

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Risk and Audit Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>3 March 2011</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Social Work Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Audit Scotland Report – Getting it Right for Children in Residential Care</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Provide a briefing on the Getting it Right for Children in Residential Care Report.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the actions taken in response to the above report's recommendations are endorsed

## 3. Background

- 3.1. Audit Scotland published the above report in September 2010. It followed on from the Scottish Government's strategic review of residential child care services in 2009 – the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI).
- 3.2. Audit Scotland examined how effectively councils use their resources on residential placements for looked after children and identified areas for improvement.
- 3.3. Audit Scotland undertook an audit of 60 case files across six Scottish local authorities, with South Lanarkshire Council offering to be one of these.
- 3.4. The number of children who are looked after by Scottish Councils has grown steadily over the past seven years from 11,241 at 31 March 2002 to 15,288 at March 2009. Some children are looked after at home and are supported by a social worker; some are looked after by family members, in foster care and residential accommodation.
- 3.5. At any given time, there are around 1600 children and young people living within residential child care in Scotland. Most of these children and young people have very complex needs and they are amongst the most vulnerable children in our society. There can be issues of serious challenging behaviour, mental health, substance/alcohol misuse, self-harming and complex disabilities.
- 3.6. Around £250 million a year is spent on residential child care in Scotland.
- 3.7. Local authorities work with community planning partners and act as *corporate parents*, making looked after children's needs a priority with the aim of seeking the same outcomes for looked after children as any good parent would.

3.8. The GIRFCIRC report makes a number of recommendations focussing mainly on individualised care planning, strategic service planning, management information, future need, commissioning, evaluation and reporting. A small working group was set up to look at each recommendation to assess South Lanarkshire Council's provision and the results are covered within the next section.

#### **4. Current Position**

4.1. The number of children and young people looked after and accommodated by South Lanarkshire Council at 22 November 2010 was 218, with 144 of these in foster care placements and the remaining 74 in residential care. Of those 74 children and young people, 45 were living within in-house residential child care, 17 within external placements, 10 in specialist accommodation for children with disabilities and 2 were placed within secure accommodation.

4.2. Within South Lanarkshire, there has been clear strategic planning for looked after children on a number of fronts. The Child and Family Services Redesign of 2009 saw a strategic exercise in which services were reconfigured to ensure that children and their families receive support and help within their own communities when it is needed.

4.3. Using existing resources, specialist teams were disaggregated, with more front line social workers providing effective and early holistic intervention for children and families.

4.4. The services for children who require to be looked after away from home have also been reconfigured to ensure that more children and young people are placed within a family setting and residential care is only used for those children whose needs it serves. There has been a significant increase in the number and range of foster carers and a reduction in external foster placements. Similarly, there has been a significant decrease in the number of children who are looked after within residential placements, both externally and within our own estate.

4.5. There is robust scrutiny within the senior management team, finance and local offices to ensure that all children and young people who require to be looked after away from home are appropriately placed, their needs are being met and the outcomes are clear and achievable.

4.6. The GIRFCIRC report provides a comprehensive check list for local authorities (see Appendix 1). A small working group was set up to review each recommendation and measure it against the current services at a strategic and operational level. The check list was then expanded to include a section for agreed actions.

4.7. At this stage, over 90% of the work identified has been achieved or is within current planning. Over 90% of Audit Scotland's requirements are in place and working well or are in place with only minor improvements needed. Actions have been identified against relevant recommendations (see Appendix 1) with named lead persons and timescales included for each action. Delivery will be tracked through the Corporate Parenting Sub Group.

4.8. Areas of good performance or high levels of compliance have been subjected to strategic and operational planning, including the integration of unit cost information. This is central to the decision making processes, monitoring delivery of plans and some aspects of procurement, including clear service specifications. Greater activity will take place in the area of contract management, which is currently being dealt with on a national basis, with representation from South Lanarkshire Council. The

issue of in-house service level agreements and an update on the review of unit costs will also be addressed.

- 4.9. South Lanarkshire Council is and has been represented on a number of national working parties to further develop services for looked after children, for example Care Leavers, National Residential Child Care Initiative, ADSW (residential child care), COSLA (Residential Child Care Workforce Development), the Scottish Government on Outdoor Pursuits, Procurement and the Care Commission.

## **5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1. The only employee implication in relation to this work is the time which is required. However, the time used will be within existing workloads and priority in this area will ultimately have a positive impact on costs, both in human and financial terms.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. The Audit Scotland report shows the 32 Scottish local authority figures in terms of budget and expenditure on residential child care and over / under spends with the highest overspend at almost 45% and South Lanarkshire at 2%. In addition to this, the robust planning and scrutiny which is in place, together with more of a community/family and kin approach means that the budget is neither increasing nor incurring an increase in overspend.

## **7. Other Implications**

- 7.1. Although it is recognised that looking after some of the most vulnerable children and young people comes with a range of difficulties, there has been a steady improvement in the lives of looked after children and the Audit Scotland report provides a national perspective and has provided tools with which we are able to learn and further develop our services.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

- 8.2. In terms of consultation, Audit Scotland sought volunteers from six local authorities. South Lanarkshire Council senior managers met with Audit Scotland as part of the research process for the report. Audit Scotland also randomly selected 8 case files of looked after children and young people. Although individual councils were not to be named in the pre-report audit, the inspector commented that the care planning and recording was of a high standard, with some very innovative practice taking place.

**Harry Stevenson**  
**Executive Director (Social Work Resources)**

**Date:** 14 February 2011

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives**

- Improving the lives of vulnerable children young people and adults
- Partnership working, community leadership and engagement
- Governance and accountability
- Accountable, effective and efficient

**Previous References**

None

**List of Background Papers**

Getting It Right for Children in Residential Care – Audit Scotland (September 2010)

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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**Circulation**

◆ Brenda Doyle, Head of Children and Justice Services

Issue	Assessment of current position					Comments	Actions	Lead person	Time scale
	No – action needed	No – but action in hand	Yes – in place but needs improving	Yes – in place and working well	Not applicable				
<b>Clear outcomes for children which are specified in their care plan</b>									
1. We are clear about the outcomes we wish to achieve for our children and young people in residential care and we have agreed targets that reflect these.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Service Plan</li> <li>GIRFEC</li> <li>Child Plans</li> <li>LAC Reviews</li> <li>Work with Educational Psychology/CAYP</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New LAC Guidelines to be launched to include training within each locality</li> <li>Children's Service Plan and Corporate Parenting Action Plans and reporting kept up to date on a regular basis</li> </ul>	Child and Family Service Manager/ Child and Family Manager	31.03.11
2. These outcomes include clear targets for educational attainment			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Support Plans are in place which are reviewed annually as a minimum and more frequently when required</li> <li>Child Plans</li> <li>LAC Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education/ Social Work planning in place to introduce Education Support Plan for all looked after children which fits with GIRFEC and ASL Act</li> </ul>	Child and Family Service Manager/ Inclusive Education Manager	31.03.11

3. There is shared agreement across all departments in this council about the outcomes we wish to achieve for our children and young people in care.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Service Plan</li> <li>Corporate Parenting Action Plan</li> <li>GIRFEC</li> <li>Child plans</li> <li>LAC Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to focus on this for all looked after children through the Corporate Parenting Sub Group</li> </ul>	Child and Family Manager/ Corporate Parenting Sub Group	In place and reviewed annually
4. There is shared agreement between this council and its partners (including NHS board and independent providers) about the outcomes we wish to achieve for our children and young people in residential care.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIRFEC National contracts and individual specifications</li> <li>Child plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to focus on this for all looked after children through the Corporate Parenting Sub Group</li> </ul>	Child and Family Manager/ Corporate Parenting Sub Group	In place and reviewed annually
<b>Care planning for individual children</b>									
5. All children and young people in residential placements have individual care plans				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIRFEC has driven up standards</li> <li>All children have placement plans which are reviewed at least 6 monthly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions to be taken in relation to 6.</li> </ul>	See below	See below
6. These care plans clearly set out short, medium and long term outcomes for each young person.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIRFEC has driven up standards</li> <li>More clarity on short/medium/ long term goals required in retrospect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be included in LAAC guidelines</li> </ul>	Child and Family Service Manager/ Child and Family Manager	31.03.11
7. The actions required to help the young person achieve these outcomes are set out in a SMART <sup>1</sup> action plan against which progress can be monitored			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIRFEC provides clear framework to capture these actions</li> <li>CAST evaluation provides peer self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Leaders to work to high standards</li> </ul>	Child and Family Service Manager	31.03.11

						evaluation			
8. We review and update care plans for children and young people in residential care in line with statutory requirements				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For some children this timescale is exceeded, eg where children have complex needs/high risks</li> <li>Minute takers now available for all reviews which helps to maintain standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMPROVE system to assist with monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>	Performance Service Manager	In place and ongoing
<b>To</b>									
9. We have a clear strategy for residential child care. This is based on a Best Value review of residential child care services, focused on both in-house provision and services from independent providers, completed within the last three years.				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous reports and processes for Service Re-design, including residential child care, have reviewed and improved the services for children who need looked after away from home.</li> <li>These have been through RMT and where appropriate Social Work Committee.</li> <li>The service re-design also includes the further development of fostering services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to hold monthly monitoring and scrutiny meetings with Head of Service/ Finance</li> <li>Continue to ensure that all South Lanarkshire children are looked after within South Lanarkshire, wherever possible and in a placement which best</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Child and Justice Services</p> <p>Head of Child and Justice Services</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p>

						<p>to ensure a range of options are in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close scrutiny of the placements of all children looked after away from home is in place</li> </ul>	<p>suits their needs</p>		
<p>10. We have a clear, costed plan for residential child care to which we have allocated an appropriate budget. The plan is monitored at least quarterly.</p>				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on the costs of in-house and external placements was submitted to Audit Commission in October 2009</li> <li>• Robust scrutiny and management is in place to ensure that there is a needs led service which is provided within set budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update unit cost using new template which the Audit Scotland report has provided</li> <li>• Continue with monthly scrutiny in terms of need and budget</li> </ul>	<p>Finance Officer</p>	<p>31.05.11</p>
<p>11. We have considered with full joint budgeting that includes social work, education and health, or at least a standard approach to funding residential school placements that would avoid the need for negotiation on a case-by-case basis.</p>				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good joint planning and budgeting arrangements are in place with Education Resources</li> <li>• Social Work and Education Finance Managers monitor budgets regularly</li> <li>• Case by case agreement with Health works very well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue joint planning and monitoring on regular basis which currently takes place within the Stage 4 Forum</li> </ul>	<p>Child and Family Services Manager/ Inclusive Education Manager/ Consultant in Public Health medicine and Child Health Commissioner</p>	<p>In place and ongoing</p>



<b>Forecasting future need</b>									
12. We have estimated future demand for residential child care services in the short, medium and long term.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included in Service Redesign</li> <li>• Second care home to close Apr 2011</li> <li>• Further development of foster care services by way of Level 4 carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Level 4 foster service which will reduce the number of residential placements required</li> </ul>	Fostering and Adoption Manager	Level 4 carers currently being recruited – in place by Oct 2011
13. These estimates are based on a review of the residential child care services utilised by the council over the last three years (in-house provision and services from independent providers).			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The whole Child and Family Services Re-design increased front line services to vulnerable children and families</li> <li>• External placements are used only in cases where in-house services cannot or have not been able to meet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the monthly monitoring and review of in house and external provider placements</li> </ul>	Head of Child and Justice Services	In place and ongoing
14. We have identified how we will meet the forecast needs.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 4 Meetings which are held jointly with Education/Social Work/ Health help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the monthly monitoring and review of in house and</li> </ul>	Head of Child and Justice Services	In place and ongoing

						<p>to provide early warning of potential future need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarly the monthly placement scrutiny meetings identify young people ready to return to South Lanarkshire, move on to independence or who may require additional resources</li> </ul>	external provider placements		
15. Where we have identified that needs cannot be met locally, we are working with providers, other councils and/or national initiatives to find ways of filling these gaps.				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ADSW Residential Child Care Group covers external providers in terms of national feedback takes place at every meeting</li> <li>• Education and Education Psychology also visit/assess external provision</li> <li>• Child and Family Support manager has a remit to monitor/review external service provision</li> <li>• Care Commission Inspection reports are used to monitor the levels of performance of each provider</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to attend ADSW Residential Child Care Meetings and relevant working groups</li> <li>• Continue with visits/assessing externals</li> <li>• Continue monitoring and review of externals</li> <li>• Use Care Commission reports to assess, review and improve</li> </ul>	<p>Child and Family Manager</p> <p>Depute Principal Psychologist</p> <p>Child and Family Manager</p> <p>Child and Family Manager/ Child and Family Manager/ Team Leaders and Social</p>	<p>In place/ quarterly</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p> <p>In place and ongoing</p>



18. To develop consistent service specifications, we have worked with independent providers and other councils, and drawn on the experience of English councils.				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Lanarkshire Council has a representative on the national working group in terms of secure accommodation – national contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop consistent service specifications in line with national working group</li> </ul>	Category Advisor	When national working group has completed
<b>In-house provision – service level agreements</b>									
19. We have service level agreements in place for our in-house provision. These set out what services are being commissioned, to what quality standards, and what outcomes are intended.		√				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thus far, no in-house service level agreements have been in place</li> <li>The ongoing service redesign of services will have a positive impact on the future shape of priorities within residential child care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To act upon Audit Scotland's recommendation to have SLA's for in house provision by setting up SLA Working Group for SLC Residential Child Care</li> </ul>	Child and Family Manager/ Contract Compliance Manager/ Category Advisor	31.08.11
20. Service level agreements are monitored at least twice a year to ensure that children and young people are receiving an appropriate service.				√		Currently not applicable – see 19 above for actions	Currently not applicable – see 19 above for actions	Child and Family Manager/ Contract Compliance Manager/ Category Advisor	31.08.11
<b>Contractual arrangements</b>									
21. We have full contractual arrangements in place with all the independent providers we use. These set out what services are being commissioned, to what quality standards, and what			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No local or national framework is in place</li> <li>Contracts are negotiated individually with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the work on the national contract is complete, the framework</li> </ul>	Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager	When national working group has completed

outcomes are intended, as well as the cost and payment arrangements.						providers for each child	will be used		
22. Contractual arrangements are monitored at least twice a year to ensure that children and young people are receiving an appropriate service.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placement agreements and care plans are monitored within the LAC Review process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be improved once national contract is available</li> </ul>	Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager	When national working group has completed
23. We are using a standard contract or we are working with independent providers, other councils, COSLA and the Scottish Government to develop one.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLC rep is on the national working group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement once standard contract has been agreed on a national basis</li> </ul>	Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager	When national working group has completed
<b>Purchase of specialised services</b>									
24. We are actively engaged in national and regional approaches to purchasing specialised services.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Representative on National Group</li> <li>Partner representation on Regional child Care Commissioning Initiative</li> <li>SLC is actively engaged in national and regional approaches to purchasing specialist services</li> <li>SLC is currently engaged with COSLA and Scotland Excel in the development of National Collaborative contracts in Fostering, Secure,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue with representations at local and national levels to drive up consistently high standards for all service users</li> <li>Once the national frameworks are in place, SLC will implement this fully</li> </ul>	Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager/ Contract Compliance Manager/ Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager/ Contract Compliance Manager	When national frameworks are in place

						<p>Residential Care and in the development of standard Terms and Conditions for social care contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLC involved on a regional level as active members of the Clyde Valley Integrated Health and Social Care Collaborative Workstream – which covers adult, older people and children’s service provision</li> </ul>			
25. We are drawing on the experience of other procurement exercises in the council and are making use of national guidance on procurement and commissioning.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social care procurement is now part of category based centralised procurement function.</li> <li>• Techniques and best practice are shared by all in the service</li> <li>• National guidance on procurement and commissioning is applied and SLC are active members of the guidance development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the national frameworks are in place, SLC will implement this fully</li> </ul>	Category Advisor/ Child and Family Manager/ Contract Compliance Manager	When national working group has completed

						set up by the Joint Improvement Team			
<b>Monitoring and review</b>									
26. Within the last three years, we have undertaken a Best Value review of residential child care, covering services provided directly by the council and services provided by the independent sector.				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Child and Family Service Redesign included all services to children and families within all localities. This also included children who require to be looked after away from home.</li> <li>Reports have been through RMT and the Social Work Committee.</li> <li>The service re-design also includes the further development of fostering services to ensure a range of options are in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with the monthly monitoring and review of in house and external provider placements</li> <li>Spot purchasing is used in terms of matching needs of children and young people with resources which are available. This could be looked at in terms of improving the process</li> </ul>	Head of Child and Justice Services/ Child and Family Service Manager/ Child and Family Manager/ Child and Family Manager	In place and ongoing
27. We undertake a Best Value review of residential child care every three years, renew our strategy every three years and monitor and review our plans on an annual basis				√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to the above at 26, Self evaluation is under-taken which is included in the Children's Service Plan and the Corporate Parenting Action Plan, both of which have actions and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with the self-evaluation and action planning with all stakeholders</li> </ul>	Head of Child and Justice Services/ Integrating Children's Service Manager/ Child and Family Manager	In place and ongoing

						<p>progress to date and identify priorities for the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close scrutiny of the placements of all children looked after away from home is in place</li> <li>• Monthly reporting, monitoring and reviewing, which includes Head of Service and Finance have been in place for more than two years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the monthly monitoring and review of in house and external provider placements</li> </ul>		
28. We have reviewed our systems for recording management information about children in residential care to ensure that they support effective decision-making.			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision making for individual children and young people is carried out within the LAC Review processes which are multi-disciplinary and are on Swis.</li> <li>• Decisions to accommodate children and young people are made only with the authority of the Head of Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust LAC Review processes are in place</li> <li>• The In House Quality Group undertake peer evaluation annually</li> <li>• Improve provides reports on performance and quality</li> </ul>	Head of Child and Justice Services/ Performance Service Manager/ Child and Family Service Manager	In place and ongoing
29. We make available regular, consistent and accurate information for senior managers and councillors to help them			√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly reporting, monitoring and reviewing, which includes Head of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with monthly monitoring and review</li> </ul>		



<p>understand and make strategic decisions about residential child care services.</p>							<p>Service and Finance is in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We Can and Must Do Better Training has been rolled out across the authority and is listed within the Interagency Training Plan</li> <li>• Who Cares Scotland have been commissioned by the Scottish Government to provide WCAMDB training for all elected members across the 32 local authorities</li> </ul>	<p>process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue rolling out the WCAMDB training</li> <li>• Date to be set for elected member training for early 2011</li> <li>• Look at framework for annual report for senior managers and elected members within Corporate Parenting stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Performance Service Manager</p> <p>Child and Family Manager</p>	<p>31.03.11</p>
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DISCUSSION DOCUMENT