in SQA who have completed the Care Experienced and Corporate Parenting Course. As at the end of March 2025, 49 SQA colleagues have completed the course. We have a communications plan in place to promote the course throughout 2025 and to encourage colleagues and teams across SQA to complete the course.

Employees shared their feedback after completing the course:

*I really enjoyed the module. It was quite hard hitting especially the video but great to stop and make you think how hard this must be for a young person.*

*I thought the module was very informative. Although I understand the role of a Corporate Parent, the course made me more aware of the impact we can have on care experienced people and the importance of providing the right support at the right time.*

*I thought the module was great - informative and nicely designed. Not too in-depth but not too high level - just right!*

## **Who Cares? Scotland's Corporate Parenting Training to Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

[Dionne Harty](#), Education and Engagement Officer at Who Cares? Scotland delivered corporate parenting training to members of our SLT in February 2025.

This was a great session raising awareness of the special responsibilities we have to care experienced people and the vital role our SLT play in supporting us to meet our legislative obligations. 27 members of SLT attended and we hope to arrange another session for those members who couldn't attend. SLT's engagement and input during the session were invaluable and we continue to explore the ideas and proposed key actions they discussed.



Members of our SLT shared their feedback following the training:

*Dionne delivered an informative session to the senior leadership team as part of our Corporate Parenting training. Personally, I found it very valuable to get an insight into the lived experiences of care experienced people of all ages. The session got me thinking about our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent and what we could do in Qualifications. It provided food for thought across several areas including making sure we develop inclusive contexts for our assessments, ensure our evidence requirements are not a barrier to care experienced learners, and enhancing our guidance around Exceptional Circumstances consideration to be more reflective of*

*the circumstances care experienced learners may be faced with. Also, there are opportunities for us to consider working with delivery partners to design programmes and qualifications that are more flexible and relevant to the needs of care experienced learners.*

**Robert Quinn, Head of English, Languages & Business**

As part of the training, Who Cares? Scotland shared with us some of the key issues their advocates support care experienced people and corporate parents with.

### Education & Training

**“Scotland must recognise that, where educational experience has been disrupted, some people may require additional or different support to realise their potential.”**



*Amongst the many competing demands on our time and attention this was a valuable and important opportunity to focus on our role as a Corporate Parent. It was a reminder of the need to continue to take the actions we can, to support those of all ages whose life chances have been impacted by circumstances over which they have no control.*

**Martyn Ware, Director of Policy, Analysis & Standards**

We are also committed to carrying out a full Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to examine what further training is needed and appropriate across the organisation.

We aim to ensure awareness of SQA's corporate parenting responsibilities is included in our revised corporate induction programme and that our Care Experience and Corporate Parenting course is completed by new colleagues joining the organisation. We look forward to delivering corporate parenting training to SQA's Board of Management in 2025–26.



## Employee Networks

SQA's Employee Network groups provide colleagues with an opportunity to come together to share their experiences and ideas, offer peer support and guidance, and build on allyship awareness and understanding of their experiences. Networks also provide a forum for SQA to engage with colleagues to help inform policy development. We are pleased to have seven Employee Networks in SQA:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network
- Disability Network
- Rainbow Network (LGBT+ Network)
- Women's Network
- Young Talent Forum
- Parents and Carers Network
- Men's Shed

Our new Parents and Carers Network welcomes foster carers across SQA to join.

## Collaboration and learner engagement

Our strong partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, MCR Pathways and Career Ready allow us to keep informed of the issues which impact on the life of care experienced people.

We welcome every opportunity to listen to people with experience of care, and those people and organisations who represent their views. Education reform and becoming Qualifications Scotland bring further opportunities for change and for ensuring young people and their rights are at the heart of the education system, which has been a consistent focus as SQA continues to work on this area. We aim to ensure our responsibilities to care experienced people are reflected when developing SQA's Children's Rights Framework for Qualifications Scotland and will continue to deliver for learners, schools, colleges and customers while working with others to ensure a smooth transition in 2025.

We promoted participation on SQA's '[Your Voice panels](#)' through Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways and will engage with Who Cares? Scotland to ensure that care experienced learners have the opportunity to help shape Qualifications Scotland. Our leadership team is keen to ensure we deliver on SQA's 'Every Learner, Every Educator, Every Community' commitments.

We work closely with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways and participate on different external corporate parenting collaboration forums. Career Ready is a social mobility charity who also support care experienced young people to experience the world of work through internships and mentorship in the workplace. We host 4-week paid internships for Career Ready interns. We are represented on Who Cares? Scotland's Collaborative Corporate Parenting Network, which has provided the opportunity for us to forge more collaborative relationships with other corporate parents. We also regularly attend Who Cares? Scotland's Themed Learning events throughout the year.





We share the good practice we learn from these forums and events with our internal CPSG and SQA colleagues. We also ensure ongoing review of publications, case studies, evidence and participation with Who Cares? Scotland's Collaborative Corporate Parenting Network to ensure we are informed and consider the support SQA might be able to offer.

In January 2025, Who Cares? Scotland invited corporate parents from five corporate parenting organisations into their National Office to ask them what corporate parenting means to them and why they think it is important. We were delighted to be invited and took part in creating new videos to support corporate parents on their journey.

It was an opportunity to share messages of support to the care experienced community, reflect on the support we receive from Who Cares? Scotland's Education and Engagement team, and say thank you. The videos are available on Who Cares? Scotland's website:

- [What is Corporate Parenting – For Corporate Parents](#)
- [What is Corporate Parenting – For the Care Experienced Community](#)
- [Support from the Education and Engagement Team](#)

As a public body, we are committed to ensuring that our policies and services are delivered 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 EqIA process and staff training, we aim to ensure colleagues are alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people in care. Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments are also an effective tool for ensuring that the impacts on the rights of children and young people are considered in SQA's policies and practices.

We aim to align with The Promise and the strong message that all children should grow up loved, safe and respected. We will continue to do this through taking a children's rights-based approach to the actions and commitments in our Corporate Parenting Plan.

## Data collection

We are committed to improving how we collect and use evidence and data to ensure that care experienced people benefit from access to a range of SQA services designed to meet their needs. To achieve this, we aim to ensure the views of care experienced people, and evidence and data on care experience, are considered and used to make evidence-based decisions informing the development and review of our policies, planning and practice. SQA's ability to understand the range of support services we offer to care experienced people relies heavily on having robust data. We received approval from the Scottish Government to access equality data from the Pupil Census, which includes high level data on care experience. This enables us to monitor the impact of our policies, products and services once appropriate internal ethical reviews relating to data requests have been carried out. We continue to work with the Scottish Government and partners to improve the equality data that SQA can access, particularly to consider intersecting identities of care experienced children and young people and their experience with accessing our products and services.

## Equality of Access to SQA Qualifications policy

Our [Equality of Access to SQA Qualifications policy](#) was revised and published in 2024. This policy sets out our approach for access to assessment and qualifications. We support the principle of equal opportunities in employment, education and training, and oppose all forms of discrimination against the protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). Wherever possible, we also consider other factors affecting our learners, such as socio-economic disadvantage, care experience or other circumstances that present barriers to accessing qualifications. Although such factors are not covered specifically by the Equality Act 2010, we recognise that they can have an impact on a learner's ability to achieve qualifications. We made the commitment to ensure our EqIA process considers the needs of care experienced people, by treating care experience as a protected characteristic.

## The Equality Review of Qualifications process

Our Equality Review of Qualifications process ensures that our qualifications are non-discriminatory. The guidance and process were revised in 2024 and are applied to any changes made to our current qualifications. We ensure that care experience is considered so that our qualifications and assessments are as accessible as possible.

## Designing the Inclusive Assessment Course

This SQA Academy Course, which includes information on care experienced learners, is for our Qualifications Development colleagues and our appointees who are involved in writing our assessments and question papers. The course was recently revised and published in January 2025. It is designed to ensure that:

- our assessments are free from stereotypes and discrimination
- our assessments reflect diverse groups and voices
- our assessments are accessible to learners with protected characteristics
- we fulfil our legislative requirements

## Assessment arrangements

Assessment arrangements can be provided to disabled children and young people and 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 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 learner 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 and 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](#).

## SQA Young Talent Strategy

SQA needed more routes for young people to join the organisation and more development opportunities for colleagues under the age of 28 so they feel valued, invested in and able to build their careers with us. In turn this provides the organisation with the skills, knowledge and experience it needs for the future.

We reviewed and realigned our Young Talent Strategy for 2024–25 to achieve this ambition, this included:

- revising recruitment training to provide valuable feedback that young colleagues can apply in their development plan
- committing to recruit on experience of work activity not number of years in a position
- developing a Skills Matrix for the young talent population to better identify development opportunities and use of existing skills
- agreeing further corporate sponsorship for Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation Apprenticeship and Career Ready Internship programme delivery in 2024 and 2025
- creating a Young Talent Career Development Mentoring Programme to pair young talent colleagues with more experienced colleagues to help them identify and work towards their career goals and ambitions

We achieved the following:

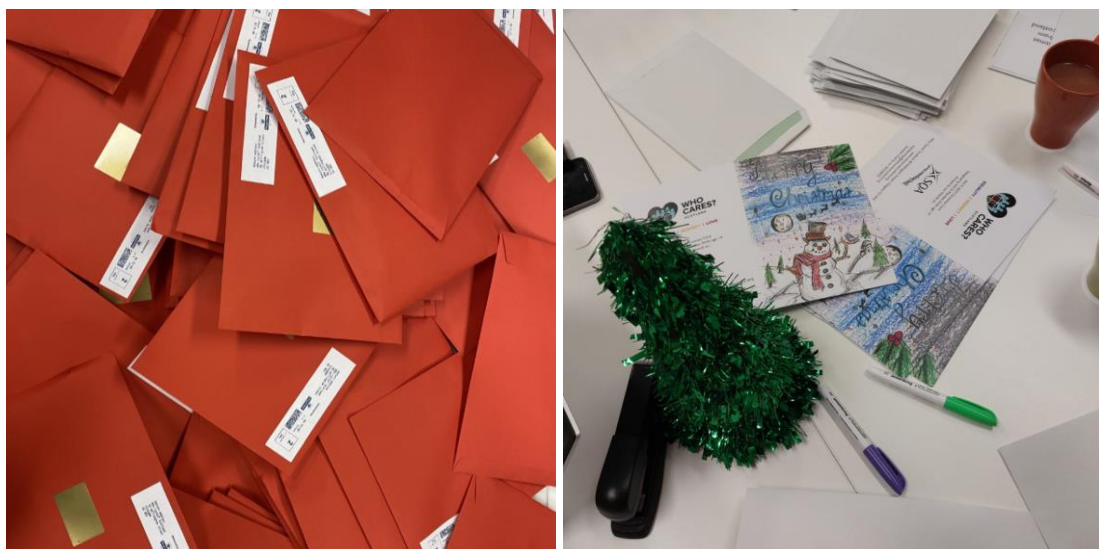
- Five new Modern Apprentices were hired in August 2024 and six vacancies were advertised in March 2025. Opportunities are available to care experienced applicants up to the age of 29, and promoted via Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways to reach as many care experienced people as possible.
- We supported six new Foundation Apprentices and five new Career Ready Interns in 2024.
- We developed eight new Young Talent Career Development Mentoring partnerships.
- Our Young Talent Forum recruited 18 new members.

In addition to this, we achieved Investors in Young People Gold accreditation. The Investors in Young People Report 2024 highlighted, 'The Young Talent Strategy is a particularly impressive piece of work, and all policies and procedures are well-thought out and focused on the success of young people. The Young Talent Strategy champions, encourages and supports the employment of young people and leaders are positive about young people and recognise that they are vital to SQA.'

## Volunteering

### Christmas cards

Each year, Who Cares? Scotland holds a Christmas Card design competition for their members. The winning design is shared with our Design Team, and turned into the Who Cares? Scotland Christmas card. Our Print Team printed 4000 cards for Who Cares? Scotland's members in 2024. The cards are then delivered to Who Cares? Scotland offices, where SQA volunteers spend time handwriting heartfelt personal Christmas messages to their members. The cards are then posted to all their members in their Christmas parcel. Eight SQA volunteers attended the volunteer card writing sessions between 13 November and 21 December 2024.



## **Birthday card writing**

Who Cares? Scotland also runs a birthday card design competition, so each member receives a birthday card on their birthday. SQA volunteers attend and support card writing sessions.



## **Mentoring with MCR Pathways**

MCR Pathways connects disadvantaged, often care experienced, young people with volunteer mentors to help them find, grow, and use their talents. We held two mentoring information sessions with MCR Pathways in 2024 and currently have 16 SQA mentors at different stages of mentoring.

## **Who Cares? Scotland Care Family Christmas**

Each year, SQA supports Who Cares? Scotland's Care Family Christmas. Our Responsible Business Team promotes Care Family Christmas, collects donations from SQA colleagues throughout December, and ensures these are delivered to Who Cares? Scotland. We were invited to include a quote in the Christmas edition of Who Cares? Scotland's members magazine, Speak Out.





## Work Experience programme

We continue to promote SQA's Work Experience programme, available to all young people from schools in Glasgow and Midlothian. Our Responsible Business Team promotes work experience opportunities via MCR Pathways to ensure care experienced young people are aware of the opportunities available.

## Looking forward

As we reflect on our progress and priorities, we are looking forward to the year ahead.

Our priorities include:

- embedding our new core values — open, connected, caring and brave — in all our corporate parenting work
- listening to care experienced learners and those who advocate for them to ensure their voices are heard as part of the smooth transition process to Qualifications Scotland to shape its culture and how it delivers its services
- developing a new EDI Strategy for Qualifications Scotland and ensuring care experienced people are represented
- ensuring the needs of care experienced people are considered so barriers are removed, and additional support provided where needed
- ensuring we incorporate children's rights into our Corporate Parenting Plan and commitments