



Forestry and  
Land Scotland  
Coilltearachd agus  
Fearann Alba

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# Forestry and Land Scotland Putting Down Roots

## Corporate Parenting Plan 2020-2023



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## Foreword

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I am delighted to introduce the first Corporate Parenting Plan for Forestry and Land Scotland.

**As a Corporate Parent, Forestry and Land Scotland has obligations and responsibilities towards children and young people with care experience. However, we also want to make sure that wherever possible we extend our responsibilities to everyone who has a care experienced background.**

“Looking after Scotland’s forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future” is our organisational mission. And I am clear that this means all – including those with care experienced backgrounds. We know of the tremendous health and wellbeing benefits that enjoying the forests and land can provide and this plan sets out how we will take steps to ensure that those with care experience are able to access this incredible resource.

This plan sets out 21 actions that we will take over the next three years. We are a relatively new executive agency, established in April 2019. It is important that we will be undertaking actions that will help us gain a better understanding of our role as a corporate parent and of the needs and issues faced by care experienced children and young people.

As a new organisation we also have the opportunity to ensure that our policies, strategies and decisions are informed by the needs of care experienced young people. We will continue to actively engage with care experienced young people and work collaboratively with organisations such as Who Cares Scotland and other Corporate Parents to ensure that the way we work and how we look after and manage Scotland’s national forests and land can have a positive impact on the lives and aspirations of everyone who has a care experienced background.

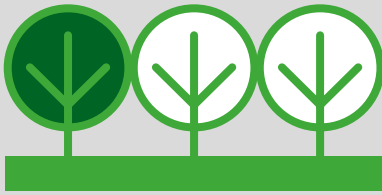
We will regularly review this plan to ensure that it continues to demonstrate how we are meeting and exceeding our duties as a **#proudcorporateparent**.

**Simon Hodgson,**  
**Chief Executive, Forestry and Land Scotland.**

# 1. About Forestry and Land Scotland

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) is an executive agency of the Scottish Government, established on 1 April 2019. We are one of two new agencies formed to take over the work previously undertaken by Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest

Enterprise Scotland along with the new responsibilities gained following the full devolution of forestry to Scotland<sup>1</sup>. Our main role is to look after and manage Scotland's National Forests and Land on behalf of Scottish Ministers.



Approximately **one third (470,000ha)** of Scotland's forests and woodland are on public land, owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the nation.

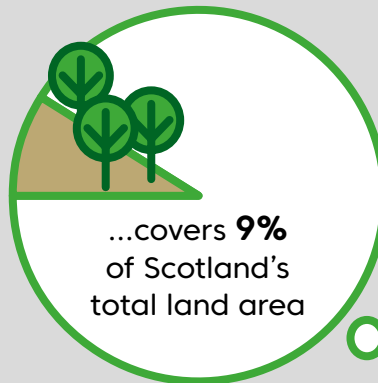
...includes more than **6,500ha of restored peatland...**



...and host **enough renewable energy** infrastructure to produce over one billion watts of energy and sufficient to **power 600,000 homes.**



## Scotland's National Forests and Land...



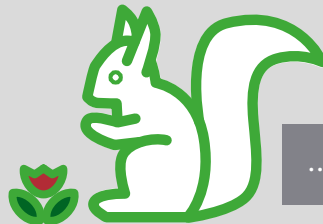
...contributes over **£1million per day** Gross Value Added (GVA)



... hosts **90 community and partnership projects**



...welcomes **10.6 million visits**



...supports **10,255 FTE jobs**



...are home to over **1000 species, 172 of which are protected species** including **lichen, moths, capercaillie and red squirrels**



...helps to **improve the physical, emotional and mental well-being** of residents and visitors.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/8/enacted>

## Corporate Plan

Published in October 2019, the first Corporate Plan for FLS sets out the direction of travel for our new organisation and priorities for the next three years. It sets out the Vision for FLS as:

**“Forests and land that Scotland can be proud of.”**

FLS will work towards this vision by delivering on our Mission, which is:

**“Looking after Scotland’s forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future.”**

We have developed five Corporate Outcomes that will guide all of our work. All of the outcomes are reliant on each other and all support the delivery

of our mission and vision, and ultimately Scotland’s National Performance Framework.

We have aligned our corporate parenting obligations under the following Corporate Outcome:

**“Forestry and Land Scotland is a supportive, safe and inclusive organisation that provides exciting careers, professional development and strives to be an employer of choice.”**

However, we will take a mainstreaming approach to meeting our obligations, which means that Corporate Parenting will be inherent in the delivery of all of our Corporate Outcomes.



## 2. Context

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### Corporate Parenting

Scotland has embraced the concept of Corporate Parenting since the late 1990s and it has actively informed Scottish Government policy since the 2007 report, 'Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better'<sup>2</sup>. The impetus behind the report was a desire to see a step change in outcomes for looked after children and young people.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014<sup>3</sup> came into effect in April 2015 and established a new legal framework within which public services should work together in support of children, young people and families in Scotland. The Act outlined the Scottish Government's commitment to making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

Scottish Government Statutory Guidance<sup>4</sup> supporting the implementation of the Act states that Corporate Parenting is:

**“An organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked-after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.”**

Part 9 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out six statutory duties which all corporate parents must carry out in support of care-experienced young people. As a Corporate Parent, FLS must:

- Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of an eligible young person
- Assess the needs of eligible children and young people for any services or support provided
- Promote the interests of eligible children and young people
- Seek to provide eligible children and young people with opportunities to promote their wellbeing
- Take such actions as it considers appropriate to help those young people:
  - access opportunities to improve wellbeing
  - make use of services, and access the support, which they provide
- Take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those young people
- Keep our approach to corporate parenting under constant review, seeking out improvement wherever possible

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/looked-children-young-people-better/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

<sup>4</sup> Statutory guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

## Defining Eligibility

Throughout this plan, we will be using the term 'care-experienced' to describe anyone who currently is or ever has been 'looked after'. This is an inclusive term and includes those who are currently looked after, those who have been looked after at some point in their lives, and care leavers, be it looked after at home or away from home in kinship care, residential, foster or secure care.

We recognise that we have a statutory responsibility to report formally within the limits of the legally defined terms. However, in line with the approach taken by other executive agencies and public bodies, wherever possible we will uphold our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent to this wider group of all care experienced people, rather than limit it to just those who meet the legal definition of 'looked after' or 'care leaver'.

**“You don't stop being 'care experienced' because you reach a milestone birthday, or fill out a form.”**

Young person with Care Experience,  
Consultation Event, November 2019.

## Outcomes of Young People with Care Experience

While it is recognised that many young people with care experience achieve positive life outcomes, and despite the far-reaching framework of policy and legislation, evidence suggests that those who are care-experienced have the poorest outcomes of all children and young people in Scotland.

**“Many think care leavers get the same chances as all other young people to get a job, go to college, and work towards their dreams. The truth is, the opportunities may be there, but young people can't always sustain them as they are still dealing with a lot of the emotional impact of being brought up in care and experiences they had before it. They need continued support to take advantage of these opportunities.”**

**Young people in care are just like all other young people – except they also need to deal with being separated from their parents, being judged for living in a children's home and being viewed as 'different' because their families can't look after them. It is unsurprising that after these experiences, their outcomes in life can be much poorer than their non-care peers.”<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> Outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People, Who Cares Scotland Parliamentary Paper 2016.  
[http://www.parliament.scot/General%20Documents/CEYP\\_outcomes\\_06.16.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/General%20Documents/CEYP_outcomes_06.16.pdf)

Figures from a range of sources illustrate potential outcomes of people with care experience:

- In Scotland, **one third of young offenders** identified as having **been in care** at some point in their lives<sup>6</sup>
- **73%** of looked after young people **leave school at the earliest opportunity**<sup>7</sup>
- **16%** of Care Experienced people **leave school with a Higher (SQCF 6) level qualification**, compared with **61%** of their peers<sup>8</sup>
- **6%** of Care Experienced people **leave school for university** compared with **40%** of their peers<sup>9</sup>
- **45% of five to seventeen year olds** living in care have been diagnosed as having a **mental health disorder** as compared with **9%** of their peers<sup>10</sup>
- Nine months after leaving school, **76%** of care experienced young people were **in a positive destination**, compared to **93%** of all school leavers<sup>11</sup>
- There is a **50% chance** that care experienced young people will become **homeless**<sup>12</sup>
- **40%** of all care leavers of 19, 20 and 21 years of age (in 2016) were **not in employment, education or training** compared to **14%** of all 19, 20 and 21 year olds<sup>13</sup>

There is very little research available which shows the extent to which care experienced young people access the great outdoors or Scotland's national forests and land. As part of our action plan we will consider carrying out research with other Corporate Parents to ascertain any particular barriers that care experienced young people might face in accessing the outdoors.

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish Prison Service. 2016. Prisoner's Survey 2015 – Young People in Custody. SPS: Edinburgh.

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government. 2016. Education Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children, 2014/15. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6439> Edinburgh

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government. 2016. Education Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children, 2014/15. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6439>. Edinburgh

<sup>9</sup> As above

<sup>10</sup> Office of National Statistics. 2004. The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in Scotland. HMS; London. Information is also referred to in the Scottish Government Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2017-18/pages/2/>

<sup>12</sup> Scottish Government. 2016. *Scottish Homelessness Statistics*. Scottish Government: Edinburgh

<sup>13</sup> <http://spectrafirst.com/identity-cms/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CLC-INTRO-LEAFLET-BRANDED-ALTERNATIVE-LOW.pdf> p.4



## 3. Our Corporate Parenting Plan

### Developing our Corporate Parenting Plan

As a Corporate Parent, FLS has responsibilities and duties towards young people with care experience. Although we do not provide a bespoke service for care-experienced young people, in the way that for example a local authority might, our services and how we deliver them can have an impact.



We have been working on the development of this Corporate Parenting Plan since early 2019, prior to the establishment of FLS. During this time we have worked closely with the organisation Who Cares? Scotland, to deliver training to our Executive Team and other members of staff so that we have a better understanding of the issues faced by people with care experience and our obligations as a Corporate Parent.

We have also undertaken the following actions to ensure we can effectively mainstream our approach to Corporate Parenting:

- Appointed the Director of Corporate Services as Corporate Parenting Champion;
- Incorporated a strategic action around Corporate Parenting within our Corporate Plan; and
- Included the development of the Corporate Parenting Plan in the FLS Business Plan 2019/20.

We have also worked with our Scottish Government colleagues in the Corporate Parenting Team to consider best practice and incorporate this within our action plan.

### “Putting Down Roots”

In November 2019, Who Cares? Scotland held a focus group with people with care experience to help further develop our Corporate Parenting Plan. Some of the ideas set out in our action plan are ideas that came directly from this focus group. One clear message that became apparent during the discussion was that people with care experience may not have roots – e.g. a place to call home or to go back to when they are older with their own children. One of the participants suggested the idea of how FLS can help establish literal ‘roots’ for care experienced young people by planting trees and suggested that our plan could be based around the idea of ‘Putting Down Roots’, which has been adopted as the name of this plan.

We will continue to work with Who Cares? Scotland throughout the implementation of this plan, to ensure that it can deliver positive outcomes for people with care experience.

The action plan below sets out the ways in which FLS proposes to support care-experienced young people, both as visitors to the national forests and land and in the provision of the wider range of day-to-day and corporate activities undertaken by the Agency. The plan shows some of the opportunities identified, how FLS will enable staff to perform this corporate parenting duty, working in partnerships, and how the Agency will report any outcomes delivered for care-experienced young people.



Figure 1: Putting Down Roots – Tree image created by focus group, November 2019.



## Governance and Reporting

We recognise that meeting our corporate parenting duties is not a process with a clear end date, many of the actions are ongoing. The actions in this, our first plan will help our duties to be mainstreamed across the work of the organisation. We will monitor the implementation of this plan on a regular basis and will make changes as required, rather than waiting until the end of the plan period.

We will also formally review the implementation of this plan at the end of each year to include any updates in planned activity for the following reporting year. Progress reports will be submitted to the FLS Executive Team for sign-off prior to publication. Corporate parenting activities will be reported annually in the FLS Annual Report and Accounts, and other performance reports as appropriate.

To promote our commitment to our corporate parenting duties, this plan will be published on the FLS website and a log of activity relating to the plan and any outcomes impacting on the experiences of care-experienced young people will be maintained.

## Further Information

Further information on this Corporate Parenting Plan can be requested by contacting the Corporate Services Team using the following details:

Forestry and Land Scotland  
Great Glen House  
Leachkin Road  
Inverness  
IV3 8NW

Telephone 0300 067 6000  
Email: [enquiries@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:enquiries@forestryandland.gov.scot)  
Website: [forestryandland.gov.scot](http://forestryandland.gov.scot)

## 4. Putting Down Roots – Our Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Corporate Parenting Responsibility	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of care experienced young people	1 We will attend national and local Corporate Parenting Events and seek out opportunities to keep up to date with the issues impacting care experienced young people.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
	2 We will work with partners and other Corporate Parents to develop our approach to staff training and development around Corporate Parenting.	Business Services – Learning and Development	Ongoing
	3 We will develop, maintain and promote a Yammer page for colleagues in order to share literature, evidence and news on the needs and views of care experienced young people.	Corporate Services	Spring 2020
Assess the needs of care experienced young people for the services and support we provide	4 Working with partner organisations wherever appropriate, we will undertake research to understand the relevant needs of people with care experience in relation to the work of FLS. In particular we will explore research opportunities to ascertain any particular barriers that care experienced young people might encounter in accessing the outdoors/ national forests and Land.	Corporate Services	2020 initially and then ongoing
	5 Where required we will develop effective policies and practices in relation to Corporate Parenting, that are informed by regulations and engagement with care experienced young people, Scottish Government, and organisations who support care experienced young people.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
	6 We will identify opportunities for incorporating Corporate Parenting into review of our strategies, plans, processes and programmes	Corporate Services	Ongoing

Corporate Parenting Responsibility	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Promote the interests of care experienced children and young people	7 We will sign the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant and demonstrate our responsibility as a Corporate Parent.	Corporate Services	Spring 2020
	8 We will include 'Care Experienced' as a vulnerable group to consider in impact assessments, report implications, policy development etc.	Corporate Services	Spring 2020
	9 We will develop staff communications campaigns to assist with raising awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities, the needs of care experienced young people. We will use the Scottish Government promoted tagline <b>#proudcorporateparent</b> wherever possible.	Corporate Services	2020 initially and then ongoing
	10 We will identify key partners to collaborate with to deliver relevant actions from this plan in order to gain and promote a deeper understanding of the issues and promote the ethos of Corporate Parenting.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
Seek to provide eligible children and young people with opportunities to promote their wellbeing	11 We will consider how we can enable outreach opportunities, e.g. guided visits and walks for care experienced groups.	Land Management	Ongoing
	12 We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure that people with care experience are aware of Forestry and Land Scotland and the range of wellbeing/other opportunities provided.	Corporate Services	2020 initially and then ongoing
	We will consider how best to provide opportunities for care experienced young people to 'Put Down Roots' – dedicating areas of forest/woodlands to care experienced young people.	Corporate Services and Land Management	2020

Corporate Parenting Responsibility	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Take action to help eligible children and young people access opportunities to improve wellbeing and or make use of services and support available	13 We will review our recruitment processes to identify barriers/opportunities for care experienced young people. This will include consideration of ring-fenced opportunities for care experienced young people and promoting vacancies to organisations that support people with care experience.	Business Services – HR Team	Ongoing
	14 We will share information with our partner organisations on our corporate parenting obligations and ask them to consider reviewing their processes to be more inclusive where appropriate.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
	15 We will consider how we can offer support to organisations such as Who Cares Scotland to make use of the national forests and land (e.g. by supporting permissions).	Land Management	Initially 2020 and then ongoing
Keep our approach to Corporate Parenting under constant review, seeking out improvement wherever possible	16 We will ensure that corporate parenting is included in our Corporate Planning Framework.	Corporate Services	Spring 2020
	17 We will continue to work with Who Cares Scotland, people with care experience and other Corporate Parents in the ongoing development and implementation of this plan.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
	18 We will review the Corporate Parenting Plan on an annual basis and publish reports on our website and in alternative formats as required.	Corporate Services	Annually
Collaboration with other Corporate Parents	19 We will regularly engage with other Corporate Parents to identify opportunities for partnership working and sharing good practice. (Informally and via Scottish Government round-table meetings).	Corporate Services	Ongoing
Other actions we will take to improve the way we engage and work with care experienced young people	20 We will involve care experienced people in engagement exercises on the development of the Visitor and Communities Strategies to identify any barriers to accessing recreational/other activities known to improve health and wellbeing.	Land Management	2020/2021
	21 We will ensure that a 'feedback loop' is sustained with those who are involved in such consultation exercises.	Corporate Services	Ongoing

# Appendix 1: Definition of Terms

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## Looked-after child

The definition of a 'looked-after child' is set out in section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 ("the 1995 Act"), as amended by the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") and Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). A child is 'looked-after' by a local authority when he or she is:

- provided with accommodation by a local authority under section 25 of 1995 Act or
- subject to a compulsory supervision order or an interim compulsory supervision order made by a children's hearing in respect of whom the local authority are the implementation authority (within the meaning of the 2011 Act); or
- living in Scotland and subject to an order in respect of whom a Scottish local authority has responsibilities, as a result of a transfer of an order under regulations made under section 33 of the 1995 Act or section 190 of the 2011 Act; or
- subject to a Permanence Order made after an application by the local authority under section 80 of the 2007 Act.

To assist in the provision of their care some children and young people with physical and/or mental/learning disabilities are 'looked-after' by local authorities (often under a 'section 25' arrangement). These children and young people are legally 'looked after', and so covered by the duties set out in Part 9 of the Act.

The legal route by which a child became looked-after has no relevance to their entitlement for corporate parenting support. If a child is 'looked-after', by any of the means set out above, the duties set out in Part 9 apply.

A child or young person who has been adopted, or is secured in a placement with friends or relatives by means of a Kinship Care Order (Section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995), is not 'looked-after' by a local authority. However, in both cases a child may still become 'looked-after' and depending on when they cease to be looked-after may be considered a 'care leaver' and where this occurs, the child/young person is covered by corporate parenting.

## Care Leavers

The definition of a care leaver is set out in section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as amended by section 66 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

A young person will become a 'care leaver' if they cease to be 'looked-after' on, or at any time after, their 16th birthday.

## Care-Experienced

"Care-experienced" is an all-inclusive term which describes children and young people of all ages with all varieties of care experience. The term has been used to focus on the individual rather than the type of care they have experienced.

## Appendix 2: List of Corporate Parents

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Schedule 4 of the Act names 24 individuals and groups as Scotland's Corporate Parents. Corporate parenting responsibilities apply equally to the following organisations:

1. The Scottish Ministers
2. A local authority
3. The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland
4. Children's Hearings Scotland
5. The Principal Reporter
6. The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
7. A health board
8. A board constituted under section 2(1) (b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978
9. Healthcare Improvement Scotland
10. The Scottish Qualifications Authority
11. Skills Development Scotland
12. Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (The Care Inspectorate)
13. The Scottish Social Services Council
14. The Scottish Sports Council
15. The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland
16. The Scottish Police Authority
17. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
18. The Scottish Legal Aid Board
19. The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
20. The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
21. The Scottish Housing Regulator
22. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
23. Creative Scotland
24. A body which is a "post-16 education body" for purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005
25. An integration joint board to which functions in relation to persons under 18 years of age have been delegated in pursuance of an integration scheme prepared under section 1 or 2 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014.]
26. ILF Scotland



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