

HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS

Scotland's Care System:

Achieving Life Goals and Ambitions

**"I would say corporate parents
need a better understanding
of life in care and to be
more considerate when
approaching young people."**

Young Person in care commenting on what needs
to improve in Scotland's care system

**"We need support – not
criticism, manipulation or
not being listened to."**

Young Person in care commenting on what needs
to improve in Scotland's care system

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About Action for Children Scotland

Action for Children Scotland works with more than 14,000 children, young people, parents and carers each year. With 84 services across Scotland, we are in communities where you live and work. We help transform the lives of thousands of children and young people which we have been doing across Scotland for over 60 years.

For more information, visit actionforchildren.org.uk or follow us on Twitter [@Actn4ChildrScot](https://twitter.com/Actn4ChildrScot).

Executive Summary

Action for Children Scotland asked care experienced children and young people about Scotland's care system. Responses were gathered through postcards, which were presented to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP and Independent Review Chair Fiona Duncan at an event in March 2017. Almost 500 responses were received.

"I find that there is not enough help when leaving the care system. I also feel that staff in residential don't show young people enough love and affection like we would get at home."

Young Person reflecting on their experience in care

This report highlights the voices of care experienced children and young people that Action for Children Scotland supports. It tells politicians, policy makers, professionals, and practitioners about what care experienced children and young people believe works in Scotland's care system but also what needs to improve. The hopes and aspirations of care experienced children and young people are also revealed within this report.

Summary of Postcard Comments

Care experienced children and young people can be looked after at home or looked after and accommodated. Those we support told us that Scotland's care system should:¹

- provide the setting where young people can have positive relationships with all those they encounter based in a safe, secure, and happy environment;

- ensure that people and systems around young people treat them with respect and are available to turn to in times of need at 'transitional' moments in their care journey;
- empower them to make decisions that affect their lives so that they can achieve their goals while learning from their experiences;
- provide equality of opportunity, with financial and in-kind support, to allow them to become confident and successful adults.

The Vision Statement

Care experienced children and young people that Action for Children Scotland support have developed a vision statement which contains four principles.

Action for Children is working towards a Scotland where:

- 1. children and young people in care have the right to live in a safe, secure and happy environment underpinned by positive relationships;**
- 2. children and young people in care have the right to be able to live independently but with the comfort of knowing that support is available during transitional moments in their lives;**
- 3. children and young people in care have the right to be treated with respect by systems and people that they encounter and are also empowered to learn from their mistakes while achieving their goals;**
- 4. children and young people in care have the right to equality of opportunity, and the financial and in-kind support to help them succeed and achieve in life.**

¹ Action for Children, 2017, "Voices of Looked After Children and Young People in Our Care" Postcards collated during February and March 2017

Putting Words Into Practice

Care experienced children and young people came together to develop the vision statement by looking at challenges and developing potential solutions. The asks contained within this report along with Annex A reflect this work. In taking these asks forward, the Independent Review of Scotland's Care System, can promote a system which supports care experienced children and young people to fulfil their potential. This is also an opportunity to review earlier reports, strategies and programmes to ensure that words have been put into practice.

Asks of The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System

We have developed asks of the Independent Review of Scotland's Care System based on feedback from care experienced children and young people. These are:

1. identify what impact existing strategies, initiatives and programmes have had on improving the lives of children and young people in care;
2. identify where existing funding and resources can be better invested to provide effective financial, or in-kind, support for care experienced young people to fulfill their potential;
3. identify an answer to what 'living independently' means in practice for children and young people in care;
4. listen to all the voices of children and young people in care including those who have learning and communication needs.

What Action for Children Scotland is already doing

- developing materials and processes which are young person friendly, in particular for young disabled people;
- bringing children and young people in care together to discuss improvements to service delivery;
- reviewing Action for Children Wi-Fi and social media policies;
- developing good practice guides which set out clearly what good care looks like and what support is required at transitional moments.

"I felt looked after as they had regular one to ones with me and always made sure I was ok. They took us on regular outings like the football and swimming which I enjoyed. They also helped me to get a mechanics work placement which was great."

Young Person in care from the Highlands



Introduction By Paul Carberry Director of Action for Children Scotland

October 2017



Our collective ambition is to see a Scotland where no child or young person is in care, because they will be living safely and happily with their birth parents and families. Unfortunately, 15,000 children and young people are currently living in Scotland's care system.²

For these children and young people, we need to make sure that the care system is working. This is why Action for Children Scotland asked care experienced children and young people about the care system – what works and what needs to change. We also asked them to share their hopes and aspirations. Our report draws upon almost 500 responses.

Young people have told us repeatedly what needs to change. They want a system that allows them to develop positive and appropriate relationships with all those involved in their lives, to achieve their goals, to learn from trying and making mistakes. They want people and systems around them that treat them with respect so that they can turn to them in times of need. They want to receive support at 'transitional' moments in their care journey. It is vital to get the balance right between having independence and receiving support.

That is why Action for Children Scotland has worked with children and young people with experience of Scotland's care system to produce both a vision statement and asks of The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System. In doing so, we have followed a rights-based approach to ensure we do what's needed and what works for Scotland's care experienced children and young people. While organisations and individuals will be making their own contributions, it is important that we collectively respond to the work being carried out by the Review.

Our duty as corporate parents is not only to make sure these children and young people are properly looked after during their time in care, but that they are also well prepared and equipped to leave the care system when they are ready and willing to do so. I was a member of the Scottish Government's Corporate Parent Working Group, which produced 'Good Corporate Parenting' guidance for community planning partnerships.³ Although we have made progress since, more still needs to be done.

Action for Children Scotland is fulfilling its responsibility to care experienced children and young people. We currently support more than 800 children and young people in care including those looked after at home and those who are looked after and accommodated.⁴ We have employed more than 90 young people, many of whom are care experienced, to become part of our workforce, becoming an 'Investors in Young People' recognised employer. We remain committed to improving the support we provide to care experienced children and young people that we support.

² Scottish Government, Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2015-16

³ Scottish Government, 2008, "These are our bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent"

⁴ Action for Children Scotland Audit of Looked After Children and Young People, March 2017

The Voices of Care Experienced Children and Young People: A Vision Statement

In early 2017, Action for Children Scotland asked all the 800 plus care experienced children and young people we support to tell us what they thought works and what needs to improve in Scotland's care system.

What Works Well in Scotland's Care System

"Some good workers you can speak to who listen and understand."

"I was provided with somewhere safe to stay which in some sense was a relief to be away from the family home. The individuals were nice too."

"Positive relationships between carers and parents. If the social work knows what they are doing – good listening from social workers. Depends on the worker and relationship with family. Experienced social workers."

"Positive relationships between families and social work."

"I always really appreciated and respected the individuals that worked with me. I knew that I could be challenging sometimes and the individuals were always firm but fair and supported me."

"I can have conversations about things that help me to stay out of trouble and out of jail."

"I found the individuals very supportive in the care system. I felt looked after as they had regular one to ones with me and always made sure I was OK."

"They took us on regular outings / activities such as football and swimming, which I enjoyed. They also helped me to get a mechanics work placement."

"Young people should have one social worker who makes an effort to get to know them and support them over the years of their life. I never had that."

"My hopes and dreams are not any different to other young people who haven't been in care."

"Children in care should not be treated differently with regards to their hopes and aspirations. Some may need extra support to fulfil these and this should be done through a supportive and caring environment. Children in care should have equal opportunities to fulfil their hopes and aspirations as those brought up by their parents."

The children and young people's comments echo findings from research in this area. Studies stress the importance of relationships and the quality of these relationships in the care system.^{5,6}

The Four Principles

The voices of the care experienced children and young people we work with are at the heart of our vision statement. We have taken a rights-based approach to develop the statement which has four principles.

Principle One

Action for Children is working towards a Scotland where...

Children and young people in care have the right to live in a safe, secure and happy environment underpinned by positive relationships.

Children and young people in care said:

"Don't separate siblings."

"I had numerous social workers and they changed regularly over the years. I never felt I had ongoing support; didn't have someone I could rely on."

5 Boddy, Janet, 2013, "Care Enquiry: Understanding permanence for looked after children: a review of research for the Care Inquiry"

6 Winters, Karen, 2015, "Supporting positive relationships for children and young people who have experience of care"

The Review of England's Care System concluded that "a fresh approach was required." This included "building a more flexible system which considers the quality of a child's relationships at its heart." The review continued, "the relationships with people who care for and about children are the golden thread in children's lives". A further conclusion was, "the quality of a child's relationships is the lens through which we should view what we do and plan to do."⁷

Therefore, the requirement is for Scotland's care system to be based on having a safe, secure, and happy environment and positive relationships between children and young people, and all those who support them throughout their care journey.

Principle Two

Action for Children is working towards a Scotland where...

Children and young people in care have the right to be able to live independently but with the comfort of knowing that support is available during transitional moments in their lives.

Children and young people in care said:

"As a young person, I would like continued support i.e. a flat within the residential unit to enable me to live more independently but still have the safety net of all the support I receive."

"Scotland's care system needs to provide support for young people in relation

to finding real help for care leavers. Scotland's care system must be reminded that other young people with stable backgrounds have parents for ongoing support. Our care system has to show the same love."

"For my family, I want to break the cycle of social work involvement for four generations of my family – through drugs and addictions. I want them to grow up in a household that doesn't know poverty, deprivation or is unhappy. I want them to be able to say that they come from a comfortable background and knew no struggle."

"I want to make a better life for myself so that my own children are not in the care system."

We found wider research also supported the need for balancing having independence with receiving support during transitional moments. Young people in care or preparing to leave the care system have been clear that they want to be involved in the decisions that affect them. The Review of England's Care Review in 2013 stressed that providing sufficient support before, during, and after transitional period was vital.⁸ This echoes the earlier report 'Can and Must Do More,' published by the then Scottish Executive in 2007.⁹

⁷ Care Inquiry, 2013, "Making not breaking: Building relationships for our most vulnerable children"

⁸ Care Inquiry, 2013, "Making not breaking: Building relationships for our most vulnerable children"

⁹ Scottish Executive, 2007, "Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better"

Research has shown that a child's identity and sense of belonging need to be supported through making connections between their past, present and future and that this can be more easily achieved during childhood experiences and during transitional moments.¹⁰

Principle Three

Action for Children is working towards a Scotland where...

Children and young people in care have the right to be treated with respect by the systems and people that they encounter and are also empowered to learn from their mistakes while achieving their goals.

In voicing their views, care experienced children and young people gave numerous examples whereby people and systems involved in the wider care system did not treat them with respect. The use of inappropriate language and behaviours by professions and processes gave them cause for concern.

This is what children and young people said:

"I feel that I was never listened to. At times, it was like my opinion was never heard by the social work or the children's panel when I tried to express my feeling about moving back in with my mum. They always made decisions regardless of how I felt about it."

"There should be more opportunity to do things on your own e.g. go shopping for clothes etc. as I felt that individuals were always 'watching me.'"

"I hope all children in care go to foster placements and not units. I felt pushed out of the family but I now realise that they love me for who I am. I don't have to be like anyone else. Give them the opportunity and time to settle in and support. When I got time, I am really good. I had a life that was terrible and now it is amazing. We go out for dinner and everything."

"My hope is to help others realise their hopes and dreams. People need other people to cheer them on and support them. To keep them going when life challenges them. My hope is to get training to work with young people through sports. That is what got me out of my bad days."

¹⁰ Boddy, Janet, 2013, "Care Enquiry: Understanding permanence for looked after children: a review of research for the Care Enquiry"

We found that research recognised that the care system is diverse – in terms of the personalities of children and young people, the professionals and practitioners providing them with support, and the ever increasing and multiple complex needs that face those living in the care system.

The views of children and young people in care must matter when deciding what permanence will look like for them.¹¹ Karen Winters suggests that to enable and support relationships between young people and professionals, practitioners, and carers requires change from the people and processes within the care system.¹² This is why the care system has to recognise, respect and be responsive to the diversity of those who live or work in it.

Principle Four

Action for Children is working towards a Scotland where...

Children and young people in care have the right to equality of opportunity, and the financial and in-kind support to help them succeed and achieve in life.

There were two key messages from care experienced children and young people about their hopes and aspirations. Firstly, they do not lack dreams or ambition and secondly, their hopes and aspirations are no different than those of their non-care experienced peers. Their experience and journey to achieving those hopes and aspirations are different, but children and young people in care want the same opportunities to be available to them while also having access to financial and in-kind support.

This is what children and young people in care said:

“Teachers need training in trauma – I was told I had a learning disability, my teachers did not know enough about the effects of trauma.”

“Receive help to get a driving licence and driving lessons aged 17 as we live in a rural area. It would help me get a mechanics job.”

“The Wi-Fi in residential unit should stay on longer until 10:30pm at least.”

We found a variety of research that supports the views of care experienced children and young people. Research from the Rees Centre shows that children and young people in care may take longer to fulfil their potential than their non-care experienced peers as they require additional support.¹³ Such support includes recognising that they are care experienced, identifying their specific needs and providing tailored support to address those needs. Other research also showed that good practice already exists.^{14 15 16 17}

However, the question needs to be asked if all public bodies deemed ‘corporate parents’ are signed up to the Covenant. If so, a further question is if all their employees are fully aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities.¹⁸

11 Boddy, Janet, 2013, “Care Enquiry: Understanding permanence for looked after children: a review of research for the Care Inquiry”

12 Winters, Karen, 2015, “Supporting positive relationships for children and young people who have experience of care”

13 The REES Centre, 2015, “Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England”

14 Scottish Government, 2009, “Improving the Education of Looked After Children: A Guide for Local Authorities and Service Providers”

15 Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008, “Looked after children, young people and care leavers: examples of good practice”

16 Ekosgen, 2012, “Evaluation of Action for Children Supported Training Programme – Year 3”

17 The Prince’s Trust, 2017, “From Care to Independence”

18 Care Leavers Covenant, 2015 “The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant”

The Voices of Care Experienced Children and Young People: Asks

We asked the care experienced children and young people we support how they would take forward the four principles in our new vision statement for Scotland's care system. Annex A of this report summarises this work.

Asks of The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System

Based on what care experienced children and young people that Action for Children Scotland support said, we ask the Independent Review of Scotland's Care System to:

1. identify what impact existing strategies, initiatives and programmes have had on improving the lives of children and young people in care;
2. identify where existing funding and resources can be better invested to provide effective financial, or in-kind, support for care experienced young people to fulfill their potential;
3. identify an answer to what 'living independently' means in practice for children and young people in care;
4. listen to all the voices of children and young people in care including those who have learning and communication needs.

What Action for Children Scotland is already doing

- developing materials and processes which are young person friendly, in particular for young people who have learning and communication needs;
- bringing children and young people in care together to discuss improvements to service delivery;
- reviewing Action for Children Wi-Fi and social media policies;
- developing good practice guides which set out clearly what good care looks like and what support is required at transitional moments.



Conclusion

The political interest in issues around care in Scotland has led to the much needed Independent Review of Scotland's Care System.¹⁹ Action for Children Scotland welcomes this move and has played its part, helping to contribute to its work. Almost 500 children and young people in care that we work with got involved, telling us what works well and what needs to change in Scotland's care system.²⁰ The responses about their hopes and aspirations were enlightening. We remain committed to further contributing to the work of the Review. Our vision statement includes four principles and four asks that we would like to see be taken forward by the Review.

In this report, we have looked at what care experienced children and young people tell us, the policy context, and the research available. All this evidence confirms that we – Scotland – already know what works well and have some insight into what needs to change. We also know that the care system has positive aspects to it and that good practice exists.

Now, more needs to be done to ensure that all the existing laws, policies, strategies, guidance, programmes and initiatives that have been committed to are fully implemented and delivered. The care system must evolve, in design and practice, with what young people, professionals and carers who live and work in it believe is needed. The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System now has the opportunity to do this and make a real difference to children and young people in care.

“There is not enough funding for carers to spend on taking us on holiday or taking part in activities.”

Care Experienced Young Person from the Borders

“I had a good experience of kinship care and stayed with my gran. It is good that children are kept with their families whenever they can be.”

Care Experienced Young Person from Edinburgh

“Children and young people should not be moved around as much. I had several accommodations and found it hard to settle.”

Care Experienced Young Person from Alexandria



19 Independent Review of Scotland's Care System Website, 2017, "About the Review"

20 Action for Children, 2017, "Voices of Looked After Children and Young People in Our Care" Postcards collated during February and March 2017

Annex A: How Care Experienced Children and Young People want to progress the Four Principles

How care experienced children and young people want to implement principle one

Children and young people in care have the right to live in a safe, secure and happy environment underpinned by positive relationships.

Care experienced children and young people supported by **Action for Children's Fostering and Clackmannanshire Family Support services** have told us what they think a safe, secure, and happy environment should look like:

1. the Basics – food, water and shelter;
2. well-kept furnishings;
3. to feel safe;
4. to feel loved;
5. to not feel scared;
6. to feel I can speak to people;
7. positivity;
8. encouragement;
9. set boundaries;
10. good relationships.

Care experienced children and young people need to develop and maintain positive relationships with foster carers, befrienders, social workers, support workers, health visitors, educational psychologists, and child adolescent mental health professionals. This is what care experienced children and young people said can make a positive relationship:

- knowing what's happening;
- working towards a more predictable future;
- people are approachable;
- feel can ask anything and not be judged;
- availability;
- empathy;
- giving cuddles;

- acceptance;
- love;
- stability;
- consistency;
- not being given up on;
- fun;
- reliability.

How care experienced children and young people want to implement principle two

Children and young people in care have the right to be able to live independently but with the comfort of knowing that support should be readily available to them during transitional moments in their lives.

Care experienced children and young people supported by **Action for Children's Employability, Dundee Housing Support, and West Lothian Housing Support services** have shared their thoughts on 'what living independently means:'

"To feel safe."

"Moving out of care, living in a supported flat or had a tenancy themselves."

"Able to do things yourself but not feel isolated from others."

“Living independently is when you have your own place to live with your own rules and being able to make all choices for yourself. Not having to permission for anything, being able to make your own decisions and do what you want. Being able to do things such as budgeting and cooking.”

“Young people will have support and know where to get it. When I live in my own house, paying my own bills, and spending my money they way I want to.”

Care experienced children and young people also listed times in their life that they felt were a ‘transitional moment’ for themselves:

1. stopping and re-starting contact with birth parents;
2. during their time in education – moving between nursery, primary, secondary, further, and higher education;
3. leaving education to seek employment or training;
4. moving within different types of care i.e. changing fostering placement or residential accommodation;
5. moving between different types of care i.e. fostering, looked after at home, and residential;
6. moving into supported accommodation;
7. moving into self-supported accommodation i.e. own tenancy;
8. experiencing life changing moments such as having a relationship, getting married, having children, building their careers etc;
9. leaving the care system.

It is important to note that ‘transitional moments’ will of course be different for all children and young people depending on their experience of the care system. The children and young people provided an overview of all those they felt could support them to live independent lives while being their support network. They also listed what type of support they would be looking for from each support network. The table below illustrates their views:

Support Network	What kind of support children and young people in care are looking for?
Social Worker	Reliability and consistency Regular contact
Support Worker	Reliability and consistency Before a new move takes place, support workers from new accommodation should visit you at present accommodation to get to know you
Schools / Colleges	Teaching life skills
Self-Support	Knowing about life skills such as cooking, budgeting, managing a tenancy, and sexual health education
Government and Agencies	Overseeing people and systems ensuring that what is meant to happen is implemented.

How care experienced children and young people want to implement principle three

Children and young people in care have the right to be treated with respect by the systems and people that they encounter and are also empowered to learn from their mistakes while achieving their goals.

Care experienced children and young people supported by **Action for Children's Moray Residential and Moving On services** were asked to provide examples of scenarios where people and systems had not used appropriate language or acted properly towards them.

Examples given were:

- too much jargon used at meetings and events;
- too many rules and regulations relating to support workers and the type of support they could offer i.e. not being able to give hugs or giving advice based on their own lived experience;
- existence of a postcode lottery in terms of the support and opportunities made available i.e. can be differences between local authorities or even within towns and cities;
- professionals and practitioners not spending enough time with children and young people in order to get to know them and help them achieve their potential.

Having considered the above, they were asked to provide potential solutions that could help people and systems improve their understanding and interactions towards children and young people in care.

This is what they said:

“Children and Young People in care have no different hopes and aspirations than those who are not in care.”

“Allow young people to help choose the setting including times and venue to hold review meetings – no need to always use a formal office.”

“Communicate plainly and honestly by not using jargon, making assumptions or using labels to define someone.”

“Treat young people as adults and speak ‘with’ rather than speak ‘to’.”

“Be understanding and patient if a child or young person needs to ask the same question repeatedly because they feel that they have not understood something.”

“Ask each child or young person how they wish to be referred to i.e. child or young person; client or looked after.”

“Professionals speak on a human level and not on a professional level by constantly encouraging other professionals to make this change and holding them to account when they do not do so.”

How care experienced children and young people want to implement principle four

Children and young people in care have the right to equality of opportunity and the financial and in-kind support to help them succeed and achieve in life.

Care experienced children and young people supported by **Action for Children's Employability services** devised a list of opportunities that they would like to be given. The table below summarises this:

Opportunities Required	Financial Support Required	In-Kind Support Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – gaining employment – accessing further and higher education – improving their own health and wellbeing – learning to drive a car – managing personal finances and budget – managing a tenancy – learning vital life and survival skills such as cooking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – accessing equipment such as computers – support to get driving lessons – support for travelling to and from job centre and job interviews etc. – acquiring housing for independent living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – seeing your social worker more – more support with learning about and developing life and survival skills



Annex B: Scotland's Care System: The Numbers

As of 31 March 2016, Scotland had:

15,317 looked after children and young people²¹

Of that:

13,840 are looked after in the community through foster care, kinship care or adoption

1,477 are looked after in residential accommodation provided by local authorities, the voluntary sector or in secure accommodation.

As of 31 March 2017, Action for Children Scotland supported:

824 care experienced children and young people across Scotland²²

Of that:

254 are supported in residential short-breaks;

211 are care leavers;

141 are on a supervision order;

103 are in fostering;

93 are in residential care;

22 are in kinship care.

How Action for Children Scotland is working with The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System

In May 2017, Fiona Duncan and her review team visited Action for Children Scotland's Fostering Hub to speak with young people, carers, and practitioners about their experiences of the care system. In August 2017, the Independent Review team visited and heard from young people and practitioners in our service in the Western Isles. Young People from Action for Children Scotland's Residential services in Moray attended the Independent Review's roadshow in Inverness. Our Public Policy team attended the review's world café event in Glasgow. Action for Children Scotland will continue to support the Independent Review of Scotland's Care System in its important work.

²¹ Scottish Government, Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2015-16

²² Action for Children Scotland Audit of Looked After Children and Young People, March 2017

Annex C: The Policy Context

Since devolution, the policy and legislative framework impacting on children and young people in care has developed significantly through a series of strategies and approaches.

<p>The then Scottish Executive published a report in 2007 entitled 'Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better.' This sought to understand the various barriers children and young people in care faced as well as to: promote the role of the Corporate Parent; raise awareness of the educational, employment, housing, physical and emotional wellbeing needs of children and young people in care; improve training and clarifying roles of foster carers, residential workers, lead professionals, and support workers; and secure pivotal changes to improving support before, during, and after transitional moments.²³</p>	<p>In 2008, the Scottish Government published a Fostering and Kinship Care Strategy. That strategy had two objectives. First, to deliver a child – centred approach to kinship and foster care and secondly, to support high quality kinship and foster care. The strategy's purpose was clear – to support the children and young people concerned but also those who cared for them.²⁴ In terms of fostering, this was followed up by a review in 2013 which has led to new learning and development standards as well as reviewing the care allowance.²⁵</p>	<p>The Scottish Government's 'Early Year's Framework' had the principles of early intervention and prevention at its heart. To achieve this, investment in the early years and community empowerment to better deliver services was essential to ensure that Scotland is the best place to grow up in for all.^{26 27 28} Both the 'Curriculum for Excellence' and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) also strongly promoted early intervention and holistic approaches. It is understood that these are the basic requirements for all children and young people to grow and develop and reach their full potential.^{29 30}</p>
<p>The 'Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014' made it a requirement that, based upon an assessment, care leavers received support up until they turned twenty-five. This ensured a more gradual, and needs based rather than a one size fits all approach be applied.³¹ Various guidance and best practice relating to addressing the educational, housing and financial needs of children and young people in care has been published by the Scottish Government.^{32 33 34 35} As has guidance on the various stages in the care journey - through care, continuing care and after care.³⁶</p>	<p>The 'Scottish Care Leaver's Covenant' aims to support Scotland's corporate parents, carers, practitioners, managers and decision makers in fulfilling their duties to improve the life chances of all of Scotland's care leavers.³⁷</p>	<p>The Independent Review of Scotland's Care System is currently leading a review of the care system.³⁸</p>

23 Scottish Executive, 2007, "Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better"

24 Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008, "Fostering and Kinship Care Strategy"

25 Scottish Government Website, 2017, "Looked After Children"

26 Scottish Government, 2008, "The Early Year's Framework"

27 Scottish Government, 2008, "These are Our Bairnes"

28 Scottish Government, 2013, "Staying Put Scotland Providing care leavers with connectness and belonging"

29 Scottish Government Website, 2017, "Looked After Children"

30 Scottish Government, 2013, "Supporting Young People's Health & Wellbeing - A Summary of Scottish Government Policy"

31 Scottish Government Website, 2017, "Looked After Children"

32 Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008, "Looked after children, young people and care leavers: examples of good practice"

33 Scottish Government, 2009, "Improving the Education of Looked After Children: A Guide for Local Authorities and Service Providers"

34 Scottish Government, 2013, "Practical guidance for local authorities and service providers relating to private fostering"

35 Scottish Government, 2013, "Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers; Guidance for Corporate Parents"

36 Scottish Government Website, 2017, "Looked After Children"

37 Care Leavers Covenant, 2015, "The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant"

38 Independent Review of Scotland's Care System Website, 2017, "About the Review"

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HOW

**ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

WORKS

“The education system for young people in care is not as good as it could be. Young people in care get embarrassed. My hope is that this gets better. People will feel the care system is more a ‘family’ than just a system that is looking after you.”

Young Person in care commenting on their hopes and aspirations

“The only thing I want at the moment is to get a full-time job and earn my own money.”

Young Person in care commenting on their hopes and aspirations

“To be heard.”

“To feel safe.”

“To not be judged on your past.”

“To have opportunities to go to university.”

“To be a good parent and learn from the mistakes of my parents.”

The Hopes and Aspirations of Care Experienced Young People from Dundee

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