

Resource on Care Experience

For apprenticeship learning providers

**Welcome to this resource on Care Experience
for apprenticeship training providers.**

Learning objectives

We hope that after reading this resource, you will:

- Have a better understanding of what Care Experience is
- Better understand the barriers this group face
- Feel more confident and motivated in your own role as a training provider in supporting Care Experienced apprentices.

Throughout this resource, you will hear from three Care Experienced people who have successfully completed apprenticeships – **Ethan**, **Kate** and **Simona**.

The care population

Who are our Care Experienced people?

Care Experienced people are those who are or have been looked after by their local authority, having been deprived of parental care for any reason, or otherwise due to concerns about their well-being.

14,015 children were 'looked after' on 31st July 2019, a decrease of 723 (5%) from 2018, and the seventh consecutive year of decline.

Fewer than 2% of children in Scotland were being looked after by local authorities or on the **child protection register** on July 31st, 2019.

“Children living in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland are 20 times more likely to become Care Experienced than those in the 10% least deprived areas.”

The Independent Care Review (2020)

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Ethan, 27, IT Apprentice:

My advice for any Care Experienced individual who is starting an apprenticeship is for you to believe in yourself. In my experience, when you have been in care you rarely have anyone who believes in you or sees any potential in you. When you are offered a job as an apprentice think of it like someone saying “hey, I see potential in you” - and it’s up to you to show them what you can do.

This is an opportunity for you to show what you are made of. You may have times when you struggle or are unsure of things - speak to someone about it. The main thing is to not give up.

Doing an apprenticeship has been an amazing experience because it has helped me learn new skills and, at the same time, gain work experience. I am not saying it was all smooth sailing but the greater part of it was really good. Initially, when I started, I was bursting with energy, saying “let’s do this!” - but as time goes on you face different challenges. For example, balancing work and the course modules was a bit difficult at some points. And this is where good assessor support is vital to provide you advice and guidance.

I generally would say that doing an apprenticeship was very positive for me. Imagine learning a skill and putting it to use the next day! I really enjoyed it and I gained a lot of knowledge from my work and from the course modules.

Where is care delivered?

Where does Scotland’s Care Experienced population live?

Looked after at home

Young people can be looked after at home, or away from home. Being looked after at home means that the child remains at home with their parent(s) but is under a Compulsory Supervision Order and will receive **services, care and support** from the local authority. For whatever reason, it is deemed the parent(s) cannot care for and protect the child alone, and **the state needs to take on a parental role and share that responsibility**.

Kinship care

This is where a young person lives with another family member – for example their grandparent, auntie or uncle – or close friends, who care for them as a parent would. **There are two types of kinship care – formal and informal**. In a formal kinship care arrangement, the state and services are involved and payments are made to the carer in the same way as happens for foster carers. Many young people in kinship care are not recorded in official statistics as their placement is seen as informal.

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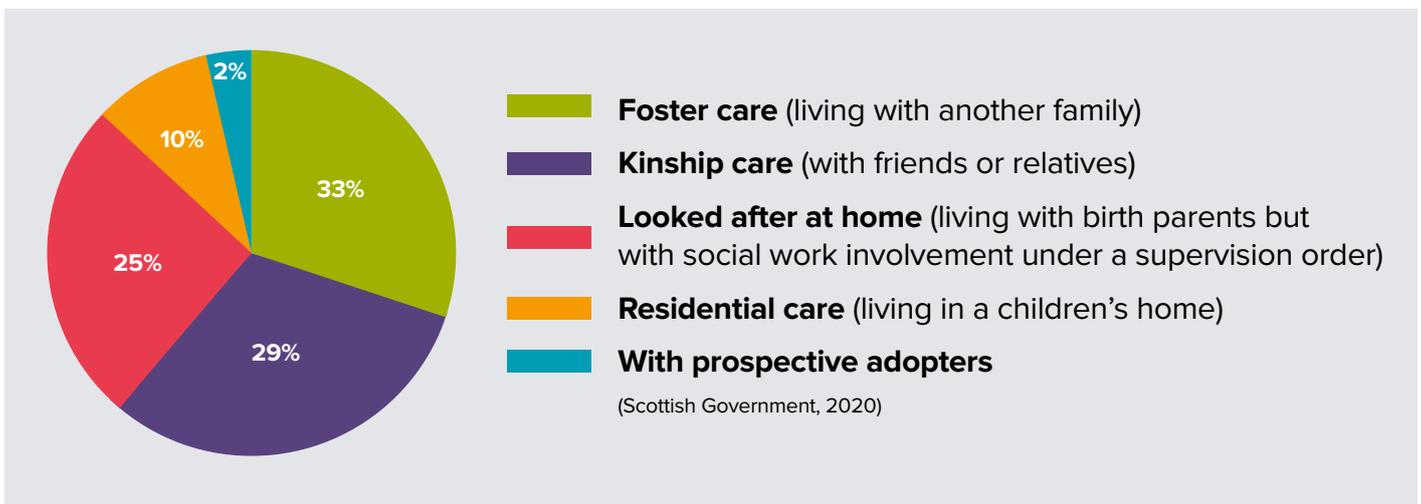
Foster care

This is where a young person lives with another family, often people **they have not met before**, in a family home. This can be provided through the local authority or a private care provider. Foster carers receive payment for the services they provide.

Residential care

This is when a young person lives in a **children's home**, usually in a group of around 4-6 other young people who are also in care. They are cared for by **employed residential staff**. When your average person thinks about living in care it is generally a children's home or a foster family that comes to mind.

Here's a breakdown of where young people currently in care reside in Scotland:



Why are young people taken into care?

Care Experienced people are deprived of parental care **through no fault of their own**.

In 2019/20, 12,849 children and young people in Scotland were referred to the Children's Reporter. In **84%** of cases, people are referred to the Reporter on grounds of care and protection. Common circumstances include neglect, parental drug and alcohol addiction and parental mental ill-health. In some cases the child or young person has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse.

In **22%** of cases, people have a referral on grounds of committing a criminal offence. A significant number of these people also have a referral on grounds of care and protection. Even where they don't, we know through the work that we do with people in care, that when you look behind child and adolescent criminal behaviour, in the vast majority of cases, there are significant issues at home and in relationships with family

Jenny shares her experience of being taken into care, in this short video:



How nurturing is our care system?

Placement moves and mental ill health

68% of Care Experienced people experience 3 or more placement moves (SCRA, 2012).
“The majority of the children experienced instability in terms of multiple moves. Over two thirds had at least three moves; 8% had 10 or more moves. Over a half of moves were not planned.”

SCRA (2012)

We work with Care Experienced people every day who have been moved **significantly more than this** since they've been in care. Often “informal” moves between respite care, kinship care, etc are not officially recorded. However, every time a young person moves to another placement, their families, friendships and links with the community can be **torn apart**.

Care Experienced people often experience these moves as **abrupt, unplanned and stressful**. Sometimes they are made to move overnight or after school, having only enough time to throw some belongings into plastic carrier bags.

Mental health

45% or close to half of 5-17 year olds in care were assessed as having a mental health disorder, as compared with 9% of their peers (ONS, 2004).

In the same study from 2004, it was identified that **39%** of people living in residential care in Scotland had self-harmed, compared to **18%** of their peers.

Frequent moves and loss, or lack of, meaningful relationships often has a **significant impact** on a young person's well-being and in many cases on mental health. People often tell us that they have **given up** on making new friends and relationship as they know they have to move so regularly.

How do our young people get on at school?

Academic outcomes for Care Experienced people

44% of Care Experienced people leave school in S4 or before – compared to only 11% of **non-Care Experienced pupils**.

Many of our people tell us that they felt **forced out** of school and sometimes pushed into college instead.

Educational attainment

Latest figures show that Care Experienced school leavers continue to have lower attainment than other school leavers. In 2017/18 62% of all school leavers had 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better, whereas only 12% of school leavers who were in care for the full year and 11% who were in care for part of the year had qualifications at this level (Scottish Government, 2019).

There is a negative correlation between placement moves and the level of achievement at school for Care Experienced people – the more you move, the less well you do.

Educational attainment is strongly linked to health and economic outcomes, such that, the disadvantage faced by Care Experienced people in receiving a disrupted education can profoundly shape their adult life

What experiences do our Care Experienced young people have in school?

School exclusions

Care Experienced people are **over six times** more likely to be excluded from school than their peers (Scottish Government 2018).

The more placement moves a child experiences in a year, the higher their likelihood of exclusion. This can have a hugely disruptive impact on their learning. Additionally, people in care often face **daily disruption** to their studies due to children's hearings, looked after child (LAC) reviews and other meetings scheduled during school hours.

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Additional support for learning

Under the Education (Scotland) Act 2004, there is a **presumption** that looked after people have additional support needs, unless otherwise assessed.

Local authorities also have a duty to assess all people in care for a **coordinated support plan**, which will bring together different agencies (education, social work, health, etc) to ensure that a young person can benefit from their school education.

Despite this, around half of Care Experienced children have not been assessed for a coordinated support plan, even though they are entitled in law (Govan Law Centre, 2015).

There is also a wide variation in implementation depending on local authority.

What about after school?

Access to further and higher education

Across all levels of study at university and college, the number of Care Experienced entrants increased from 2,070 in 2016-17 to 2,545 in 2017-18 (SFC, 2019).

However, the figures also show that at all levels, Care Experienced students have lower rates of completing courses compared to all students at university and college. Between Care Experienced students and non-Care Experienced students, there is a difference of 5.3% for retention at university, and the largest gap is in successful completion of full-time further education courses at college where the gap is 15.6% (SFC, 2019).

These percentages clearly illustrate the **disproportionately high drop out rates** for Care Experienced students.

Only **6%** of Care Experienced people leave school for university compared with **49%** of their peers (Scottish Government, 2019).

In many cases, carers and professionals have low expectations for people – they often tell us that the career advice they're given is limited to a small number of gendered options, like hairdressing, beauty therapy or plumbing.

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The statistics below reveal some of the **potential lifelong impacts of being in care**. They help us understand why Care Experienced people of many different ages may benefit from support at various stages in life.

- Almost twice as likely to have no internet at home
- Almost twice as likely to have poor mental health
- More than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness
- Over one and a half times more likely to have financial difficulties
- Over twice as likely to have no educational qualifications and less of half the chance of having a degree
- Over one and a half times more likely to experience multiple disadvantage
- Over 3 times as likely to have not had a full-time job by the age of 26
- On average earn three quarters of the salaries of their peers.

So where do apprenticeships come in?

An apprenticeship can be a fantastic opportunity for a Care Experienced person to begin or continue their career, whilst also gaining a qualification.

In response to the multiple disadvantages that Care Experienced people face, which you have now explored, Scottish Government recognises them as a key priority group for apprenticeship policy. There is also recognition of the fact that Care Experienced people often enter full time work or education later than their peers. This is why Care Experienced people are eligible for enhanced apprenticeship funding up to the age of 29.

This additional funding is for you, the training provider, to use to help your Care Experienced apprentice start, sustain and achieve their apprenticeship.

How can we do this?

In this section, we explore some of the practical steps you can take as a training provider, to fulfil your duty in providing additional support to your Care Experienced apprentice.

What does good support from an assessor look and feel like?

Ethan, Kate and Simona share their insights.

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Ethan's 'Top Tips'

1

Good communication

An assessor who invests time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication will rapidly build the confidence of an apprentice, leading to increases in productivity and general morale. For example, if an assessor doesn't give clear instruction on how to complete a module, an apprentice will end up doubting their ability to complete it – decreasing their confidence and leaving them feeling unsure if they have what it takes.



2

Regular catch ups

An assessor who invests time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication will rapidly build the confidence of an apprentice, leading to increases in productivity and general morale. For example, if an assessor doesn't give clear instruction on how to complete a module, an apprentice will end up doubting their ability to complete it – decreasing their confidence and leaving them feeling unsure if they have what it takes.



3

Not just 'doing their job'

If an assessor treated me like somebody they just have to put up with just because of their job description, I would have struggled to complete my apprenticeship. An assessor must establish a positive relationship with an apprentice; they need to make the apprentice feel valued, and believe in their abilities too.



4

Patience and understanding

An assessor who understands that people get things done at different paces is a godsend. This can be due to learning style but also personal issues such as physical or mental ill health, moving house, caring responsibilities, and so on. An assessor who is willing and able to accommodate the issues faced by an apprentice is really valuable.



5

Motivating

When my assessor gave me positive feedback on my work, I would feel even more motivated to do better. When I finished my first module, he told me that my work standard is what he would expect from a level 8 apprentice. I was doing level 6 modules, so this made me feel really good and I continued to set a high standard for myself. Even just a simple 'well done' from an assessor helps to motivate an apprentice.

In a nutshell, good assessor support can be likened to a good personal trainer - they know what you want and they make it their goal to help you achieve your goals. They communicate well with you, they contact you on a regular basis, they make you feel valued, understand you or anything you are going through and constantly motivate you.



Simona's ideal qualities in an assessor?
Supportive, Patient and Reliable

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Kate, who has dyslexia as well as being Care Experienced, shares her thoughts:

For me, the most important offer from an assessor is to have clear, concise and regular communication. When explaining or relaying information to an apprentice, the assessor should ensure the individual has a firm grasp on what has been asked with regards to assessments or pieces of work. This should be in basic, small bite-size pieces of information, taking into consideration different learning abilities. Ensure that all support needs, learning styles and neurodiversity (such as dyslexia) are taken into consideration, utilising expertise from other sources and professionals if necessary. Furthermore, it is essential to follow up with an apprentice to ensure they feel confident and comfortable with the support being given.

Do's and Don't's

Do's

- Do schedule additional meetings and contact time if beneficial to your apprentice
- Do consider if your apprentice needs support with any travel costs related to their apprenticeship – you can apply to use enhanced funding towards this
- Do be prepared to use more visual or auditory learning formats for your apprentice if that suits them best, including personally coaching them through material if helpful for them
- Do invest time in providing specific and positive feedback to keep your apprentice motivated
- Do make yourself available through a range of contact methods – stay approachable
- Do explore their aspirations and short/long term career goals
- Do listen to your apprentice because it is important that they feel heard

Don't's

- Don't ask about somebody's time in care, or their childhood. They may choose to share, but that is their choice.

You can hear directly from some Care Experienced apprentices as well as their employer in this short video:



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How do I find out more?

To further deepen your understanding of the Care Experienced community and the role you can play in unlocking their potential, please visit the Who Cares? Scotland Corporate Parenting website. There is a whole host of materials, resources and case study videos available to develop your understanding of Care Experience and care identity.

www.corporateparenting.org.uk

Additionally, the Training and Education team at Who Cares? Scotland can provide bespoke, live training for you and your organisation to fully understand your role in supporting Care Experienced people flourish in their apprenticeships. The team can be reached on corporateparenting@whocaresScotland.org.uk

Modern Apprenticeship Funding

Enhanced Funding

The aim of Enhanced Funding Contribution (EFC) is to enable Providers to offer additional support* for disabled people and/or those who are care experienced aged 20-29 on the Modern Apprenticeship Programme.

[Enhanced Funding Guidance](#)

[Enhanced Funding Application form](#)

Ethnic Intersectionality Incentive (EII)

For Care Experienced individuals of any age who also identify as Black Minority Ethnic, the provider can apply for EII

[Ethnic Intersectionality Incentive Guidance](#)

[Ethnic Intersectionality Incentive Application](#)

For more information on enhanced funding and ethnic intersectionality incentive please contact: SDS Equalities Team on equality.apprenticeships@sds.co.uk