



Video: University of the Highlands and Islands – Rebecca

Title: Corporate Parenting, Rebecca

Rebecca: Hi, my name's Rebecca, I grew up in foster care and now I stay in supported accommodation and I'm going to be studying college in August, going back to college in August to study Maths, English and Psychology.

Title: Rebecca's first experience of studying at college was attending a transitions course whilst still at high school. Rebecca thoroughly enjoyed the course, and thrived in the college environment.

Rebecca: College was a fresh start for me because nobody knew me, I was going into a totally new environment. Older people and people my age who knew nothing about me, whereas school they kind of knew that I was in care and that my brother wasn't and stuff like that. It was very, you felt more judged in school. But, so that gave me an opportunity to be like, be myself and start new and that helped quite a lot.

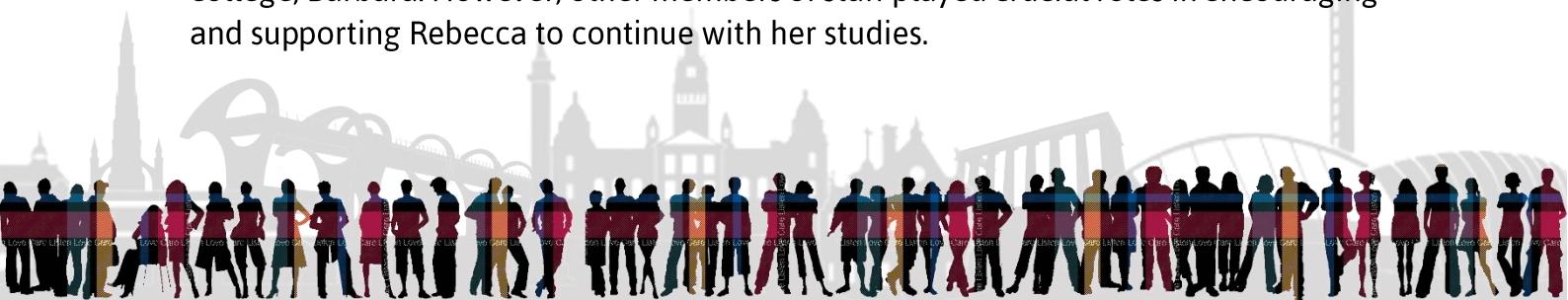
Title: When Rebecca made the decision to attend college full-time, she thoroughly enjoyed the first course she undertook. She felt secure in her foster placement, and was getting the support she needed both at home and at college.

Rebecca: I loved learning every part of it, and like, other parts, areas of my life was quite settled and I was getting on nicely and college were supportive and I met the Transitions Coordinator who I became known to was able to go to if I needed any help or support with anything I was struggling with, and that really helped me, and, I completed that course and then I went on to do health and social care in the August, but, at that time, everything seemed to happen at once which made me struggle with the course a lot.

Title: At seventeen, Rebecca was expected to leave her stable foster placement and move in to supported accommodation. This was unexpected, and Rebecca struggled to stay on top of her coursework whilst trying to cope with the difficult transition.

Rebecca: I was moving on from my placement and all that, and when I didn't expect to and a lot of things were happening that were out with my control and a lot of things impacted on my education at college, but they were really good in helping me as much as possible to stay on my course, whether it was like putting it down to part time, then were emailing me work and just being really supportive, but I still had, it still came to a point with me which was quite hard to decide, to be like I can't do this right now until I sort out other stuff at home so that's why I'm coming back this year as, more settled to start fresh again, and I know I've got that support there to do so.

Title: Rebecca built a strong relationship with the Transitions Coordinator at the college, Barbara. However, other members of staff played crucial roles in encouraging and supporting Rebecca to continue with her studies.





Rebecca: On days where I wasn't able to kinda, come in, or things were a bit more challenging, I was able to work from home and my tutor sent out some work for me to complete, which really helped me because I really wanted to complete the course and the best that I could do. The lecturers that were teaching my courses had a huge impact on my learning as well as Barbara because they gave me faith in myself and helped me pick out my strengths and all that, and encouraged me to do the best that I could do, and I think that's important for tutors, all tutors to know, the impact that they have on that young person's life, or, that they might not have in themselves and for them to help them find their strengths and to build on them and all that, makes a huge difference. I think it's important as a staff member to know that even the littlest of things that you do for that young person can make a huge difference to them, whether it's just saying hello in a corridor, because then you've, that young person know that you recognise them and they recognise you as friendly and approachable and is more likely to go for support. That's helped me this time round to get back into college, with knowing what support is there for me and how to access it.

Title: Every member of staff in every college and university in Scotland is a corporate parent to care experienced young people. Rebecca has some reflections on what corporate parenting means to her and how powerful it can be.

Rebecca: As a corporate parent, I think it's important to understand that a care experienced young person's life can change instantly which can have a big impact on them and that college can be the most structured place for that young person and I think it's knowing that you can be a huge part of that young person's life and actually have that big impact on them, and it's, to take that responsibility and know how much you actually do mean to them because it's a big thing for them to be in college and to do education, that they're going to have with them for the rest of their lives so what you do makes a big difference. I know what helped me was meeting Barbara the Transitions Coordinator and I know even some of the things that she's done so far, like getting free breakfasts in the mornings for young people. That's something your parents would do yourself when you're at home, like "Oh, have you had breakfast? Here's some breakfast to take off with you." and stuff like that, and a lot of young people don't have that if they're even living in their own places at such a young age, and stuff like that, so knowing, even having that there, that's taking that role as a corporate parent. And I think it's important to understand that care experienced young people are not in care because they're bad? It's mostly because of circumstances that are out with their control, and they don't have people at home, like mums and dads that they could go to and be like, "Oh, I need help with this" and stuff like that, so college is then that place where they have that support from.

