

EAST AYRSHIRE

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD: 24 JUNE 2010

CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN: PROGRESS REPORT

Report by Susan Taylor, Head of Service: Children, Families and Criminal Justice, East Ayrshire Council

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress in implementing the East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan and to advise of arrangements made to identify priorities for planning in 2010/2011.
- 1.2 To advise of the launch of the national anti stigma campaign, to receive a presentation designed and delivered by young people on the key themes and issues for young care leavers, and to seek support to East Ayrshire's Promise, which outlines how prejudice and stigma can be tackled (appendix 1).

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 At the Community Planning Board on 30 April 2009, the East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan was approved. The plan had been informed by a range of activity throughout 2008/2009 involving community planning partners including seminars which raised awareness of the issues impacting on the lives of children and young people who are looked after/looked after and accommodated.
- 2.3 A progress report was provided on 30 September 2009 at the Community Planning Partnership Board, and six monthly progress reports were agreed.

3. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 Since September 2009, a number of key national developments have been taken forward and will have an impact on practice in East Ayrshire. This includes:
 - Launch of National Anti Stigma Campaign and Training programme for Elected Members (Who Cares? Scotland)
 - National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI)
 - National Commissioning Approach.
- 3.2 Who Cares' Scotland has led on the development of a national training programme for elected members and also on the implementation of a national

anti stigma campaign, both supported by the Scottish Government. Who Cares? Scotland is a national voluntary organisation which works with and for children and young people in care. It works in most local authority areas in Scotland and provides a range of services to children and young people with experience of being looked after including advocacy, advice, information and support. The organisation also:

- consults with and listens to young people's views;
- campaigns for children and young people;
- helps policy-makers consider the views of young people;
- brings together young people with experience of care; and
- provides a network of support through their office and the work they do throughout Scotland.

3.3 East Ayrshire Council funds a dedicated Who Cares? Scotland member of staff who works directly with children and young people from this local authority area and the staff members who care for them. This includes advocacy, supporting them in having their views heard and helping to ensure they were fully involved in their care planning arrangements.

3.4 Work relating to the National Child Care Residential Initiative and the new national approach to commissioning will be reported in further detail at a future meeting.

4. CORPORATE PARENTING: NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

4.1 Corporate Parenting is the responsibility that councils and their partners have for children and young people who are looked after under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Most young people become looked after as a result of a decision of a children's hearing or a court. Those children are often referred to as "in care". Corporate parenting is defined as:

"The formal and local partnerships needed between all local authority departments and services, and associated agencies, who are responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children and young people and care leavers." *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better (Scottish Executive, 2007).*

4.2 A good corporate parent should:

- accept responsibility for the council's Looked After children and young people and care leavers;
- make their needs a priority; and
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

These Are Our Bairns, (Scottish Government, 2008).

4.3 There are 5 key elements to being a good corporate parent:

- the specific statutory duty under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in your care.
 - strong governance – having the right information, planning strategically, driving improvement, challenging services, focusing on outcomes.
 - strong leadership within the council, within the Community Planning Partnership and in the community.
 - listening to children and young people.
 - being able to say yes to the question *“is this good enough for my child?”*
- 4.4 While the primary responsibility lies with the council, community planning partners have a duty to co-operate to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of looked after children and young people and care leavers.
- 4.5 All Elected Members have a responsibility for the care and support provided to looked after children and young people. A briefing note issued by the Improvement Service has also recently been circulated to elected members highlighting their responsibilities as a corporate parent.
- 4.6 The National Training Programme for Elected Members was launched by the Minister for Children and Young People on 25 May 2010. The programme seeks to develop awareness of elected members in respect of their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents. A considerable amount of work has already taken place in East Ayrshire in raising awareness about our corporate parenting responsibilities, which has involved elected members, community planning partners and staff. For this reason, the national programme is starting in East Ayrshire, recognising that there is much to build upon.
- 4.7 The presentation to the Community Planning Board on 24 June 2010 will focus on young care leavers. It has been designed and delivered by young care leavers, some of whom live in the East Ayrshire area. This presentation was first made at the Care Leavers Event held on 23 April 2010 in Kilmarnock, which was an initiative developed through the Council’s Member / Officer Working Group, which aimed to engage all partner agencies in the consideration of the key issues and challenges affecting young care leavers. The central purpose of the day was to inform the development of a specific action plan for care leavers. This work is being collated for reporting to the next Council Member / Officer Working Group.

5. THE NATIONAL ANTI STIGMA CAMPAIGN

- 5.1 The National Anti Stigma Campaign was launched in January 2010, by the Minister for Children and Young People and aims to tackle the stigma and prejudice associated with being a child in care. The campaign has a key message “Be Fair to a Child in Care” – this message is being widely disseminated via press, publicity and events. The presentation to the Community Planning Board on 24 June 2010 requests that a commitment is

made to supporting the campaign by agreeing to commit to a promise about being fair to children in care.

5.2 The “Give me a Chance” campaign is the product of two years work with young people living in care. It started in 2008 when Who Cares? Scotland marked its 30th anniversary with a year of activities on the theme of Celebrating Success and Challenging Stigma.

5.3 The anniversary publication, *Caring about Success – Young People’s Stories*, captured what success means to children and young people in care, both their own and other people’s, and what they aspire to in the future. It showed that stigma and other people’s low expectations have an adverse impact on children and young people in care. One of the key recommendations was that the:

“Scottish Government and its strategic partners should come together to launch a national campaign aimed at dispelling the myths associated with being in care and promote positive images of children and young people looked after away from home, including the message that they are children and young people first and foremost, with the same rights to respect and freedom from discrimination, and the chance to achieve their potential just like any other children and young people: this should be designed by and led by children and young people, supported by key partners”. *Recommendation 1 of Caring about Success (Who Cares? Scotland 2008)*.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN: PROGRESS REPORT

6.1 The action plan and progress report is attached at appendix 2.

6.2 The action plan covers four key themes:

- Individual Care Planning
- Operational Planning and Service Delivery
- Learning and Development
- Creating Opportunities.

6.3 Progress to date includes:

- Planning permission secured for the site of the new children’s house in New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock. Following the levelling of the site by the contractor, arrangements are being made to progress to tender. It is anticipated that construction will start in August 2010.
- Positive community engagement work has taken place in New Farm Loch, specifically via the Community Council, St. Kentigern’s Church and St. Matthews Chapel, enabling information to be shared about the needs of children/young people who require to be accommodated by the local authority.
- Successful results in progressing the fostering recruitment campaign (May 2009 to 3 March 2010: 201 enquiries, resulting in 30 new placements

(fostering, adoption and short breaks) for children and a further 17 currently being considered).

- Detailed option appraisal work has taken place to consider how to resource foster carers, including bench marking activity with other local authority areas. Investment in this area was approved by East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet on 19 May 2010 as part of the work relating to the sustainability of social work children's services.
- Young people and staff are currently working on ideas for promoting the key messages from the anti stigma campaign in East Ayrshire.
- Looked after young people were supported to participate in a leadership event at Columba 1400, Isle of Skye in early June 2010.
- A Sports Motivation programme involving Children's House visits, identification of appropriate opportunities to participate or volunteer in leisure and facilitation of young people's involvement in these is now well established within the three residential children's houses.
- A partnership event to focus on the needs of young people leaving took place on 23 April 2010.
- Young people who left school (summer 2009 and Christmas 2009) are being tracked to help us learn from their experiences.
- Raising the attainment of young people in care is a focus in schools and this session 93% of looked after children who attend mainstream secondary schools will attain the minimum standard of Maths and English at SCQF level 3.
- Further work is being done in partnership with schools, the Youth Strategy Service and Rathbone Training to support young people in alternative educational provision in attaining the minimum standard of qualifications. Maths and English at SCQF level 3 will become the minimum standard for all looked after children whether in mainstream or alternative provision from next session.
- Work has started to review the existing supported employment service, and to consider how this could respond to the needs of young people leaving care (who have specific additional support needs).
- A proposal is being developed for a supported carers service whereby people will be recruited to provide accommodation and support to young people leaving care. Investment was approved by East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet on 19 May 2010 as part of the report on the sustainability of social work services to children, young people and their families.
- Successful implementation of the "We Can and Must Do Better" training/development programme for staff. A total of 217 staff have attended the full day programme across education, social work, health, police and housing services. In addition, 285 staff have attended unit 1.

- The implementation of Chief Executive Letter (CEL) 16 has been progressed by NHS Ayrshire and Arran. This specifically focuses on the implementation of issues relating to health assessment and health needs as set out in “We Can and Must Do Better” (Scottish Government, 2007).
- Within East Ayrshire Council, a Member/Officer Working Group has been established to monitor the implementation of the plan. Partner agencies have been invited to participate, with each meeting focusing on both progress and key themes (fostering, adoption, residential child care and secure care).
- Tracking arrangements are in place to enable improved understanding of the pathways taken by young people leaving school (who are accommodated or who have recently left care).
- Regular meetings scheduled between Skills, Development and Employability Service, Social Work and Careers to ensure relevant support in place for young people leaving care.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Community Planning Partnership Board:

- (i) notes the launch of the national anti stigma campaign;
- (ii) notes the range of work which has already taken place in East Ayrshire to raise awareness of our corporate parenting responsibilities, and to improve our services;
- (iii) notes the key messages from young care leavers as provided in the drama presentation “One Big Family”;
- (iv) agrees to commit to the East Ayrshire Promise in support of the National Anti stigma Campaign to promote and celebrate the success of children and young people in care and to tackle the negative stigma often associated with being in care;
- (v) notes the progress being made in implementing the East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan;
- (vi) notes that a partnership event is planned to revise and develop the action plan for 2010/11; and
- (vii) requests that a further progress report be provided to the Community Planning Board in six months time.

Susan Taylor
Head of Service: Children, Families and Criminal Justice
East Ayrshire Council
16 June 2010

EAST AYRSHIRE'S PROMISE GIVE ME A CHANCE: BE FAIR TO A CHILD IN OUR CARE

We are committed as individual organisations and as a community planning partnership to the aims of the Who Cares? Scotland Anti-Stigma Campaign to give looked after children and young people a fair chance in life.

We will:-

- Combat the myths associated with children and young people in care.
- Promote a positive message of the achievements of children in care.
- Help to educate communities and workforces on the reasons for children being accommodated.
- Listen to children and young people and work in partnership with them to increase opportunities for them to thrive.
- Advocate for looked after and accommodated children and young people as children first.
- Find creative ways to include and support children and young people in their communities, including young people leaving our care;
- Support children and young people in fulfilling their potential.
- Continue to provide high quality services.
- Support the campaign through practical and material activities.

EAST AYRSHIRE

CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN

PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT – JUNE 2010



THEME 1: INDIVIDUAL CARE PLANNING

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2010
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"> • Targets for educational attainment • Actions to maximise attendance at school and minimise exclusions • Actions to maximise engagement in leisure and recreation activity • Actions to support transport to school • Regular health assessment • Encourage “life books” for children • Well planned and managed transitions • Preparation for through care including housing options for independent living and job opportunities • Arrangements for mentoring and/or befriending • Support for children to retain personal belongings (toys, pictures etc) • Regular review of care plans to maintain relevance 	Quarterly, beginning June 2009	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits of care plans have taken place on a quarterly basis within residential child care settings in East Ayrshire. • The findings have highlighted a range of good practice, particularly in respect of the opportunities being made available to young people. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children had access to leisure opportunities. • All had health assessments • There was good evidence of support in maintaining friendships. • The audit tool is being further developed for wider application.
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"> • Review existing systems • Identify areas for improvement in management information reports • Identify areas for reporting on performance 	December 2009	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead officers in education and social work identified. • Processes and protocols agreed for accessing SWIFT and for regular data checking.
3.	We will implement the revised procedure for the LAAC Review System and review within one year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review operational experience of implementation. 	December 2009	Service Manager (Corporate Parenting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work underway to ensure compatibility between the LAAC review system and the implementation of the integrated assessment framework. • A review of the role / responsibilities of the independent chair’s role is underway.

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"> 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. 	Quarterly – reports during 2009/2010	HOS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the existing allowances paid to foster carers has been undertaken. This matter will be reported to the Council's cabinet as part of the work taking place on the sustainability of social work budgets. A review of the management and staffing arrangements in residential child care has also taken place and will be similarly reported. This work specifically addresses the recommendations in the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI) which was launched in December 2009.
----	--	---	--------------------------------------	-------------	--

THEME 2: OPERATIONAL PLANNING / SERVICE DELIVERY

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2010
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"> Review the administrative tasks associated with looked after children, linking as necessary with other organisational changes that may be proposed. 	Revised timescale September / October 2009	HoS: Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of the Department of Educational and Social Services administration and support structure was reviewed and reported to cabinet on 16 December 2009. The recommendations include additional capacity to support social work staff, including the minuting of reviews
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"> Review current working arrangements, mindful of current budget constraints. 	June 2009 for in-year savings	HoS: Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed and approved by cabinet in September 2009. Priority focus for Learning Communities is "We Can and Must Do Better".
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"> To be progressed as part of the Council's preparations for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) implementation 	In accordance with CfE Implementation Plans	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SOA target of offering 20% of the S3/4 school roll a place on college based vocational programme has now been met and passed. Last session,

					<p>23% of the S3/4 roll were offered a place at college, this level will be maintained next session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further training has been delivered to staff across the authority to assist with the implementation of a CFE scheduled for August 2010. Training has been delivered to encourage the development of Skills for Life, Learning and Work, further engagement with the Experiences and Outcomes, Literacy and Numeracy development and early consideration of the Assessment processes in a CFE.
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"> • Through Departmental Management Teams, we will identify named "Corporate Parenting" officers. 	Completed	Executive Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead officers have been identified for key areas. • A seminar is planned for lead officers to connect and review collective progress. This will be on a multi-agency event.
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"> • Review and revise current practice in relation to parental authorisation for school activities. 	Ongoing	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Circular 48 is currently being revised and will contain advice on the inclusion of children who are looked after on school excursions. It will clarify the responsibilities of the local authority as a parent and will allow schools to include children who are looked after in excursions safely and legally.
6.	We will monitor the quality and effectiveness of service provision for our Looked After children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action via use of established self evaluation tools and performance reporting procedures. 	Annually	EDESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member / officer working group continues to meet and is reviewing the range of service provision. • The member / officer working group arranged a partnership event focusing on young care leavers in April 2010.

7.	We will continue to increase the numbers of local foster carers, short break carers and adopters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop targeted recruitment campaign. • Review existing support arrangements for fostering and adoption. • Maximise existing flexible working arrangements to support employees who want to become foster/respice carers. • Review our remuneration and other benefit packages for foster/respice carers • We will work with Partners to raise awareness of fostering and adoption recruitment campaign. 	June 2009	HofS (CF&CJ) CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recruitment campaign has continued and has attracted considerable interest. The outcomes to date are: (May 2009 to March 2011) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 201 enquiries ○ 30 new placements (fostering, adoption & short breaks) ○ 17 potential placements – being assessed. • Following a review of the Council's House Allocation Policy, proposals have been submitted to members for consideration which, if agreed, would permit the allocation of larger properties to address the accommodation needs of foster carers and support placements.
----	---	---	-----------	-------------------------------	--

THEME 3: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2010
1.	We will increase knowledge and understanding of Corporate Parenting responsibilities with Elected Members and Community Planning Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A seminar will be arranged for Elected Members and Community Planning Partners. 	Completed	EDESS/DCE-EDCS EDESS/DCE-EDCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed in 2009 • A further event took place in April 2010 in respect of young people leaving care.
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"> • Partners will do this through established employee/user communication networks. 	Ongoing	CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting to the Community Planning Board • Community Planning Partner involvement in corporate parenting events.
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"> • Establish a partnership group to progress key actions in respect of corporate parenting. 	Completed	HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi agency event took place in April 2010 with a focus on young care leavers. • A corporate parenting seminar is also

					being planned to ensure connections between lead officers.
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"> Ensure that the existing children and young peoples forum (residential care) is influencing service delivery. Explore the need for a care leavers reunion / forum 	Completed	HofS (CF&CJ) HofS (CF&CJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing forum continues to operate and is supported by social work staff. The forum members have been asked for their ideas on how to progress the anti stigma campaign in East Ayrshire.
5.	We will continue to provide and further develop training / learning opportunities for relevant employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and assess current training provision to ensure we are meeting service standards. Explore opportunities for funding to support our training requirements. Work with partner agencies to explore cross-cutting training opportunities for employees. 	Ongoing	EDESS/HoP CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “We Can and Must Do Better” training has been rolled out and is continuing in 2010. A total of 217 staff have attended the full day (across agencies). A further 285 staff have attended Unit 1. The “multi” agency training programme on the integrated assessment framework is also being rolled out in 2010.

THEME 4: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

	Objective	Tasks	Timescale	Responsible	Progress as at June 2010
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"> Review current employment and training initiatives for young people and identify areas where this will be possible, including modern and craft apprenticeship schemes. Further develop opportunities for work experience and supportive employment schemes for all of our young people. Work with partners to make best use of training, employment and vocational opportunities in their organisations for Looked After children. 	Ongoing First stage completed – May 2009 Ongoing	Executive Directors DCE-EDCS/HoHR CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 young people have participated on EAC Lifeskills programme & 1 young person on the Get Ready for Work training programme. Staff from the Skills Development & Employability Service (SDE) have undertaken visits to 3 residential houses in EA to raise awareness of our service. 3 Transitional Support workers being recruited with 1 having responsibility for care leavers. Work is taking place to review the

					supported employment scheme and to consider the potential for more tailored approaches.
2.	We will develop a structured mentoring and befriending scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further extend our approach to mentoring and befriending schemes <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"> Develop a mentoring scheme with partners and maximise opportunities available in partner organisations. 	December 2009	EDESS/HoS EDESS/HoS CPP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being implemented with a focus on support in educational attainment
3.	We will endeavour to provide suitable supported housing opportunities to all young people leaving care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with young people to identify suitable housing opportunities based on their individual needs Review our housing allocations and benefits policies to identify ways of ensuring that all young people leaving care have suitable accommodation with support opportunities. 	Review ongoing	EDNS/HoHS EDNS/HoHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proposal for a supported carers scheme has been presented to the Member / Officer Working Group on Corporate Parenting Options for housing models is also being considered and will be a focus at the multi-agency planning day in June 2010. The proposed Common Housing Allocation Policy, if agreed by Council for adoption will award previously looked after and accommodated children a priority to be housed through 'direct matching' from a Strategic Needs Group. Communication between Housing, Social Work and the individual young person will be vital to identify suitable housing opportunities.
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"> Review our policies for school transport. 	December 2009	HoR&TS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of transport is currently underway, including school transport (summer 2010)

5.	We will continue to develop opportunities for vocational learning for Looked After children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	August 2009	HoS: Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wider range of flexible work experiences will be made available to allow young people to access placements in a range of ways. This could include several hours per week over longer blocks of time. All schools are working towards the inclusion of College based vocational courses in their option choice forms. This will give a wider choice to a greater range of pupils.
----	---	--	-------------	--------------	---