Newbattle Abbey College
Colaiste Abaid a'Bhatail Nuaidh

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN
2025-2029

NEWBATTLE ABBEY COLLEGE

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Introduction – The College and its Context

Newbattle Abbey College is set within an historic 16th century building and 125 acres of ancient woodland and parkland in Midlothian.

We have a proven track record of meeting the needs of adults and young people at points of transition. By providing transformative learning and offering extensive support the college helps people change their lives and achieve their personal ambitions.

For those setting out on their learner journey, whether it is for the first time or individuals who are re-engaging with education after a break, we understand that this can be a challenging time and can often be difficult to navigate without the right support. As a corporate parent we are committed to supporting our students, and our curriculum has been developed in such a way to provide opportunities for learners at different stages in their learner journey. Newbattle aims to promote access, plan progression routes with partners and enable learners to progress to positive destinations.

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Newbattle Abbey College is defined as a Corporate Parent under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Corporate Parents have a responsibility to understand the lives of Scotland's care-experienced and looked-after young people and respond to their needs.

The term "Care Experienced" refers to anyone who has been, or is currently, in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age. This care may have been provided in many different settings, such as:

- Kinship care – those who live with a family member other than a parent
- Looked after at home – with the help of social work
- Residential care – living in a residential unit or school
- Foster care – living with foster carers
- Secure care – living in a secure unit
- Adoption

In agreement with *Who Cares? Scotland*, we believe that 'you may leave care but care doesn't leave you' and with this we will provide support, where possible, to every Care Experienced person.

Everyone needs support sometimes and we know that Care Experienced people face barriers into education that non-care experienced peers don't. College and universities need to ensure they are providing tailored support for each individual's needs, to ensure Care Experienced students have as much chance of achieving their goals as everyone else.

The relation-based and supportive nature of Newbattle attracts a higher proportion of Care Experienced students than the sector norm, and we are passionate about our commitment to being Corporate Parents and providing support to our students and employees.

The Scottish Funding Council's 'National Ambition and Vision' aims for there to be no difference between the outcomes of care-experienced learners and that of their peers by 2030. Newbattle Abbey College is committed to improving outcomes of Care Experienced learners and will contribute to this vision by implementing our Corporate Parenting Plan and closely monitoring outcomes for our Care Experienced learners.

Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Corporate Parents have the following duties:

- to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people;
- to assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides;
- to promote the interests of those children and young people;
- to seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their well being;
- to take such action as they consider appropriate to help those children and young people to access opportunities provided to promote their wellbeing;
- to take such other action considered appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which they exercise their functions in relation to those children and young people.

As Corporate Parents, we have a duty to produce a Corporate Parenting Plan, which details how we will deliver our corporate parenting responsibilities.

Demonstrating our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring our students achieve the best possible results and to supporting our staff and stakeholders. Through our focus on continuous improvement, we are confident that we will deliver our vision to change lives and unlock opportunity.

Our commitment to Care Experienced Students and our supportive and nurturing community results in the College consistently attracting a high proportion of Care

Experienced students. In the 2024-25 academic year, 18% of our students were Care Experienced, compared to the sector average of 6.5%. Outcomes for our Care Experienced students are also consistently above those across the sector.

We provide a high standard of education to learners from our local communities and from across Scotland and the UK. We offer access to a range of courses and qualifications ranging from SCQF Level 2-8. The majority of our students have few or no qualifications and many have had disrupted lives and poor experiences of formal education. Newbattle offers them a vital opportunity to improve their own lives and reach their goals.

The ethos of the College is to support learners to achieve, especially those who have experience of challenges and barriers in their learning journey due to the impact of the lived realities of care. Supporting transition into their next steps in education or employment is, therefore, embedded into our practice. Classes are small, all students have a dedicated Personal Academic Tutor, and regular staff meetings are held to share information about individual student progress and any concerns. The Student Wellbeing and Support Team liaise with local services around the learner to ensure a person-centre approach for support.

Specific actions that illustrate our commitment over the last three years to supporting care-experienced learners include:

- *Who Cares?* Training for staff
- Our Student Wellbeing and Support Team have attended Corporate Parenting Training Events
- The Student Representative Council has a dedicated role for a Care Experienced student representative
- Staff support the SRC to create opportunities for student events which encourage socialising in positive ways.
- There is well-being support in place through Student Wellbeing and Support Team who also help students to access further support where needed
- Student Residency: the College offers residential accommodation, supported by a volunteer Residential Assistant
- Travel: eligible students who are not residential and require support are given funding for transport costs
- Student Wellbeing and Support Team attend training and events to gather up-to-date information and network with other support services who can provide information and support for students
- The Student Wellbeing and Support Team provides dyslexia and scotopic sensitivity screening and one-to-one support for individual learners. Students can be screened for dyslexia and then further assessed by a psychologist in order to get a confirmed diagnosis.

- Individual Learning Plans are created for all students. Personal Learning Support Plans are provided for students with identified learning needs and a record of contact is kept to track support and outcomes.
- Students complete Individual Learning Plans with the Student Wellbeing and Support Team and Personal Academic Tutors regularly meet with students to review their academic progress throughout the year

Hub for Success

The college is a partner in the Hub for Success, a collaborative project based in Edinburgh, set up to support educational progress for people of any age who are Care Experienced. The project brings together five universities, three colleges, and the City of Edinburgh Council to improve post-school educational outcomes for people of all ages with experience of care in the South-East region of Scotland. The project partners work collaboratively to provide bespoke support in order to:

- raise aspirations among Care Experienced to pursue post-school educational opportunities;
- widen access to college and university for care-experienced;
- support care-experienced individuals into, through and out of college and university.

The College provides input at the Steering Group and Advisory Group level and work with the team at the Hub to provide bespoke support for care experienced students based on their individual needs.

Collaboration

The College collaborates with outside support agencies on a regular basis. This includes: school guidance staff, social workers, key workers, GP practices, Mental Health Support Teams, trauma centres, homeless shelters and other appropriate agencies to share the information, support and resources that students may need during their time in college.

In order to ensure students progress to positive destinations, Newbattle works in partnership with other organisations, including Skills Development Scotland, SRUC Oatridge Campus, Borders College, Queen Margaret University and local employers.

The Review and Revision Process

Corporate Parents are required to report to Scottish Government every three years on how they are carrying out their responsibilities.

Regular internal review and revision of our progress will ensure that we are successfully delivering our plan. Progress is reviewed annually by our Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee and is reported to our Senior Management Team and Board of Directors, and shared with the SRC on a regular basis. The review process also involves consultation with Care Experienced students to ensure their views inform improvements to the support they receive.

It is vital that as a Corporate Parent we protect the wellbeing of our Care Experienced community ensuring consultation fatigue is avoided. Where possible we utilise existing student data from previous years, as well as listening to the voices of those Care Experienced learners within the college, ensuring voice is sought in a mindful and meaningful way.

Systems are in place to monitor and analyse data in relation to trends in applications, retention and success of Care Experienced students. Outcomes relating to Care Experienced Students form part of the agreed Performance Indicators and are reported to the college Board of Directors and the Scottish Funding Council.

Our Plan - Aims, Actions and Expected Outcomes

Our Corporate Parenting Plan will be published on our website to ensure it is accessible.

Specific Actions of Our Plan

Aim: Improve communication at an earlier stage with teaching/support staff

Section of the Act: 58 1(a) To be alert

Current Activity: Training provided to teaching staff to ensure they are aware of any risks posed by our service or organisation to looked-after children and care-experienced leavers

Action Required to Progress Commitment: In-house training for all staff

Target Date: December 2026

Expected Outcomes: Improved learning experience and raised attainment

Aim: Improve processes to assess the needs of care-experienced learners

Section of the Act: 58 1(b) Assess the needs

Current Activity: We have taken steps to assess the needs of the looked after children and Care Experienced learners who engage with us, either directly or indirectly, by allowing them to identify themselves as Care Experienced during their course application

Action Required to Progress Commitment: Provide opportunity for Care Experienced learners to share more information, that they may wish to share, at interview stage and during needs assessments for Personal Learning Support Plans by incorporating optional questions into process

Target Date: June 2027

Expected Outcomes: Better identification of the specific needs of Care-Experienced students

Aim: Ensure that care-experienced students can identify who the 'go to' staff are that they can get support from and identify outside organisations that can provide support

Section of the Act: 58 1(d) Seek to provide opportunities

Current Activity: We have resources available with key information summarizing college staff and outside organisations who can provide support

Action Required to Progress Commitment: Production of digital and printed leaflet that care-experienced students can access with key information that is clear and easy to understand. This will be accessible via the colleges website and specific Microsoft Teams pages

Target Date: September 2026

Expected Outcomes: Improved support for care-experienced students by helping them be aware of exactly what support is available to them

Aim: Help breakdown barriers to support for care-experienced students

Section of the Act: 58 1(e) Take action to help children access opportunities and make use of services

Current Activity: We ensure support is available for students who are Care Experienced and provide information on Trauma Informed Practice to increase staff awareness so they can better support students

Action Required to Progress Commitment: Support students who are Care Experienced to engage with wellbeing services and counselling. Also continue to raise awareness amongst staff by providing further access to resources and materials on Trauma Informed Practice.

Target Date: September 2026

Expected Outcomes: Help to breakdown barriers to learning for students by providing wider support services and ensuring staff understand the challenges they may face

Aim: Deepen collaboration with outside agencies

Section of the Act: 60 Collaborate

Current Activity: Currently work with a variety of local and national networks such as Who Cares Scotland?, Hub for Success, CDN, Mayfield and Easthouses, Youth 2000 Project and Midlothian House Project

Action Required to Progress Commitment: Deepen collaboration with outside agencies and look to further develop our reach and in turn our ability to better support care-experienced students an example of which is joining the Collaborative Corporate Parenting Network, facilitated by Who? Cares Scotland and held 4 times a year

Target Date: January 2027

Expected Outcomes: We are able to produce a more robust approach to supporting students

Title:	Corporate Parenting Plan 2025-2029
Lead Officer:	Depute Principal
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