IN MY OWN WORDS

Full of promise

Earlier this year the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant was launched. Created with the help and guidance of young people themselves, it is a bold and committed promise to all care-experienced young Scots. Connor Chalmers, a recent care leaver involved with the Covenant, tells us more.

My role was to bring together a group of care-experienced young people and get their views on it. This was a group of young people who, because of their experience, have their own ideas about what the care system should look and feel like. The fact that they were all very positive about the Covenant and its message, for me, just demonstrates its relevance.

My hopes for the Covenant going forward is that it will provide opportunities to care-experienced young people – ones that they should rightfully be getting. However I also feel that this a fantastic opportunity for corporate parents to help make sure that care leavers don’t have to always fight for everything that they get. This can only help to better the outcomes for care experienced young people and better the care system in general.

I honestly believe that if the Covenant had been around when I was leaving care that I wouldn’t have faced as many problems with unemployment, addiction issues and other challenges I had to face. This is because the support would have been there from my corporate parents and I would have been able to hold them to account more.

Having just secured full-time employment and passed my SVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care I am a positive example of what happens when you give care-experienced young people the right opportunities and chances. Give us the opportunity and we will run with it.

The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant

In October, to mark the start of National Care Leavers Week 2015, a new Scottish Care Leavers Covenant was launched.

An ‘Agenda for Change’, it asks corporate parents, and others, to take a bold step and sign up to improve the lives and opportunities of young people leaving care. It offers corporate parents guiding principles and actions to support the Aftercare section of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and improve the lives of children who are often further disadvantaged as a result of their care experience.

By endorsing and signing up to the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant, corporate parents can demonstrate their commitment to excellence by transforming practice; culture and outcomes for all care leavers.

The Covenant has been created by a cross-sector ‘Alliance’ of stakeholders, including CELCIS, Barnardo’s Scotland, Who Cares? Scotland, Quarriers, Life Changes Trust, the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ), Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), and the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum.

www.scottishcareleaverscovenant.org