



**THESE ARE OUR BAIRNS: A GUIDE FOR
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS ON
BEING A GOOD CORPORATE PARENT**

BOARD MEETING - 18 SEPTEMBER 2008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board of the content of the Scottish Government publication: 'These Are Our Bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent'.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The document provides guidance to councils and community planning partnerships on how to improve the lives of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, through better fulfilling their role as a corporate parent.
- 2.2 Corporate parenting, as outlined in the Scottish Executive's 2007 publication 'Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better', means the formal and local partnerships needed between all local authority departments and services, and associated agencies, which are responsible for working together to meet the needs of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers.
- 2.3 The guide was published in early September 2008 and can be downloaded from the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/29115839/0>.

3. SUMMARY OF CONTENT

- 3.1 The guide states that the focus on strengthening corporate parenting sits within the Single Outcome Agreement and the National Performance Framework.
- The overarching outcome that is being collectively aimed for is that:
Young people who have experienced the care system will be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors whose life outcomes mirror those of their peers.
 - The specific outcome relating to the function of corporate parenting is:
Councils and their community planning partners will fully understand and accept their responsibilities as corporate parents and governance arrangements will be in place to make sure that work within councils and their partner organisations is child-centred and focused on achieving the overarching outcome.
- 3.2 The guide identifies the specific roles, duties, responsibilities and opportunities across the range of services delivered through community planning partnerships, as well as the wider community, with sections relating to, for example:

- Scottish Government
- Elected Members
- Chief Executives
- Community Planning Partnerships
- Range of Council services, for example: Social Work, Education and Housing Services
- Health Services
- Independent Sector (voluntary organisations, faith groups, private care providers)
- Police and Criminal Justice System
- The Community; and
- Children’s Hearing System, Courts and Other Decision-Making Bodies.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 The section of the guide which relates specifically to community planning partnerships states that councils cannot work in isolation to improve outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers and that the corporate parenting responsibility must be shared across the Community Planning Partnership as the wider corporate family.

4.2 Community Planning Partnerships are identified as the vehicle through which the corporate family ethos is to be promoted and nurtured.

4.3 Specific Community Planning Partnership aims are identified as:

- ensuring that the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are articulated within the Community Plan, associated Action Plans, Integrated Children's Services Plan and Single Outcome Agreement;
- ensuring that independent sector partners are actively engaged in the Community Planning Partnership;
- being confident that there is a joint focus of activity, ensuring that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible, and included;
- being aspirational for Looked After children and young people and care leavers, holding the same expectations good parents would have for their own children;
- ensuring that all employees within each Community Planning Partnership organisation are aware of their responsibilities in respect of Looked After children and young people and care leavers;
- delivering integrated high quality services that meet the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers;
- ensuring that the widest range of choices and opportunities are available to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, particularly at transitional stages;
- ensuring that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are able to play a positive part in the life of their community;
- ensuring that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are actively involved in decisions that affect them; and
- ensuring a robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of activity to support Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

4.4 The guide states that Community Planning Partnerships will know that they have made a difference when:

- Looked After children and young people and care leavers are integrated into their community, whether at school or with their friends; when they participate in the local youth activities and when they feel comfortable with their own history;
- Looked After children and young people and care leavers achieve the same or similar goals and achievements as other children and young people;
- Looked After children and young people and care leavers fulfil their potential, no longer feel stigmatised and excluded from services and communities;
- all children and young people access the local services when they need them, and their experience is of the highest quality;
- staff in different organisations know who to talk to, feel comfortable working together and sharing information and are jointly accountable for their work;
- joint inspections demonstrate excellent collaborative integrated working; and
- there is no difference between the educational, health, employment and other life outcomes of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and those of their peers.

5. PROPOSED COMMUNITY PLANNING SEMINAR ON LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CARE LEAVERS

5.1 East Ayrshire Council recently held a one-day seminar for its extended Corporate Management Team to discuss how the Council could better understand and address the needs of its Looked After and Accommodated children and young people and care leavers.

5.2 This was a successful event which provided key staff across the Council with an opportunity to focus attention on the needs of this important client group and it is proposed that a similar event be organised for the Community Planning Partnership Board and representative staff in early 2009.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i) considers and comments on the implications for Community Planning Partnerships as a result of the recently produced 'These are our Bairns' document;
- ii) agrees to participate in a Community Planning Partnership seminar, to take place in early 2009, which will consider the implications of the document from an East Ayrshire perspective; and
- iii) otherwise, notes the content of the report.

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11 September 2008