

#KeepThePromise

Borders College Corporate Parenting Plan 2025-2028



the promise
scotland

BORDERS

COLLEGE

Contents

Foreword 3

What is a Corporate Parent? 4

The Promise 7

Engagement 8

Our Corporate Parenting Vision 11

Our Commitments 12

Commitment 1: Language 15

Commitment 2: Nurturing Relationships 16

Commitment 3: Scaffolding 17

Commitment 4: Sustainability 18

Conclusion 19

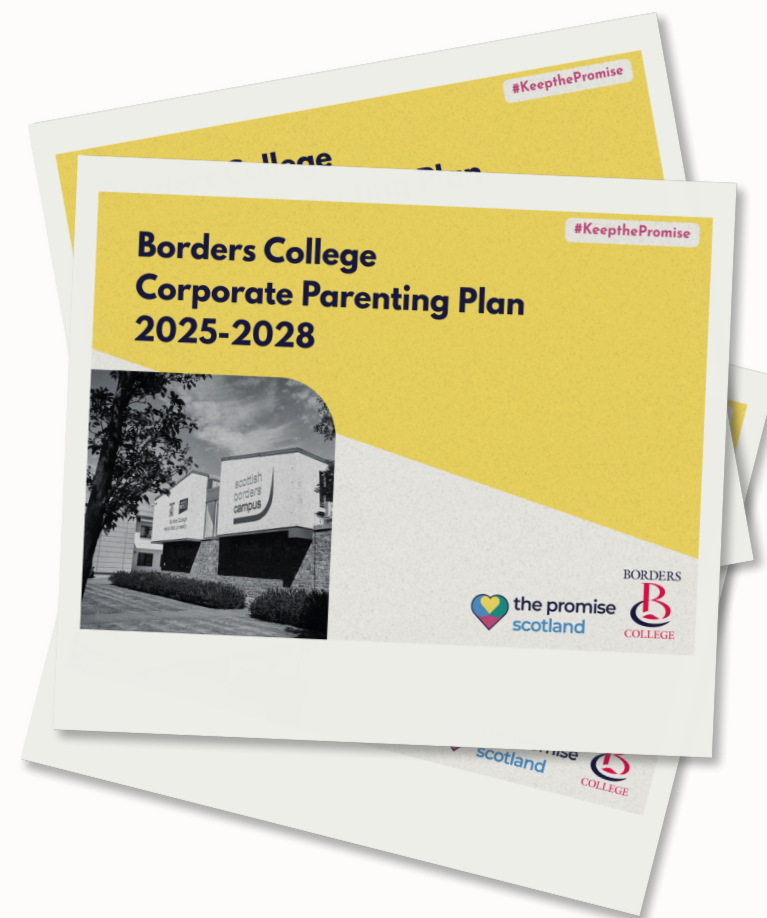
Foreword

Welcome to Borders College, Corporate Parenting Plan 2025-2028

At Borders College we pride ourselves in being an inclusive organisation that welcomes applications from people with care experience. We acknowledge the structural barriers and inequalities that can make accessing and sustaining Further and Higher Education challenging for the care experienced community. We strive to do all we can to guide and support students with care experience so that their aspirations are realised, and they thrive at college.

Successful Corporate Parenting needs passion, commitment, partnership working and engagement both within the college, and across the agencies with which we work. It requires every person within our organisation to acknowledge their role as a Corporate Parent, and to actively seek to better understand their responsibilities and improve their practice. We must work together to ensure students with care experience feel nurtured, listened to and are supported to achieve their potential.

Within the context of this plan, we use the terms 'people with care experience' and 'students with care experience' to refer to anyone who has lived, or is currently living, in care settings such as residential care, foster care, kinship care (both formally and informally), are adopted, or living at home with a supervision order.



What is a Corporate Parent?

A Corporate Parent is described as:

“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.” (Scottish Government, 2014)

Corporate Parenting is about collective support. As the only Further Education establishment in the Scottish Borders, we play a crucial role in providing a network of support for students with care experience.

We will work with Local Authority partners to align with the Scottish Borders Council Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025-2028. We make a commitment to students with care experience that we will continue to develop our services and enhance our support, in line with the five foundations and changes set out in The Promise, as well as the five local promises developed collaboratively with other Scottish Borders Corporate Parents.



Who? Cares Scotland, [Corporate Parenting Duties: An Overview, Guidance Materials](#)

Borders College is one of many organisations listed as Corporate Parents within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Under this act we must:

- Be aware of matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of people with care experience.
- Assess the needs of people with care experience for the services and support we offer.
- Promote the interests of people with care experience.
- Provide people with care experience with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take action to help people with care experience to access opportunities we offer, make use of services and access the support available
- Take any other action we consider appropriate to improve the way we work with people with care experience.
- Collaborate with other Corporate Parents.

To meet these responsibilities, we must listen to the voices of students with care experience, understand their needs, and acknowledge that care experience is a lifelong right. By prioritising this perspective in the development and delivery of our services, we will ensure that we are offering fair and equal opportunities for access to support.

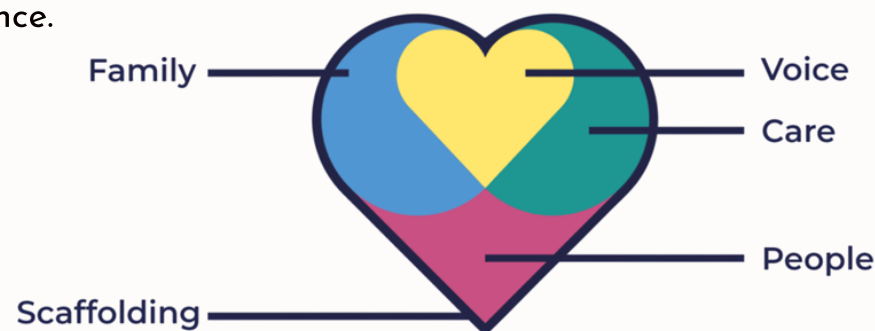
Through ongoing engagement and assessment, along with the strong relationships Borders College has built with local and national Corporate Parenting partnerships, we will ensure that we do everything possible to support students with care experience.

“The support at college has made me feel a lot more settled. When I first applied, I was nervous and didn’t know that any support was available and I was nervous to start at a new place, much bigger than high school.”

The Promise

In February 2020, The Independent Care Review's report The Promise was launched, giving Corporate Parents a clear direction to better support and care for children and young people with care experience. The Promise Plan 2024-30 highlights the urgency of this work, stressing the need for accelerated action and systemic change.

The Promise outlines five key foundations for meaningful and lasting change, along with over 80 specific commitments designed to transform how Scotland nurtures and supports children, young people, and families. These five foundations are:



The Promise Scotland, [Foundations of the Promise](#)

- **Voice** - Every child and young person must feel heard, valued, and included in decisions that affect them, at every stage of their journey.
- **Family** - Every family should have access to the right support, at the right time, to stay together, thrive, and grow in safe and loving environments.
- **Care** - Where children and young people are cared for by Scotland, that care must be compassionate, stable, and nurturing, building strong, positive experiences of childhood.
- **People** - The people in children's lives must prioritise relationships, show unwavering commitment, and act with kindness, consistency, and respect.
- **Scaffolding** - Systems and structures must be responsive, inclusive, and designed to support, not burden, children, young people, and families, particularly when life becomes difficult.

The clear and compassionate message of The Promise offers a strong, evidence-based foundation for shaping the future of corporate parenting in Scotland. It guides the development of supports and services that are responsive to the experiences and needs of people with care experience, ensuring their voices are central, their strengths are recognised, and their wellbeing is always the priority.

Engagement

We acknowledge that people with care experience each have diverse and unique experiences. Each person has their individual preferences regarding the terms, words, and labels used to describe them. In this plan, we use the term 'students with care experience', because we believe this is inclusive language that recognises the wide range of experiences within this community, and the lasting effects that care can have. However, we welcome all feedback on our use of language. Reflection on our practice is important to us and ensures we are actively playing our part in ensuring every child in Scotland grows up feeling loved, safe, and respected.

While many people contributed to the development of this plan, the most valuable input came from students with care experience.



The support at college has made me feel listened to. I can let off steam without judgement.



As part of developing our new Plan, we carried out a range of engagement activities to gather feedback from students with care experience. These included:



Surveys

One-to-one conversations

Staff-student consultations

The process was well supported by students, the Borders College Students' Association, the college's Senior Leadership Team, support and curriculum staff, the Local Authority Education Department, and Who Cares? Scotland.

Borders Young Talent Mentors, who provide mentorship to students with care experience, were asked to gather feedback from those they work with. This helped us understand what aspects of support are working well and where improvements could be made. Borders College Students' Association also facilitated one-to-one discussions with students with care experience to explore their experiences of support - what they valued, and what could be better.

A wider consultation was held with representatives from the college's Senior Leadership Team, curriculum and support staff, the Students' Association, students with lived experience, and Who Cares? Scotland. This included a review of our previous Plan and a discussion of opportunities for the new one. All feedback collected through these consultations was carefully analysed to ensure the voices of students with care experience are clearly reflected in our new Corporate Parenting Commitments.

In shaping this Plan, we also drew on several key documents, including:

**The
Independent
Care Review's
The Promise**

**The
Scottish
Government's
Review of
Corporate
Parenting Plans
(2018-21)**

**Each and Every
Child**

**The
Scottish Borders
Council Corporate
Parenting
Strategy and
Annual Report**

We recognise the importance of truly listening to children, young people, and communities, and acting meaningfully on what we hear. That's why engagement remains a central priority for this Plan and will continue to guide our approach throughout its duration.

Our Corporate Parenting Vision

Our vision is to create a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where students with care experience feel valued, heard, and empowered to achieve their full potential. Through flexible, trauma-informed support and strong partnerships with local and national agencies, we aim to ensure that every student has access to the care, encouragement, and resources they need to thrive, and to feel a true sense of belonging within the college community.

Our Commitments

Our four commitments reflect our overarching Corporate Parenting vision and reflect our broader efforts as a college to embed trauma-informed approaches across all areas of our work.

Compassionate Language

Nurturing Relationships

Scaffolding

Sustainability

Our commitments align with The Promise Plan 2024-2030 and directly reflect the support and services we provide as a Further Education college. We are committed to working collaboratively to build on our existing efforts while embracing new opportunities to enhance the support we offer to students with care experience.



Click on each commitment to find out more!

Some key areas of focus for our new Plan include:

Language and Training

We are committed to fostering a culture where kind, respectful and inclusive language is at the heart of all interactions with and about students with care experience. To support this, we will refresh staff training to reflect trauma-informed principles and promote awareness of the power of language. We will also develop and implement a thoughtfully designed language guide to promote consistency and compassion in how we communicate across the college community.

Trauma-Informed Approaches to Policy Development

We will ensure that all college policies are developed and reviewed through a trauma-informed lens, with particular attention to the experiences and needs of students with care experience. Our policies will be shaped in collaboration with those with lived experience, or their representatives, and will be sensitive to the challenges these students may face. This includes recognising the impact of trauma, loss, and instability, and ensuring that our approaches to behaviour, attendance, assessment and support are flexible, compassionate, and do not unintentionally create further disadvantage.

Enhancement of Ongoing Partnerships

We will continue to work closely with our partners across education, social care and other relevant services to strengthen data sharing practices and collaborative approaches. Our focus will be on improving transitions to and from college for students with care experience, and ensuring they are supported at every stage of their journey. By developing clear, compassionate systems of communication and support, we will work to reduce barriers and provide tailored, ongoing support that recognises each person's individual needs and aspirations.

During the final review of our previous Corporate Parenting Plan, we identified key areas for improvement in how our responsibilities are delivered and embedded across the college. To ensure consistent implementation of our new Plan, we will host a formal launch. The event will include participation from the Wider Leadership Team, alongside national partners. As part of the launch, there will be space for open discussion, guidance, and support for all managers with responsibility for delivering the Plan within their respective areas. This will serve to reinforce the importance of our role as Corporate Parent and our shared commitment to achieving the ambitions set out in this Plan, collectively.

Our internal governance structures for monitoring the delivery of Corporate Parenting commitments are now well established. Regular reporting is made to the College's Equality and Inclusion Committee, and progress is also shared with the Curriculum, Quality, and Student Experience Committee on an annual basis. To further strengthen operational delivery, we will establish a quarterly Corporate Parenting Working Group. This group will support continuous progress through active engagement, reflective evaluation, and regular review.

Commitment 1: Language

We believe that every student deserves to be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. We recognise that the language we use when speaking about students with care experience can sometimes, unintentionally, reinforce stigma. This often stems from a lack of awareness or understanding about what it means to experience care.

As a college community, we are committed to creating an environment where respectful and inclusive language is the norm. Together, we will work to build a shared understanding of the importance of using kind, thoughtful, and appropriate language when speaking or writing about people with care experience.

Our Commitment:

We will use kind, respectful, and inclusive language when referring to students with care experience. We understand the impact language can have and will work to avoid terms that may be stigmatising or harmful.

We will:

- Provide regular training for staff to strengthen awareness of our responsibilities as Corporate Parents.
- Create resources to help staff recognise appropriate and respectful language and understand the impact that words can have on students with care experience.
- Continue to engage with students and external partners to improve how we communicate, ensuring that our words reflect empathy, compassion, and respect for the experiences of those who have been in care.

Commitment 2: Nurturing Relationships

Building and maintaining positive, trusting relationships between staff and students with care experience is crucial to ensuring we Keep the Promise. We will support and empower our staff to form and nurture these connections.

Our Commitment:

We will foster nurturing, supportive relationships with students with care experience at every stage of their college journey. From recruitment through to ongoing support, we aim to create an environment where they feel safe, valued, and respected.

We will:

- Continue our work to become a trauma-informed organisation, ensuring that staff understand and respond to trauma appropriately.
- Provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support students with care experience in a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive manner.

Commitment 3: Scaffolding

We will continue to collaborate with college staff and our partners to ensure that the services we offer meet the needs of students with care experience, promoting their wellbeing and providing stability. We will listen closely to the voices of those with lived or living experience of care, and where needed, offer additional support to help them achieve their educational ambitions.

Our Commitment:

We will build strong partnerships with external organisations and support networks to create a unified approach that provides a scaffolding of support, ensuring students with care experience are surrounded by a community that understands and meets their needs.

We will:

- Enhance retention of students with care experience by collaborating across the college to ensure students feel supported and engaged throughout their college experience.
- Improve outcomes for students with care experience by providing clear guidance and access to resources that help them succeed academically and personally.

Commitment 4: Sustainability

We are focused on developing a sustainable approach to delivering support for students with care experience. While various funds have played a crucial role in enabling this work in the past, we recognise that long-term success lies in embedding these skills and practices within our workforce. To provide a consistent, well-integrated, and sustainable support structure, we must prioritise the development of staff expertise, both now and in the future. By fostering a culture where awareness and support are embedded in our workforce, we can ensure that all students with care experience receive the ongoing, reliable support they need to thrive throughout their time at college.

Our Commitment:

We will invest in the development of both current and future staff, providing opportunities to grow their skills and understanding, ensuring they can offer the consistent support students with care experienced need to thrive at college.

We will:

- Develop a long-term strategy within the Student Support Services team to embed well-established support structures for students with care experience into the college's pastoral support framework. This strategy will focus on ensuring that support is consistent, reliable, and sustainable, laying the foundations for these structures to be maintained and strengthened for years to come.
- Work collaboratively with key teams across the college to ensure ongoing training and professional development opportunities are available for staff to ensure the knowledge and skills to support care experienced students are integrated into everyday practice.

Conclusion

Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2025-2028 outlines our vision and key commitments to supporting students with care experience.

By listening to our community of care-experienced students, working in partnership with external agencies, and fostering strong collaboration across the college, we will gather insights, track our progress, and remain committed to Keeping the Promise. Through this collective effort, we will identify opportunities to strengthen our approach to supporting students with care experience and make the changes needed to continually enhance the support we provide.

“Thank you so much for all the support you have shown me over the duration of me being at college you have really helped me through it all.”