

Care Experience:

Care Experienced includes any individual who has been 'looked after' at any point in their life. This can mean living at home with their parents under a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) or, living in Kinship, Foster, Residential or Secure Care.

Corporate Parents:

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) defines 'Corporate Parenting' as **'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of Care Experienced children and young people'**

As Corporate Parents our duties are to:

- Consider the wellbeing and be **ALERT** to matters which may affect Care Experienced people
- **IMPROVE** the way your organization functions in relation to Care Experienced people
- **ASSESS** the needs of Care Experienced people for the services and support provided
- Make sure Care Experienced people can **ACCESS** opportunities and make use of services and support
- **PROMOTE** the interests of Care Experienced people
- Provide **OPPORTUNITIES** to participate in activities promoting wellbeing

City of Edinburgh Council, Psychological Services. 0131 469 2800.

Our Most Vulnerable:

The term *Care Experienced* reflects the lifelong impact of Care. Over 90% of children enter Care due to Care and Protection concerns. Often, they have experienced trauma – abuse and/or neglect (emotional or physical). The Care System itself can also be traumatizing, as children might be separated from loved ones and moved from place to place. Trauma can have an adverse and lifelong impact on a child's wellbeing and development.

The health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for Care Experienced people are significantly poorer than those of their non-care experienced peers.

Care Experienced people are more likely to be unemployed, homeless, or in prison. They are less likely to enter further/higher education and they are more likely to suffer from mental health issues.

Most strikingly, Care Experienced people are estimated to be 20 times more likely to die by the age of 25.

As Corporate Parents, we need to think extra carefully about how we support our Care Experienced pupils at this difficult time.



Care Experienced Parents:

Care Experienced adults might not have a family network to turn to for additional support. This might mean they feel isolated and scared. They might also be anxious about seeking professional support. It is important to reach out to any Care Experienced or vulnerable parents to ensure they feel supported.

Carers:

Long periods of time at home will put tremendous pressure on all parents. Care Experienced children might find it difficult to regulate their emotions as the ability to process and respond in healthy ways to tricky feelings can be inhibited by the impact of trauma. We need to support and protect Carers to ensure the relationships they have with their children are supported and protected.

Children Looked After at Home:

If a child has been 'looked after' at home at any stage in their life, this has been due to concerns about their welfare. Whether there is a CSO in place or not, if we know a child is Care Experienced we need to be vigilant, to ensure that they are safe and protected.



Current Concerns:

Care Experienced pupils already face barriers to learning, wellbeing and healthy development. COVID19 is a challenge for all children and families. Here are some extra concerns for our Care Experienced pupils and their Carers and families:

- **SAFETY** – professionals not regularly seeing children for whom there have been care and protection concerns in the past. There is also a concern about placements breaking down due to Carers not receiving the right support.
- **WELLBEING** – mental health and wellbeing is always a concern for Care Experienced pupils because of trauma. Where parents/Carers have limited capacity and/or where there is limited resource, children may not have the opportunity or support to engage in wellbeing promoting activities.
- **CONNECTION** – some children may not be able to contact their family during this time because of service delivery constraints (i.e. children who are separated from siblings)
- **PARENTS MENTAL HEALTH** – children may be living with parents who have poor mental health and/or parents suffering from addiction.
- **LEARNING** – children might not have access to the resources required to engage in home learning. Children might not have parents or Carers who are able to support them in their home learning. Concerns that the attainment gap may be widening.

USEFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Who are my Care Experienced pupils?
- Who is the team around each of my Care Experienced pupils? Do all members of the team know who I am? What is the role of each team member?
- How do I know that my Care Experienced pupils are safe? Is someone speaking to the child/seeing their face (virtually) regularly?
- How am I supporting the parents and Carers of Care Experienced pupils? Am I providing guidance on how to support their child's wellbeing, behaviour and learning at home?
- Are there other services I can involve in helping me to support my Care Experienced pupils?
- How am I supporting my Care Experienced pupils to learn? Is the work sent home appropriately differentiated? Do they have the materials/resources needed to access it?
- Am I regularly seeking the child's views about what their concerns are and what is most helpful?
- Am I checking to see how they are progressing with their learning? Am I providing praise and positive feedback to keep them motivated?

Are you fulfilling your Corporate Parenting duties?

KEY LINKS AND GUIDANCE:

Child Protection Committees Scotland is urging everyone to keep their eyes and ears open for children who may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect during COVID-19. If you have concerns about a child please contact Social Work. If it is an emergency contact the police. If you want advice about concerns please see: <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/protecting-children/worried-about-child-or-young-person/>

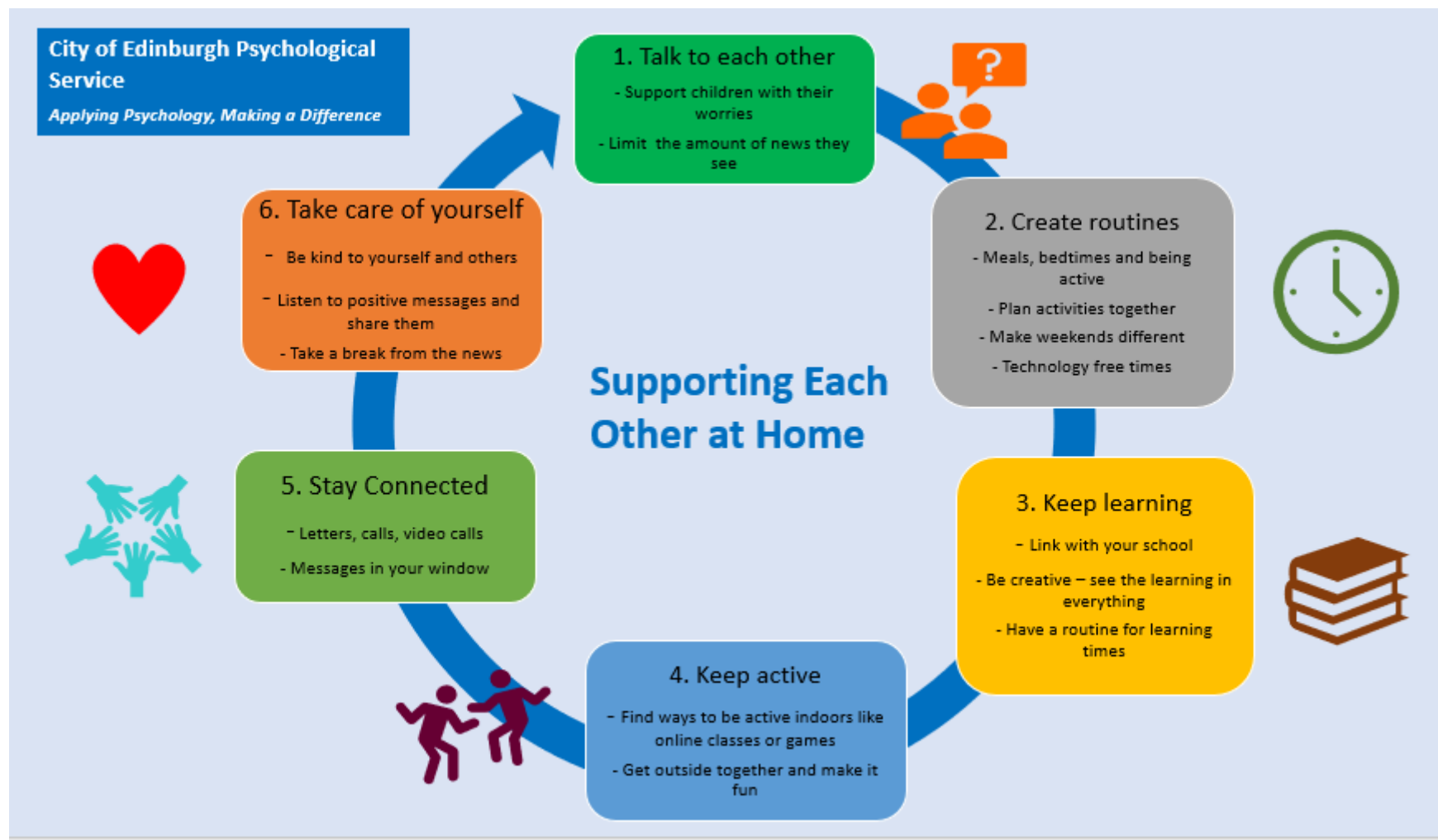
WhoCares? Scotland have a hotline and email consultation service open 7 days a week for Care Experienced People of all ages and Kinship Carers. They offer comfort and support to access services. Practical resources including food and money for bills are also available: <https://www.whocarescotland.org/coronavirus-support/>

Aberlour are offering Urgent Assistance Funds to children of families experiencing extreme hardship: <https://www.aberlour.org.uk/service-category/urgent-assistance-fund/>

Please contact your link Educational Psychologist if you require consultative support/guidance about a child or young person that you are concerned about.



KEY REMINDER: Care Experienced pupils of all ages and stages will also benefit from the same support as every other child.



A full document containing links to resources and guidance to support the above can be accessed on the [Inclusion Hub](#).