

Consultation on developing a universal definition of 'Care Experience'

The Scottish Social Services Council is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland
- publish data and official statistics on the social work, social care and children and young people workforce.

Questions

1. Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for a universal definition to describe 'care experience'?

- **Agree strongly**
- **Agree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Disagree strongly**

As a corporate parent and as part of our commitment to keep the Promise the SSSC fully agrees that there is a need for a universal definition of care experience.

2. What are your views on the potential advantages of developing a universal definition of 'care experience'?

We believe that developing a universal definition of care experience mean that there will be greater clarity for people with care experience around whether or not they can access rights and entitlements. We believe that a

universal definition would help public bodies in exercising their duties as corporate parents. For example, we offer a guaranteed interview scheme for care experienced job applicants, however without a universal definition of care experience we rely on the applicants themselves to identify as having care experience. This may mean that applicants who would be eligible for this scheme are missed as a result of them not being aware they fall within the definition of 'care experienced'. A universal definition would allow us to explore other ideas to address the attainment gap between people with care experience and those without.

3. What are your views on the potential disadvantages of developing a universal definition of 'care experience'?

We do not believe that a universal definition of care experience would clutter the care landscape, in fact we believe that universalising the definition would serve to declutter the landscape as all relevant organisations would necessarily use the same wording.

We do believe, however, that there is a risk that a universal definition may miss out people who may consider themselves to be care experienced. Therefore we believe having an appropriate review mechanism for the definition will help to make sure it remains inclusive.

4. Do you have any views on the definition of 'care leaver' as set out in the consultation paper?

We have no views.

5. Do you have any views on the statutory definition of 'Looked After' as set out in the consultation paper?

The SSSC has no view on this.

6. What experience of care would you expect to be covered by any definition of 'care experience'? Please choose all that apply.

- **Looked after at home**
- **Kinship care (looked after children who have been placed with kinship carers by the local authority)**
- **Kinship care (non-looked after children who live with a kinship carer, these children may be subject to an order under Section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or may be living in a completely private arrangement with extended family, with no local authority involvement)**
- **Foster care**
- **Residential care**
- **Residential special school**
- **Supported accommodation**
- **Secure care**

- **Adoptions**
- **Other – please specify**

We believe that all of the above should be included in the definition of care experience with the addition of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as mentioned in the consultation document.

7. Do you have any other comments about a proposed universal definition of 'care experience'?

We have no further comment to make about the proposed universal definition, but we would welcome additional information about how this consultation links with the consultations on the reform of the children's hearings system and the future of foster care. We would also welcome additional information about the timescales of this consultation, in particular when the analysis of responses will likely be published.

8. Do you have any comments on the existing language of care?

We have no comment to make.

9. Do you have any suggestions on potential ways to change and improve the language of care?

We have no comment to make.

10. Are you aware of good practice to change and improve the language of care?

Although their work is highlighted in the consultation document, we would like to take this opportunity to praise the work that is carried out by Each and Every Child, particularly in relation to framing discussions around care experience, and Who Cares? Scotland.

Scottish Social Services Council

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