Care experienced news update report

Introduction

1.   This paper updates CEGG on what has happened since the June meeting.

Recommendation

2.   CEGG is asked to note the developments in this paper.

Outcome Agreements Guidance 2020-21

3.   The College and University OA Guidance were published in October 2019. The College guidance reads (university equivalent is similar):

4.   "SFC has updated the National Ambition for Care-Experienced Students which sets the sector targets for intake and retention until 2022-23, in line with a vision of no difference in outcomes between care-experienced students and their peers by 2030.

5.   "The survey of care-experienced students in Scottish colleges and universities carried out by CELCIS on behalf of SFC, led to eight key learning points and 18 recommendations. We ask institutions to work, where relevant, towards implementation of these recommendations and to focus their reporting on their commitment to the retention and success of these students. Institutions should provide a weblink to their Corporate Parenting Plan."

Contextualised admissions

6.   CEGG was going to have a discussion on contextualised admissions at the November 2019 meeting. This has been delayed because SFC is at the moment formally monitoring and evaluating the impact of HEI's access thresholds and wider contextualised admissions policies which includes the entitlement of a place for care-experienced applicants if they meet the minimum entry requirement. SFC will be reporting to the Scottish Government and the Commissioner by May 2020, and annually thereafter. This is part of the requirement placed upon SFC to deliver COWA recommendation 11a. We anticipate having the CEGG discussion after the report to Scottish Government and the Commissioner in May 2020.

Success rates for care-experienced students

7.   At the last meeting there was a suggestion that SFC should look at the success rates of care-experienced students who were also student carers[1], those with a disability and those with a mental health condition.

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[1]   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"

8. The table below shows the number of care-experienced enrolments in the college sector who also have a declared caring responsibility/disability/mental health condition, with their successful completion rate, split by mode of attendance (full-time and part-time) in AY 2017-18. Due to low numbers the data should be treated with caution.

Table 1: Care-Experienced enrolments with a declared caring responsibility, disability and mental health condition, with successful completion percentage compared to non-care experienced students 2017-18

	Number of Enrolments	Success Rate			Success Rate* comparison	
		Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time
Care-Experienced Carers	625	53.4%	88.1%		64.6%	77.2%
Care-Experienced with a disability	1,485	52.5%	84.3%		64.5%	75.9%
Care-Experienced with a mental health condition	315	38.5%	84.4%		56.1%	68.3%

- The Asterisk is comparing carers/disabled students/students with a mental health condition that are not care-experienced.

9. At university, we are not yet collecting data on student carers however, the table below shows those care-experienced entrants disclosing a disability with their retention in AY 2017-18. Likewise due to low number the data should also be treated with caution.

Table 2: Care-Experienced entrants disclosing a disability who were retained in AY 2017-18

Domicile	Care-Experienced Entrants	Retained	Retention Rate		Comparison*
Care-experienced entrants	60	50	82.0%		87.2%

- The data has been rounded to the nearest five.
- The comparison is comparing the retention of Scottish-domiciled care-experienced undergraduate entrants.

College Leaver Destination 2017-18

10. The SFC College Leaver Destination survey was published in October however the outcomes of care-experienced leavers were not referenced in the report. This was because it was agreed that this data more relevantly sits with the SFC's Report on Widening Access which is usually published in May.

11. We are able to share the data with you now. The proportion of care-experienced leavers in the 2017-18 cohort was 1.9%, up from 1.5% the previous year. Table 3 shows a summarised comparison between the national destination figures for leavers and the destinations of care-experienced leavers 3-6 months after qualifying/leaving college.

Table 3: CLD for Care-Experienced Students 2015-16 to 2017-18

Destination of Leaver	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	CE students	National	CE Students	National	CE Students	National
Further study/training	75.4%	75.4%	78.3%	75.0%	80.8%	74.4%
Work	18.1%	19.6%	15.7%	20.0%	12.6%	20.9%
Other destination	1.5%	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%	2.2%	1.8%
Negative destination	5.0%	3.9%	4.4%	3.7%	4.4%	2.9%

- 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

12. When comparing confirmed destinations for 2017-18, we observe that 93.5% of care-experienced qualifiers moved into positive destinations compared to the national figure of 95.4%. Breaking this down shows care-experienced leavers are more likely to continue their studies than we see nationally: 80.8% compared with 74.4% for the national figure. Looking at those moving into work we see the CE qualifiers have a much lower likelihood of moving into work: 12.6% compared to the national figure of 20.9%, while they are more likely to become unemployed: 4.4% unemployment for CE compared with the national 2.9% - half as many again as the national figure become unemployed.

13. The most positive story for CE qualifiers involves those qualifying from courses at SCQF level 7+ (HE level). CE qualifiers at this level account for 0.9% of confirmed destinations (145/45,520). For this group we find CE qualifiers find positive destinations 97.2% of the time compared to the national 95.9%. Breaking this down we get 75.2% CE moved into further study and 22.1% into employment compared to 69% to further study and 26.9% to work nationally.

CELCIS Survey of care-experienced students at college and university

14. A couple of weeks after the last CEGG meeting the '[Being a student with care experience is very daunting](#)' findings from a survey of care-experienced students in Scotland's colleges and universities was published, on the day of Scotland's Fair Access conference. CELCIS has reported a high level of interest in the report which has received a warm response from colleges, universities and other partners. SFC hosted an initial meeting to think about how the sector should progress the 18 recommendations, and we'll update CEGG at the March meeting when there are firmer plan in place.

Pathways to University from Care: Findings Report One

15. A care-experienced university student survey titled '[Pathways to University from Care: Findings Report One](#)' was published in September 2019. It was led by the University of Sheffield who conducted research with 234 care-experienced students in England and Wales, with funding from the Leverhulme Trust. The report

explored the factors that promoted access to higher education for care-experienced students. The authors found that embedded support significantly aided positive transitions to university life. The report addresses shortfalls in support and highlights examples of best practice identified by care-experienced students. The report concludes with recommendations for universities, made jointly with the Care Leaver Covenant.

16.   In Scotland we are ahead of many of the recommendations e.g. a clear care-experienced definition, contextualised offers and guaranteed entry if minimum entry requirements are met, institutional named contacts, clear care-experienced support through institutional corporate parenting plans, the Care-Experienced Student Bursary, training offered to corporate parents, and pre-entry summer schools to make university more accessible. Other recommendations match the CELCIS findings. Other good practice/ recommendations include:

- Offer support on arrival day: by contacting new students to establish their transport needs and helping them move in if possible.
- Provide welcome pack for students in their accommodation including practical items (e.g. duvet, pillow, pan, plate, cup) and home comfort (e.g. biscuits, chocolate, gift vouchers) to help care-experienced students celebrate their arrival and feel at home.
- Introduce early registration: to facilitate their arrival to essential university level support.
- Introduce alcohol free accommodation options in line with recent decline in youth drinking, and consider providing alcohol-free first year accommodation for non-drinkers.
- Fast track mental health support for care-experienced students who request it and provide long-term support if necessary.
- Boost support for final year students by providing enhanced career advice, succession planning and counselling. Offer a graduation support package and bursary to assist graduates in finding suitable accommodation when they leave university. Provide guarantor status for those who need it.

Corporate parenting e-module

17.   The corporate parenting module for HEIs which is being led by the Open University in Scotland is now due to launch in the New Year with a couple of institutions piloting the module. There has been a delay due to longer than anticipated collection of the video material. Full roll-out is planned by the end of the academic year.

Commissioner for Fair Access's Annual Report 2019

18.   The Commissioner's annual report titled 'Building on Progress Towards Fair Access' was also published in June. The report has a section on individual indicators of disadvantage where it identifies three additional measures (as well as the Scottish

Index of Multiple Deprivation) which are care-experience, household income and school environment. It reads:

19. "Using care-experience as a measure of disadvantage alongside residence in a SIMD20 area is generally accepted. The number and percentage of applicants and entrants with care-experience are included in national statistics on access, and all universities use care-experience as a marker to identify disadvantage. It is also generally accepted that the needs of applicants/entrants with care-experience should be recognised regardless of their socio-economic status, although in practice many may come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Any issues about the quality and availability of data about this small group of potential students should be able to be resolved satisfactorily. Universities Scotland has agreed a common definition of care-experience (which matches SFC's definition), embracing those with experience not only of local authority care but also of kinship care (with institutions free to determine the level of verification they require). Numbers are small but growing. In 2017-18, there were 255 Scottish domiciled full-time first degree entrants who reported care-experience, up from 170 the previous year, while the percentage of entrants who reported care-experience increased from 0.6% to 0.8%.

20. "Without seeking to diminish the impact of other forms of individual disadvantage, such as those applicants who have been estranged from their parents or are orphans, not all applicants in these - and other - categories are necessarily socially deprived. The proliferation of separate categories of individual disadvantage may tend to detract from a more general definition of deprivation in the context of fair access, such as that which Universities Scotland has developed. In any case some forms of individual disadvantage are 'protected' characteristics, and universities already have a legal duty to make appropriate adjustments. Care-experienced applicants are perhaps an exception to this rule - for three reasons. First, there is an overwhelming public and political consensus that they deserve special consideration in the context of fair access; secondly, they are a well-defined and comparatively small group; and, finally, the experience of social deprivation and care-experience are closely aligned."

Programme for Government

21. In the Scottish Government's announced further commitment to those with care-experience in their Programme for Government 2019-20. These included removing the age 26 cap on the Care-Experienced Student Bursary for AY 2020-21. This is because they recognise that people with experience of care often do not feel ready to start further or higher education immediately after leaving school and so they want to support them in their studies at whatever point in life they feel they are ready, no matter what age they are. Other announcements include:
    - Extending eligibility for free NHS dental care to CE between the ages of 18 and 26.

- Working with local government to make sure CE young people receiving a qualifying benefit are supported with discretionary housing payments from April 2020.
- Launch of new Job Start Payment, ensuring that care leavers will get this help if they are receiving a qualifying benefit, without having had a period of unemployment.
- Extending entitlement to funded early learning and childcare provision to 2 year olds whose parents are care experienced. This should be in place by August 2020.
- Developing a care leavers homelessness prevention pathway, building on the work to better understand what support people with care-experience need to reduce their risk of becoming homeless and improving support if they do become homeless.

Care-Experienced Week 2019

22. Care-Experienced Week launched with the Who Cares? Scotland's Love Rally. For the second year running, hundreds of people took to the streets of Glasgow to demand a lifetime of equality, respect and love for care-experienced people all over the country. Crowds gathered at Glasgow Green and made their way up through the city towards George Square where they heard from various inspirational care-experienced speakers, and Deputy First Minister John Swinney. Throughout the week, various local events took place all over the country including a Listen & Learn event in Glasgow; My World of Work Live event with Skills Development Scotland in Inverness; a football tournament for care-experienced young people and their Corporate Parents in Kilmarnock; a Care Dinner event in Edinburgh; and a care-experienced celebration in Aberdeen. The Week was brought to close in true party style with the annual Time to Shine Festival which saw over 300 care-experienced people come together to sing, dance, create and connect.

23. The Scottish Government took the opportunity to announce more than £12 million of further funding to improve the attainment of care-experienced young people in AY 2019-20. Last year more £8 million was spent on a range of projects including mentoring programmes, counselling services and driving lessons, supported through the Care-Experienced Children and Young People Fund. Local authorities will work with chief social workers and directors of education to decide how this year's funding will be used. Care-experienced young people from birth up to the age of 26 are eligible for support.

24. Also during Care-Experienced Week, MCR Pathways published an article called 'Understanding the State of Care in Scotland' which breaks down the 2019 policy changes that impact care-experienced young people. The overview states why the changes to policy was required with sections on the Bursary, widening access to university through guaranteed offers to those who meet minimum entry requirements, and other policies announced in the Governments' Programme for

Scotland. MCR young people inform them that they should focus on two policy areas:

- Corporate Parents need to directly support care-experienced young people's education through a mentoring culture.
- Widening Access must start before young people leave school with colleges and universities engaging care-experienced young people while at school.

Independent Care Review

25. The Independent Care Review is in its third of four stages – called the Journey stage. They published the Journey stage update in September 2019 which details their work so far and there's a preview of what to expect from the final stage which is due in early 2020, called Destination.

26. February's Care Day has previously been mentioned as the launch day. During Care-Experienced Week the Deputy First Minister gave a commitment that the Scottish Government will act on the recommendations of the Independent Care Review.

Homelessness and care-experience

27. In the last CEGG news update we referenced CELCIS's Beyond the Headlines briefing on homelessness and Care-Experience. Earlier in the month new guidance was published with recommendations to improve support for care-experienced at risk of becoming homeless called 'Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways'.

28. The guidance aims to fully support existing legislation, ensure that care leavers who do experience homelessness can rapidly access tailored support, and changing the policy and culture, including shared responsibility between corporate parents to make sure young people leaving care are prepared and supported through their transition into adulthood and beyond.

Fostering and adoption statistics 2018-19

29. The Care Inspectorate has published this report which shows there were 3,758 foster care households at 31 December 2018, with the number of children and young people using fostering services is at 5,171 in 2018. Both gradual increases from 2015. An increasing number of children and sibling groups were placed in households together however there is a challenge for many fostering services, particularly local authority ones, recruiting households that can foster sibling groups.

30. At 31 December 2018 194 children and young people were approved for adoption and waiting to be matched to an adopted household. 35% were part of a sibling group and 22% had been waiting for over a year. In 2018 286 children and young people were legally adopted children, down 13% from 328 in 2017. In independent services the most common age group approval was children aged two to five years old (86%). In local authority services the most common age group was children aged younger than two years old (60%).

Kinship care research

31. A study called '[How did kinship care emerge as a significant form of placement for children in care?](#)' has been published in the Children and Youth Services Review. The study traces key policy developments in how formal kinship care has evolved in Ireland and Scotland. It shows how in recent years, formal kinship care has emerged as a critical part of many care systems, often being the 'first option' for children who can no longer live with their parents.

32. Dr Louise Hill, Evidence and Policy Lead at CELCIS and one of the researchers of the study, said: 'Over decades, kinship families have responded to the needs of their children in providing love and care often in the most difficult circumstances. In responding to the local need of communities, our research shows that kinship care has grown to be of vital importance in the care of children, with children reporting feeling loved, cared for and a strong sense of belonging.'

33. Here are some other highlights from the findings:
     - One in three looked-after children in Scotland lives in formal kinship care. There has been a steady rise in the past twenty years.
     - There are three layers of kinship care: informal, semi-formal and formal. Semi-formal is when carers receive payment from the state in recognition of the care being provided to a child who is not formally in care.
     - Kinship care as the new 'flexible friend' of the children in care system. They are described as a 'reserved army' of carers who can be 'called up' as the occasion demands. Formal kinship care fits the bill for children on the grounds of both principle and pragmatism.
     - There has been 3 separate phases in the emergence of formal relative (kinship) care.
       - 1980's, pre-emergence phase: increasing demand due to reduction of residential care places and increasing drug use and impact on families.
       - 1990's: emergence phase: there were changes in law, policy and practice which saw gradual growth in reliance on formal kinship care.
       - 2000's: consolidation phase: formal kinship care established as a core part of the care system.

34. The conclusion identifies two key policy challenges. "The first is fine-tuning provision of practical and financial support for formal kinship carers (for example achieving parity of allowance for formal kinship care and foster care in Scotland). While strictly beyond the realm of formal kinship care, there also remains the challenge of developing a stronger policy response in Scotland and Ireland to the needs of carers providing kinship care outside the children in care system."

Further information

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