

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 2 SEPTEMBER 2009

### CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN

#### Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval of the East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan and to advise of progress to date.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September 2008, the Scottish Government launched “These are Our Bairns” - Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships on How to be a Good Corporate Parent.
- 2.2 This guidance was developed by a working group chaired by the Council’s Chief Executive, as a tool for local authorities and community planning partners to ensure that looked after children and young people (including care leavers) have a positive experience of growing up, with every effort being made to address their specific individual needs.
- 2.3 A range of work has already taken place within East Ayrshire to improve arrangements for looked after / looked after and accommodated children and young people including:
- **December 2007** - the Council’s Extended Corporate Management Team identified a need to jointly maximise efforts to secure better outcomes for looked after / looked after and accommodated children and young people.
  - **January 2008** – Cabinet approved additional funding to support new developments in Corporate Parenting.
  - **June 2008** – Cabinet approved revised procedures for looked after and accommodated children and young people.
  - **September 2008** – first of a series of corporate parenting events attended by members of the extended corporate management team and other key officers of the Council.
  - **October 2008** – Cabinet approved the East Ayrshire Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2008 – 2011, which also includes specific actions in respect of looked after / looked after and accommodated children and young people.

- **November 2008** – initial development of draft corporate action plan by the Council’s Corporate Management Team.
- **January and February 2009** – corporate parenting seminars took place for elected members and community planning partners, which aimed to raise awareness of the issues impacting on the lives of children and young people who are looked after / looked after and accommodated.
- **March 2009** –The Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People published a follow up report to “Sweet 16” (March 2008), which sets out the challenges in respect of too many young people leaving care at 16 years when they are not ready to do so. The recommendations have been progressed in East Ayrshire as part of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan.
- **July 2009** – the Community Health Partnership (CHP) Officer Locality Group (Children’s Services) agreed to form a corporate parenting sub group to ensure a partnership approach to all corporate parenting activity by officers across agencies.

### **3. ACTION PLAN**

- 3.1 The East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan has been further developed as a result of the work / activities highlighted at Section 2.
- 3.2 The action plan specifically focuses on the key themes of:
- Individual Care Planning
  - Operational Planning and Service Delivery
  - Learning and Development
  - Creating Opportunities
- 3.3 A copy of the draft action plan is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.4 The action plan represents the actions of both council officers and community planning partners. For this reason, it will be subject to ongoing review and revision. Consequently, regular progress reports will be made to both Cabinet, the Community Planning Board and the CHP Officer Locality Group (Children’s Services).

### **4. PROGRESS**

- 4.1 Progress has been made and includes:
- implementing awareness raising services for Council officers and elected members on corporate parenting;
  - identifying a suitable site for the building of a new children’s house in Kilmarnock;

- improving management information systems across education and social work services;
- further developing our approach to the recruitment of foster carers;
- developing proposals for accommodation with support for care leavers (to be considered by the Corporate Management Team);
- involving young people in influencing service delivery and in contributing to the inspection of services;
- promoting 18 years as opposed to 16 years as the appropriate age to leave care (although it should be noted that this is more common in foster care, and there are challenges for staff in managing both resource capacity issues and in encouraging young people to remain in care).

## 5. MEMBER / OFFICER WORKING GROUP

5.1 A Member / Officer Working Group was previously established to carry out the option appraisal process for identifying a site for a replacement children's house in Kilmarnock. In recognition of the key role that elected members have in promoting and overseeing corporate parenting activity, it is proposed that the Member/Officer Working Group continues with the task of monitoring the implementation of the corporate parenting action plan as agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting of 4 March 2009.

5.2 Membership of the Working Group consists of:

- Provost Young
- Councillor John MacKay (Chair)
- Councillor John McGhee
- Councillor Jim Todd

5.3 The first meeting of the working group is provisionally scheduled for 15 September 2009 with a full programme of meetings provisionally scheduled as undernoted. It is proposed that each meeting, in addition to overseeing progress against the action plan, would also consider a key corporate parenting theme.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Theme</b>
September 2009	Fostering
December 2009	Adoption
March 2009	Residential and secure provision
June 2009	Care leavers

5.4 In addition to the elected members noted, it is suggested that the group is comprised of social work officers and a "Who Cares Scotland" worker (the national body advocating for children and young people who are looked after and accommodated). Attendance by partner agencies, national agencies and representation by foster carers / adoptive carers will be arranged based on the theme being considered. Opportunities

will also be identified to engage with looked after and accommodated children and young people on the key themes.

## **6. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS (Legal, Policy, Risk and Equality Issues)**

- 6.1 There are no specific legal issues to consider in respect of the implementation of the corporate parenting action plan, although it should be noted that it supports the local authority to fulfil its legal responsibilities in respect of both looked after and looked after and accommodated children and young people.
- 6.2 As outlined, the contents of the action plan reflect national and local policy in supporting looked after and looked after and accommodated children and young people. It is also consistent with overarching policy for children and young people as set out in “Getting it Right for Every Child” (2006).
- 6.3 The implementation of this action plan will assist to manage the risks associated with caring for looked after / looked after and accommodated children and young people at both individual, management and strategic levels. For example, improved care planning contributes to minimising risks to individual young people, while improving management information systems minimises reputational risk to the Council should information be inaccurately reported.
- 6.4 The action plan ensures that the local authority and its partners give due consideration to the individual specific needs of children and young people and specifically challenges the stigma experienced by children and young people due to being looked after.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 A budget has been made available to support the development of corporate parenting initiatives and this will support the implementation of the plan.
- 7.2 The costs of any specific services or developments will be identified and highlighted to Cabinet when seeking approval.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- i) approves the draft action plan;
  - ii) note the continuation of the Member / Officer Working Group as detailed at section 5
  - iii) notes that the action plan will continue to develop on a partnership basis; and

- iii) requests that a six monthly report is provided to Cabinet on progress.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services  
26 August 2009

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. These Are Our Bairns – The Scottish Government – (a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent)
2. Sweet 16? – Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People – March 2008
3. Sweet 16? One Year On – Is Life Any Sweeter? – Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People – March 2009

Anyone wishing further information should contact: Susan Taylor, Head of Service: Children & Families and Criminal Justice on 01563 - 576902

# **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN**

**PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT – AUGUST 2009**



## THEME 1: INDIVIDUAL CARE PLANNING

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at August 2009
1.	We will ensure that all of our children and young people who are accommodated have an individual care plan to reflect their individual needs and circumstances	<p>Audits will be undertaken to ensure that each care plan provides, where appropriate:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets for educational attainment</li> <li>• Actions to maximise attendance at school and minimise exclusions</li> <li>• Actions to maximise engagement in leisure and recreation activity</li> <li>• Actions to support transport to school</li> <li>• Regular health assessment</li> <li>• Encourage "life books" for children</li> <li>• Well planned and managed transitions</li> <li>• Preparation for through care including housing options for independent living and job opportunities</li> <li>• Arrangements for mentoring and/or befriending</li> <li>• Support for children to retain personal belongings (toys, pictures etc)</li> <li>• Regular review of care plans to maintain relevance</li> </ul>	Quarterly, beginning June 2009	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An audit of all care plans for children / young people accommodated in East Ayrshire children's houses was undertaken in June 2009.</li> <li>• The findings have been collated and will be presented to the OLG Sub Group (Corporate Parenting) for consideration of strengths / needs.</li> </ul>
2.	We will further improve our management and performance information systems to ensure that needs, trends and barriers are identified and actioned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing systems</li> <li>• Identify areas for improvement in management information reports</li> <li>• Identify areas for reporting on performance</li> </ul>	December 2009	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised protocols have been agreed in social work and education for inputting information to systems.</li> <li>• An action plan has been agreed for a management information implementation template across social work and education.</li> </ul>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An action plan has been agreed for further developing shared management and performance information.</li> <li>• Lead officers have been identified in education and social work functions to ensure accuracy of information.</li> </ul>
3.	We will implement the revised procedure for the LAAC Review System and review within one year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review operational experience of implementation.</li> </ul>	December 2009	Service Manager (Corporate Parenting)	
4.	We will review expenditure on corporate parenting services and make sure that council's budgetary processes include appropriate resource provision for meeting the needs and aspirations of looked after and looked after and accommodated young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditure on residential foster care placements will be reviewed, with a view to recommendations being made to the Social Work Sustainability Board about future resource requirements.</li> </ul>	Quarterly – reports during 2009/2010	HOS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of how East Ayrshire's foster carers are resourced is underway. This will be reported to the Social Work Sustainability Board in September 2009.</li> </ul>

## THEME 2: OPERATIONAL PLANNING / SERVICE DELIVERY

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2009
1.	We will reduce the administrative duties carried out by Early Years workers, Social Workers and Teachers to enable more direct involvement with children and young people in care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the administrative tasks associated with looked after children, linking as necessary with other organisational changes that may be proposed.</li> </ul>	Revised timescale September / October 2009	HoS: Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A report on the outcomes of the Business Review of Administration and Clerical Support Structures in ESS will be considered by the CMT in September / October 2009</li> </ul>
2.	We will review our Learning Partnerships in the context of organisational change and associated priorities to ensure appropriate priority is given to looked after children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current working arrangements, mindful of current budget constraints.</li> </ul>	June 2009 for in-year savings	HoS: Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Review of Children's Service Partnerships is ongoing and is referenced in Social Work Sustainability Plan and report to Cabinet on 3 June 2009.</li> <li>The review of Learning Partnerships is completed. A Framework for Learning Communities will be submitted to Cabinet in due course.</li> </ul>
3.	We will review aspects of the school curriculum to provide opportunities for the development of practical (life) skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be progressed as part of the Council's preparations for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) implementation</li> </ul>	In accordance with CfE Implementation Plans	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the CfE, the number of skills for work and vocational programmes for 14-16 year olds has increased. The SOA target was that 20% of the whole school would have access to skills for work / vocational programmes (14 – 16yrs). This is now at 23%. This takes place in partnership with colleges.</li> </ul>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CfE experiences and outcomes (health &amp; wellbeing) are being incorporated into the school curriculum. There will be a pan ayrshire seminar in October 2009 for principal teachers of all subjects, focusing on health and wellbeing, including practical life skills.</li> </ul>
4.	We will identify named officers within each Council department to be responsible for delivering corporate parenting actions particular to their Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through Departmental Management Teams, we will identify named "Corporate Parenting" officers.</li> </ul>	Completed	Executive Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered at DMT meetings</li> </ul>
5.	We will clarify responsibilities in order to facilitate the inclusion of Looked After children and young people in school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and revise current practice in relation to parental authorisation for school activities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be addressed with the working group reviewing standard circular 48 (educational excursions and school activities).</li> </ul>
6.	We will monitor the quality and effectiveness of service provision for our Looked After children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action via use of established self evaluation tools and performance reporting procedures.</li> </ul>	Annually	EDESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self evaluation undertaken in respect of adoption and fostering services – March 2009.</li> </ul>
7.	We will continue to increase the numbers of local foster carers, short break carers and adopters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop targeted recruitment campaign.</li> <li>Review existing support arrangements for fostering and adoption.</li> <li>Maximise existing flexible working arrangements to support employees who want to become foster/respice</li> </ul>	June 2009	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on the proposed Fostering and Recruitment Campaign considered by CMT on 27 May 2009. To be further developed and presented to Cabinet for consideration.</li> </ul>

		<p>carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review our remuneration and other benefit packages for foster/respite carers</li><li>• We will work with Partners to raise awareness of fostering and adoption recruitment campaign.</li></ul>		CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CPP Board agreed to engage with staff and the public in raising awareness following Board meeting on 30 April 2009</li></ul>
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### THEME 3: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2009
1.	We will increase knowledge and understanding of Corporate Parenting responsibilities with Elected Members and Community Planning Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A seminar will be arranged for Elected Members and Community Planning Partners.</li> </ul>	Completed	EDESS/DCE-EDCS  EDESS/DCE-EDCS	Seminars were held on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members: 28 January 2009</li> <li>Community Planning Partners: 10 February 2009 (outcomes reported to CPP Board on 30 April 2009)</li> </ul>
2.	Community Planning Partners will pro-actively and positively raise awareness of the issues for children and young people who are looked after.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners will do this through established employee/user communication networks.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress report to the CPP Board due October 2009</li> </ul>
3.	We will develop ways to encourage the sharing of best practice on corporate parenting between Council Services and partner agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a partnership group to progress key actions in respect of corporate parenting.</li> </ul>	Completed	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CHP Officer Locality Group agreed in July 2009 to establish a sub group focusing on Corporate Parenting.</li> </ul>
4.	We will further develop ways to encourage and support discussion between children and young people who are Looked After.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the existing children and young peoples forum (residential care) is influencing service delivery.</li> <li>Explore the need for a care leavers reunion / forum</li> </ul>	Completed	HofS (CF&CJ)  HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A forum is in place across East Ayrshire for young people from each of the children's houses to connect and to influence service delivery.</li> <li>Disclosures have taken place with care leavers, but there is no current interest in developing a forum for care leavers.</li> </ul>

5.	We will continue to provide and further develop training / learning opportunities for relevant employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and assess current training provision to ensure we are meeting service standards.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for funding to support our training requirements.</li> <li>• Work with partner agencies to explore cross-cutting training opportunities for employees.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	EDESS/HoP  CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training DVD-ROM issued to key Council employees in April 2009.</li> <li>• CPP Board agreed to identify cross-cutting training opportunities for employees following Board meeting on 30 April 2009.</li> <li>• Roll out of the “We can and must do better” training is continuing in 2009/2010.</li> </ul>
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## THEME 4: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2009
1.	We will make available a choice of training, job opportunities and work experience for all young people leaving care based on their individual needs and aspirations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current employment and training initiatives for young people and identify areas where this will be possible, including modern and craft apprenticeship schemes.</li> <li>Further develop opportunities for work experience and supportive employment schemes for all of our young people.</li> <li>Work with partners to make best use of training, employment and vocational opportunities in their organisations for Looked After children.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>First stage completed – May 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Directors</p> <p>DCE-EDCS/HoHR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on recruitment and selection of Skillseekers considered by Cabinet on 6 May 2009.</li> <li>Awareness of opportunities event involving Social Work, Careers Scotland and Skills Development and Employability service and external training providers held on 17 June 09.</li> <li>Individual training / further education plans for the 11 care leavers who left school in June have been progressed with all but 1 currently pursuing these plans.</li> <li>A Co-ordinating meeting between skills development and employee service and social work is organised for 4 Sept 09, to link identified looked after and accommodated children and young people with</li> </ul>

				CPP Board	<p>appropriate work experience or training within the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPP Board agreed to identify appropriate opportunities following Board meeting on 30 April 2009. A progress report is due on 30 September 2009.</li> </ul>
2.	<p>We will develop a structured mentoring and befriending scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further extend our approach to mentoring and befriending schemes</li> </ul> <p>Note: (We will learn from other similar activity such as learning disability and the Council's Partnership in Practice Agreement).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a mentoring scheme with partners and maximise opportunities available in partner organisations.</li> </ul>	December 2009	<p>EDESS/HoCS</p> <p>EDESS/HoCS</p> <p>CPP Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work will commence in the autumn</li> <li>• CPP Board agreed to identify appropriate opportunities following Board meeting on 30 April 2009</li> </ul>
3.	<p>We will endeavour to provide suitable supported housing opportunities to all young people leaving care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with young people to identify suitable housing opportunities based on their individual needs</li> <li>• Review our housing allocations and benefits policies to identify ways of ensuring that all young people leaving care have suitable accommodation with</li> </ul>	Review ongoing	<p>EDNS/HoHS</p> <p>EDNS/HoHS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing for elected members on the review to be held after the summer recess.</li> </ul>

		support opportunities.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review report to be concluded in Autumn 2009.</li> </ul>
4.	We will continue to provide transport to support continuity of education, taking account of the wishes of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our policies for school transport.</li> </ul>	December 2009	HoR&TS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Review underway and to report to the Management &amp; Resources Strategic Review Group by the end of the year.</li> </ul>
5.	We will continue to develop opportunities for vocational learning for Looked After children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our arrangements for access to vocational learning opportunities and continue to develop these in accordance with the needs and aspirations of our Looked After children.</li> </ul>	August 2009	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work experience opportunities managed by the Chamber of Commerce, are being reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of looked after children.</li> <li>Increased opportunities to attend vocational programmes through agencies e.g. college (including youth strategy).</li> </ul>