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Corporate Parenting Plan and Children's Rights Report

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Introduction

We are a corporate parent under the [Children and](#)

[Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). We are required to publish a report every three years to explain how we fulfil the duties the legislation places on us. We published our first plan in December 2017.

We are also required under Part One of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) to publish a Children's Rights Report on the steps we have taken to secure better or further effect of the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC). We need to report after each three year period, starting with the period April 2017 to March 2020.

The legislation allows us to satisfy these duties by publishing relevant information alongside other reports. For us, it makes sense to report on our approach to Corporate Parenting and children's rights together.

Our role

We operate under the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). This legislation sets our functions. Our statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of:

- around 600,000 tenants who live in homes provided by social landlords
- over 120,000 owners who received services from social landlords

- around 40,000 people and their families who experience homelessness and seek help from local authorities
- around 2,000 Gypsy/Travellers who can use official sites provided by social landlords.

We do this by using our powers to regulate more than 180 social landlords. We monitor, assess and report on local authorities' and registered social landlords' (RSLs) performance in delivering services and RSLs' financial well-being and standards of governance. We have powers to intervene where necessary.

We are a risk-based regulator, and we target our resources at addressing the issues that present the greatest risk to tenants' and service users' interests.

Our vision is well-run social landlords delivering what tenants, people who are homeless, Gypsy/Travellers and others who use social housing services need and want, at a price they can afford to pay. You can read more about our how we work and our current priorities in our [Corporate Plan](#).

Our [Regulatory Framework](#) explains in detail how we regulate social landlords. We consulted extensively with a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in our work on proposals for our regulatory framework. In 2020 we made some temporary changes to how we regulate to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are different in some important ways from many of the other public bodies who are corporate parents and who have UNCRC reporting responsibilities. We have no direct relationship with the children and young people to whom the duties in the Act relate.

We do not provide a service. And some of the organisations we regulate (local authorities) are themselves corporate parents and have children's rights reporting duties.

Our approach to children's rights and corporate parenting is shaped by our primary statutory functions and the relatively narrow nature of our role. We target our resources at addressing the issues that present the greatest risk to tenants' interests, in line with our risk-based regulatory approach.

Our contribution

As noted, our statutory powers are relatively narrow and relate exclusively to our regulatory functions. That said, we are able to take some tangible actions. These are a combination of regulatory activities and awareness raising / information sharing. Taken together, these demonstrate our commitment to securing further effect of UNCRC and meeting our corporate parenting duties in a way that is proportionate to our role.

Scottish Government [statistics](#) indicate that, in 2017, 11% of social rented households in Scotland were single parent families, 9% were small families and 5% were large families. The most common types of households in social rented homes in 2017 were single working age adult households (29%) and single pensioner households (20%).

One core element of our work is to monitor all social landlords' service quality against the Scottish Government's [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#). The purpose of the Charter is to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide, and it supports the Scottish Government's long-term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland. The Charter's seven sections include equalities, housing quality and maintenance, and neighbourhood and community.

We monitor social landlords' service quality through our regulatory assessments, published analysis and thematic work. We do not focus our regulatory activities specifically on children, but the figures above demonstrate that around a quarter of the households living in social rented homes in Scotland are families. Each year we publish reports about each social landlord's performance against the Charter. Find out more about [our role in the Charter](#).

Care-experienced young people can be vulnerable and at risk of homelessness. We know that access to social housing and homelessness services are important issues for many care-experienced young people.

Through our regulatory work we focus on homelessness to give us assurance that local authorities are meeting demand and providing help, advice and accommodation to vulnerable people who are or who may become homeless. Where we find that landlords are not delivering the services they should, we engage with them about the action they need to take to improve their services.

Although we do not target our regulatory activities

specifically at care-leavers, our work to monitor service quality, alongside our targeted, thematic work in areas such as homelessness shines a light on homeless and tenancy services that are important to care-experienced young people.

Examples of our work:

- In 2019/20 we engaged with 23 local authorities on homelessness issues. In 2020/21 we engaged with all local authorities to seek assurance about how they were complying with their legal duties during the pandemic.
- In 2019 we published a [report](#) on the findings of our inquiry into Dumfries and Galloway Council's Housing Options and Homeless Services.
- In 2020 we published a [report](#) on the findings of our inquiry into Glasgow City Council's services for people who are experiencing homelessness, including recommendations to address the weaknesses we identified.
- In November 2020 we published a [report](#) on the findings of our inquiry into Glasgow City Council's services for people who are experiencing homelessness, including recommendations to address the weaknesses we identified.
- As part of the programme of work of our National Panel of Tenants and Service Users, we have explored the experiences and priorities of people who have used local authorities' homelessness services. We published reports with service users' feedback in 2018, 2019 and

2020. You can read these reports on the [National Panel](#) section of our website.

- Our 2018 National Panel research included interviews with care-experienced young people, which we arranged via Who Cares Scotland. This research highlighted the extent to which care leavers' experience of homeless services is informed by their specific circumstances, including:
 - the importance of a meaningful relationship with support workers and dependency on access to an effective support network, for example access to a trusted advocate
 - the importance of services being sensitive to the specific needs of care experienced young people and understanding of the support they may require
 - services being welcoming and non-judgemental to care experienced people
 - identification of a range of challenges that care experience can introduce to navigating the homeless system.
- We will raise our staff's awareness of issues faced by care-experienced young people, including by sharing information provided to us by relevant organisations. This will help equip us to identify any issues that are particularly relevant to care-experienced young people in our ongoing regulatory activities.
- We will continue to have dialogue with advocacy organisations and other corporate parents. This

is an ongoing activity for us. In the early stages of corporate parenting responsibilities we worked with other corporate parents to build relationships and help understand how we can make practical contributions.

- As part of liaison with bodies we work closely with in our regulatory role, such as the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, Care Inspectorate and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, we will consider whether there are opportunities to contribute to the corporate parenting agenda through our work.
- Where we find particular issues or practices at an individual landlord relating to services to care-experienced young people, we will either take action (where the issue is within our statutory remit) or share information with the relevant organisation such as the Care Inspectorate.
- We will continue to respond to enquiries from corporate parents to explain our role and how we intend to approach our responsibilities.

We will continue to explore practical opportunities to contribute as a corporate parent in a way that fits with our primary regulatory role.

Part 2

Our role

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