

## Care Experienced Students at College and University

### Introduction

1. The term 'care experienced' refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care or looked after at home with a supervision requirement.
2. The SFC has a [National Ambition for Care Experienced Students](#) for Scotland's colleges and universities which we published in September 2015. We did this as we recognise the challenges faced by this group of students and our vision for the college and university sector is for no difference in the outcomes of care experienced (CE) students in comparison with their peers by AY 2021-22.
3. To achieve this vision we focussed our ambitions in the medium and long term with milestones set each year in terms of intake of care experienced students and outcomes. We set up a Care Experienced Governance Group (CEGG) to monitor targets and to help SFC achieve these ambitions.
4. The SFC and HESA have been collecting the data on CE students since AY 2013-14. While reported numbers of CE students at colleges has changed significantly over that period we believe much of this change is to do with improved reporting rather than increased levels of enrolment. Unfortunately we are not yet at the stage where we believe the reporting process is stable and therefore have more work to do before we can fully rely on these figures. SFC will work with individual institutions to better understand what lies behind the annual figures and why figures increase in one year and decline the next. The data presented in this paper is management information for the CEGG, it is provided with the aim of helping the understanding and reporting of data on this student group. SFC will provide further data on this group in our annual Access Statistics Publication which is scheduled to be published in March 2019.
5. Colleges and universities are much more aware of the challenges faced by their CE population and all institutions as Corporate Parents have published a Corporate Parenting Plan in accordance with Children and Young People Act 2014 which outlines their support to prospective and current CE students.

### Colleges

6. In the initial years of collection it was expected that the data under-represented the numbers of CE students in colleges and this was reflected in the first two years. All college regions in 2015-16 and 2016-17 reported on the numbers of CE students though further years of data are required before the figures can be considered robust and trend analysis is possible due to relative low numbers.

7. Table 1 shows the number of enrolment of CE students in each year by college region. There was a large increase in numbers in 2015-16 and this has continued in 2016-17. However, as mentioned in paragraph 4 that some of these changes are likely to be related to inconsistencies in reporting across these periods.
8. The 2016-17 data shows there were 3,055 student enrolments from a CE background, an increase of 915 from 2015-16. This represents 1.0% of total enrolments however they also represent 1.6% in terms of credit activity which means CE students have more activity per enrolment than the rest of the sector; 1 credit is equivalent to 40 hours of learning. The number of CE students far exceeds the target set in the National Ambition.

**Table 1: Care Experienced Enrolments by College Region 2013-14 to 2016-17 and by number of Credits in 2016-17**

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17		2016-17	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	%	Credits	%
Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire	0	*	65	125	0.6%	1,315	1.0%
Ayrshire	*	5	10	250	1.5%	2,645	2.1%
Borders	0	0	225	270	5.2%	1,995	7.9%
Dumfries and Galloway	0	0	30	45	0.7%	635	2.1%
Edinburgh	0	0	320	265	1.2%	2,580	1.4%
Fife	0	0	10	*	0.03%	35	0.03%
Forth Valley	240	235	205	250	1.7%	1,905	2.2%
Glasgow	340	90	240	430	0.6%	4,215	1.1%
Highlands & Islands	0	60	75	280	0.9%	2,995	2.6%
Lanarkshire	165	155	145	315	1.2%	3,275	1.8%
Scotland's Rural College	0	0	*	5	0.1%	80	0.3%
Tayside	0	0	185	310	1.6%	2,725	2.5%
West	*	100	605	495	1.9%	3,120	1.9%
West Lothian	0	0	20	15	0.2%	165	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>27,680</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

\* All figures in this report have been rounded to the nearest 5

\* Asterisk indicates the number of CE students is lower than 5

\* In 2015-16 the 2,140 CE students represented 0.8% of college enrolments

## Universities

9. Table 2 shows the numbers of CE undergraduate entrants in each year by university. The figures have fluctuated over the four years at sector and at institution level though there is a notable increase between 2016-17 and 2015-16 which is encouraging.
10. In 2016-17 the 335 CE students were studying at either First Degree or sub-degree level. This exceeds the National Ambition target (316 entrants) and represents 0.5% of the total students at university studying at that level. Generally a larger number of CE students were studying at the post-92 universities than at the ancients. Three HEIs, including two specialist institutions, reported nil CE entrants in 2016-17.

**Table 2: Care Experienced Undergraduate Entrants by HE Institution 2013-14 to 2016-17**

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Aberdeen, University of	10	*	15	30	0.9%
Abertay Dundee, University of	*	*	*	*	0.2%
Dundee, University of	5	0	0	0	0.0%
Edinburgh Napier University	5	15	15	20	0.5%
Edinburgh, University of	35	55	15	10	0.2%
Glasgow Caledonian University	0	15	15	15	0.3%
Glasgow School of Art	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Glasgow, University of	20	2	20	25	0.3%
Heriot-Watt University	*	*	*	5	0.2%
Highlands & Islands, University of the	35	35	35	55	1.3%
Open University in Scotland	45	45	35	45	0.7%
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	10	5	10	5	0.4%
Robert Gordon University	10	15	15	20	0.6%
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	0	*	*	0	0.0%
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	*	*	*	5	0.5%
St Andrews, University of	*	*	10	*	0.1%
Stirling, University of	10	45	40	40	1.7%
Strathclyde, University of	10	10	15	15	0.3%
West of Scotland, University of the	60	30	35	40	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

\* indicates the number of CE students is lower than 5 (data protection)

### Level of Study

11. The majority of CE students at college study at Further Education (FE) level though the number studying at Higher Education (HE) level has continued to increase, by 60 enrolments in 2016-17. At university there was an increase of 40 CE students studying at degree level. We have no records of any CE students studying higher than first degree level (i.e. post-graduate level) however this could be due to non-disclosure.

**Table 3: Level of Study in College and University 2013-14 to 2016-17**

College Care Experienced Students					University Care Experienced Students				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
FE	710	590	1,900	2,760	First Degree	205	230	210	250
HE	40	60	235	295	Other UGRD	60	80	75	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>335</b>

### Age

12. Table 4 shows the breakdown by age of CE students at college and university. Different age groups are shown for each sector since the college sector has more students of a younger age.

**Table 4: Care Experienced Students in College and University by Age Group 2013-14 to 2016-17**

College	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	University	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Under 16	155	70	115	475	Under 18	30	35	40	30
Age 16-17	180	175	515	845	Age 18-19	100	100	105	100
Age 18-19	135	140	440	605	Age 20-21	20	30	25	40
Age 20-24	105	105	365	445	Age 22-24	20	30	30	35
25 and over	175	160	700	680	25 and over	100	115	90	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>335</b>

13. CE enrolments at college in all age groups, except one, increased between 2015-16 and 2016-17. There was a significant increase in those under 16 and those aged between 16 and 17 years old, the largest age group. Those aged 17 years old and under (the two age groups added together) now make up 43.2% of all CE students in 2016-17, over twice as many than in the previous year. This perhaps demonstrates the strengthening relationships between schools and colleges and other key stakeholders.
14. In contrast the largest age group in the university sector are those aged 25 and over (130 students) and they represent 38.8% of undergraduate entrants. This is a growth of 44.4% from 2015-16 and is significant as only those under 26 years old on the first day of the first academic year are eligible to claim the [SAAS Care Experienced Students Bursary](#).

## Gender

15. Table 5 shows that during 2016-17 the majority of CE students across all age groups at college and university are female. However, the overall the number of males in the college sector is increasing. There were 755 male CE students in 2015-16, a rise of 540 enrolments in 2016-17, while the number of females has also grown, by 371 students.
16. In the university sector the number of males has increased from 90 in 2015-16 to 115 students in 2016-17. During the same period the number of female CE students has increased by 25. The table also shows there is a disproportionate and high number of females studying at both college (72%) and university (73%) who are over the age of 25 years.

**Table 5: Care Experienced Students in College and University by Gender 2016-17**

College	Male	Female	% Female	Total	University	Male	Female	% Female	Total
Under 16	220	255	54%	475	Under 18	10	20	63%	30
Age 16-17	395	450	53%	845	Age 18-19	40	60	58%	100
Age 18-19	305	300	50%	605	Age 20-21	15	25	63%	40
Age 20-24	185	260	58%	445	Age 22-24	15	20	63%	35
25 and over	190	490	72%	680	25 and over	35	95	73%	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>335</b>

## Disability

17. Table 6 shows that in 2016-17 CE students had a higher rate of disability compared to their peers with 31.1% of students declaring a disability, up from 22.6% in 2015-16. This compares to 13.7% of non-care experienced students declaring a disability in 2016-17, a difference of 17.1 percentage points.
18. The table also shows that a higher proportion of CE college students reported having dyslexia or mental health difficulties than non-care experienced students when looking at one disability per student.

**Table 6: Care Experienced Student Enrolments in College by Disability 2016-17**

College Care Experienced Students			Non CE Students	
Disability	Number	%	Number	%
No known disability	2,105	68.9%	261,125	86.3%
Deaf/have a hearing impairment	30	1.0%	1,670	0.6%
Blind/are partially sighted	30	1.0%	1,100	0.4%
Dyslexia	315	10.4%	13,020	4.3%
Wheelchair user/have mobility difficulties	30	0.9%	2,280	0.8%
Mental health difficulties	265	8.7%	10,045	3.3%
An unseen disability not listed above (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma)	50	1.6%	3,520	1.2%
A disability not listed above	140	4.6%	6,685	2.2%
Personal care support	85	2.8%	3,170	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,055</b>		<b>302,615</b>	

19. Table 7 shows that at Scottish HEIs 28.4% of care experienced undergraduate entrants, which includes 'first degree' and 'other undergraduate degree', declared having a disability, compared to 11.2% of undergraduate entrants who didn't have care experience. This means that in 2016-17 care experienced students at university were 17.2 percentage points more likely to have a disability than non-care experienced students.

**Table 7: Care Experienced Entrants at University by Disability 2016-17**

University Care Experienced Entrants			Non CE students	
Disability	Number	%	Number	%
No known disability	240	71.6%	58,495	88.8%
Multiple disabilities	5	1.8%	760	1.2%
A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	30	8.9%	2,820	4.3%
social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	5	2.1%	325	0.5%
long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	10	3.3%	745	1.1%
Mental health difficulties	30	8.9%	1,500	2.3%
Wheelchair user/have mobility difficulties	5	1.5%	240	0.4%
Deaf/have a hearing impairment	*	0.3%	160	0.2%
Blind/are partially sighted	0		80	0.1%
A disability not listed above	5	1.5%	725	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>		<b>65,845</b>	

\* indicates number is less than 5.

20. Similar to the college figures, CE students were more likely to declare mental health conditions or specific learning difficulties like dyslexia.

### Subject Studied

21. In 2016-17, the largest subject areas for CE students in colleges were Care subjects with 19.9% of CE enrolments and Special Programmes with 17.9%. Special Programmes are courses specifically designed for students that need more support in their learning.
22. CE students were distinctly over-represented in Care subjects compared to the sector total though the difference between the two has reduced. CE students were particularly under-represented in Engineering.

**Table 8: Care Experienced Students in College by Subject Area 2016-17**

Subject area	CE Students	Sector Total	Difference
Care	19.9%	14.2%	5.6%
Special Programmes	17.9%	9.2%	8.6%
Construction	8.8%	6.4%	2.4%
Hospitality and tourism	7.3%	5.3%	2.0%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	7.0%	4.8%	2.2%
Engineering	6.1%	14.7%	-8.6%
Business, management and administration	6.0%	7.1%	-1.1%
Computing and ICT	4.7%	8.2%	-3.6%
Social subjects	4.0%	3.0%	1.0%
Sport and Leisure	3.9%	2.9%	1.0%
Art and design	3.2%	4.7%	-1.4%
Education and training	2.8%	1.7%	1.1%
Science	2.2%	3.8%	-1.7%
Languages and ESOL	2.0%	5.8%	-3.8%
Land-based industries	1.9%	2.4%	-0.5%
Media	1.1%	1.5%	-0.3%
Performing arts	1.1%	2.1%	-1.0%
Nautical studies	0.1%	2.3%	-2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>305,670</b>	

23. Table 9 looks at what CE undergraduate entrants are studying at university in 2016-17. The subject areas more likely taken by CE students were Subjects Allied to Medicine like nursing, Social Studies, and Business and Administrative studies. These three subject areas accounted for 46.5% of the total.

**Table 9: Care experienced Entrants in University by Subject Area 2016-17<sup>1</sup>**

Subject	CE Students	Sector Total	Difference
Subjects allied to Medicine	18.0%	14.1%	3.9%
Social studies	14.4%	8.9%	5.5%
Business and Administrative studies	14.1%	12.7%	1.4%
Biological Sciences	9.0%	9.0%	0.0%
Combined	6.0%	7.0%	-1.0%
Engineering	5.7%	7.2%	-1.5%
Computer Sciences	5.4%	5.0%	0.4%
Creative Arts and Design	5.1%	4.8%	0.3%
Physical Sciences	4.2%	3.5%	0.7%
Education	3.9%	4.4%	-0.5%
Historical and Philosophical studies	3.3%	6.2%	-2.9%
Law	2.4%	2.9%	-0.5%
Linguistics, Classics and related subjects	1.8%	3.2%	-1.4%
Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture and related subjects	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%
Medicine and Dentistry	1.2%	2.0%	-0.8%
European Languages, Literature and related subjects	1.2%	2.6%	-1.4%
Architecture, Building and Planning	0.9%	1.9%	-1.0%
Mass Communications and Documentation	0.9%	1.2%	-0.3%
Mathematical and Computer Sciences	0.6%	1.6%	-1.0%
Technologies	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
Languages	0.0%	0.2%	-0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>65,845</b>	

### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

24. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying concentrations of deprivation in Scotland. Table 10 shows there are 715 care experienced students living in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland.

**Table 10 Care experienced students at College who live in SIMD10 postcode areas 2016-17**

SIMD10	Enrolments	%
No	2,340	76.6%
Yes	715	23.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,055</b>	

25. Whilst 23.4% of CE students living in SIMD10 areas are enrolled on either an FE or HE course at college, only 52.0% of these students continue and successfully complete their course. This success rate is lowest amongst all groups that we monitor with a 21.2 percentage point difference in comparison with the sector average.

<sup>1</sup> At First Degree and sub-degree level



## Student Carers

26. Students with caring responsibilities<sup>2</sup> are another group which SFC monitors as there is evidence to suggest that their outcomes are also not as good as their peers. There were 8,095 student carers<sup>3</sup> enrolled on a college course in 2016-17 which represents 3.4% of the total number of enrolments. Table 11 shows that there were 405 students who identified themselves as being both care experienced and a carer.

**Table 11 Care experienced college students with a carer role 2016-17**

Carer	Enrolments	%
No	2,625	85.9%
Yes	405	13.2%
Unknown	25	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,055</b>	

27. The successful completion rate for CE students who are also carers studying at FE level is 57.9% in 2016-17. The performance gap between CE students with caring responsibilities and the sector average remains 15.3 percentage points.

## College Successful Completion<sup>4</sup>

28. The college successful completion rate is a key performance indicator (KPI). Targets are set in the National Ambition and for 2016-17 we were aiming for 57% successfully completing their course at FE level, and 60% successful completions at HE level and these targets were met in 2016-17.
29. Table 12 shows the PI outcomes for CE students studying at FE level in 2015-16 and 2016-17. The successful completion rate has increased (from 53.9% to 57.9%) with a narrowing performance gap though CE students are 15.3 percentage points less likely to successfully complete their course compared to the sector average

**Table 12: PI Outcomes for Care Experienced Students studying at FE level 2015-16 and 2016-17**

PI Outcome	2015-16			2016-17		
	CE Students	Sector	Performance Gap	CE Students	Sector	Performance Gap
Completed Partial Success	20.9%	13.9%	17.5%	15.1%	11.8%	15.3%
Completed Successful	53.9%	71.4%		57.9%	73.2%	
Early Withdrawal	10.0%	5.1%		9.9%	5.2%	
Further Withdrawal	15.2%	9.6%		16.9%	9.8%	

<sup>2</sup> Carer definition: A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Funding Council FES data

<sup>4</sup> For further information on how this data is collected please see [SFC College Performance Indicators Publication](#)

30. Table 13 shows the PI outcomes for CE students at HE level during the same period. Likewise the successful completion rate for CE students has increased between the years (64.1% to 67.9%) with the performance gap also narrowing. In 2016-17 CE students were 5.6 percentage points less likely to successfully complete their course than the sector average.

**Table 13: PI Outcomes for Care Experienced Students studying at HE level 2015-16 and 2016-17**

PI Outcome	2015-16			2016-17		
	CE Students	Sector	Performance Gap	CE Students	Sector	Performance Gap
Completed Partial Success	12.1%	11.0%		12.5%	11.7%	
Completed Successful	64.1%	73.9%	9.8%	67.9%	73.5%	5.6%
Early Withdrawal	6.8%	4.1%		8.9%	4.1%	
Further Withdrawal	17.0%	10.9%		10.7%	10.6%	

### University Retention

31. Due to the relatively low numbers in the overall numbers of CE undergraduates the first target in the National Ambition is set for 2018-19, that retention of CE entrants is within 5% of the Scottish domiciled undergraduate sector average.
32. Table 14 shows the retention of CE Scottish domiciled FT undergraduate entrants progressing from their first to their second year since 2014-15. This PI is accepted as the time when undergraduate students are more likely to drop out during any other point of their studies.

**Table 14: Retention of Scottish-domiciled Care Experienced students at University**

Year	Care Experienced Students	Retention average in Sector	Performance Gap
2014-15	82.7%	90.5%	7.8%
2015-16	84.3%	90.6%	6.3%
2016-17	83.7%	91.0%	7.3%

33. We treat 'care experienced' as a protected characteristic. Of all protected characteristic groups, care experienced has the worst retention rate with the next highest being SIMD 0-20 at 87.2% in 2016-17. However due to the relative low number of CE students these findings should be interpreted with caution.

### College Leaver Destinations

34. We have three years of data for CE students in the College Leaver Destinations (CLD) survey. The proportion of CE students in the 2016-17 cohort was 1.5% (770/50,298) up from 1.1% from the previous year. Table 15 shows a summarised comparison between the national destination figures for leavers and the destinations of CE students 3-6 months after qualifying/leaving college.

**Table 15: CLD for Care Experienced Students 2014-15 and 2015-16**

Destination of Leaver	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	CE students	National	CE Students	National	CE Students	National
Further study/training	88.3%	79.0%	75.4%	75.4%	78.3%	75.0%
Work	6.6%	16.6%	18.1%	19.6%	15.7%	20.0%
Other destination	0.7%	1.3%	1.5%	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%
Negative destination	4.4%	3.1%	5.0%	3.9%	4.4%	3.7%

- Other destination: Temporarily sick/Unable to work or Looking after the home or family; Taking time out to travel; Permanently unable to work/retired
- Negative destination: Unemployed and looking for work; Not employed but not looking for employment, further study or training

35. In 2016-17 of the confirmed destination, 94.1% went on to positive destinations; 78.3% continued to further study (up from 75.4%) compared with 75.0% in the national figure. Where this group differs is in those moving to work (15.7% compared to the national figure of 20.0%) and those moving to negative destinations: 4.4% compared with the national 3.7% but a decrease of 0.6 percentage points from the previous year.

### Further information

36. Contact: Dr Kemi Adesokan, Policy / Analysis Officer, [kadesokan@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:kadesokan@sfc.ac.uk); or Nick Stansfeld, Policy/Analysis Officer, [nstansfeld@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:nstansfeld@sfc.ac.uk).