

Report

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Report to:	Area Committee Report
Date of Meeting:	9 February 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

Subject:	Corporate Parenting
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on progress within the implementation of a Corporate Parenting approach in South Lanarkshire

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the content of this report is noted
- (2) that progress to date with the implementation of a Corporate Parenting approach in South Lanarkshire is noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. In January 2007, the then Scottish Executive issued a national report "Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better". The focus of this report was two-fold, firstly to raise awareness among all staff who come into contact with looked after children of their needs and what they can do to support this group of children and young people; secondly, to provide an impetus and platform to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people, as it is clear that more can still be done in relation to their education and care needs.
- 3.2. Within the report an important recommendation was also made with regard to Corporate Parenting and the role which agencies have in supporting looked after children as part of a wider corporate family approach. The definition of Corporate Parenting was referred to as "formal and local partnerships needed between 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."
- 3.3. Each of the recommendations within the Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better report was subsequently followed up with further guidance for local agencies. In terms of Corporate Parenting this further guidance was issued in September 2008 and titled "These are our Bairns-A Guide for Community Planning Partnerships on Being a Good Corporate Parent".
- 3.4. The report summarised the main actions which community planning partners require to take forward in supporting their role as Corporate Parents which include:
- Having a clear involvement and consultation policy for looked after children, which guarantees the inclusion of their views at every level
 - To brief Elected Members on their role as a corporate parent
 - To celebrate the success of looked after children

- To ensure education, training and employment is central to care planning, pathway planning and the provision of appropriate accommodation
- To be proactive in ensuring access to health services, particularly child and adolescent mental health services, reach looked after children and young people
- To engage Elected Members and the wider Community Planning Partnership in developing a clear set of outcomes for looked after children and young people

4. Looked After Children in South Lanarkshire-Context

4.1. In South Lanarkshire, the number of looked after children and young people in recent years has on average fluctuated between 500 and 550. The 2009/10 annual return to the Scottish Government indicated that a total of 491 children and young people were looked after in South Lanarkshire and of this 53%% (or 258) were looked after at home with parents or by friends or relatives and 46% (or 227) were in either foster care, a children's house, residential school or secure. In 2008/09 there was a total of 490 children and young people and in 2007/08 the figure was 546. A breakdown of the 2009/10 figures are detailed below:

2009/10 Children Looked After Statistics

Accommodation Type		Total
Community	At home with Parents	166
	With friend/relatives	92
	With foster carers provided by local authority	150
	With foster carers purchased	6
	With prospective adopters	0
	In other community	0
Residential	In Local Authority Home	57
	In voluntary home	0
	In residential school	18
	In secure accommodation	2
	Crisis care	0
	Other residential	0
		491

Notes: These figures were taken from the annual return as at 31 March 2010.

4.2. The more up to date figure of children and young people living in the local authority children's houses was 47 at 17 January 2011. This demonstrates a further reduction since the above figures were published.

5. Progress with Implementation of Corporate Parenting in South Lanarkshire

5.1. Several key pieces of work have been taken forward in South Lanarkshire with regard to Corporate Parenting as detailed below:

- A Corporate Parenting event which was held in June 2009 with the purpose of raising awareness across agencies including Elected Members (17 attended) of their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents. This event was led in part by young people, who used real life stories to highlight the challenges being faced by looked after children
- The information and work undertaken at this event was used to shape the final Corporate Parenting Policy, which was approved by Executive Committee in December 2009. This policy clearly articulates the role of individuals and agencies working with looked after children and how we can work collectively to be ambitious for this group of young people

- The implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child within South Lanarkshire is a key overarching strategy which is aimed at ensuring children and young people have access to the help they need, when they need it
- The re-design of Child and Family Services within Social Work Resources has strengthened resources within localities. This ensures that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are identified at an early stage and that services are co-ordinated through one identified professional. This supports children and families' needs are met at the earliest possible stage
- Significant investment has been made by the local authority in creating environments within Children's Houses which promotes a Corporate Parenting approach. Recent inspection reports by the Care Commission highlight that the quality of care for looked after and accommodated children continues to improve
- Young people continue to be involved in policy development in this area, through the Young Voices Group, which is a group led by young people who are either in care or have now left care
- The tracking of progress with the implementation of Corporate Parenting continues to be driven through the multi – agency Children's Services Planning Sub Group for Corporate Parenting. This forum provides updates to the Children's Services Steering Group annually
- The Fostering and Adoption Team are in the process of developing level 4 foster care provision for children and young people with more complex needs who will benefit from a solo placement

6. The role of Elected Members

- 6.1. Elected Members have a key role in supporting the Corporate Parenting agenda as they are in a strong position to be the champions for looked after children and young people, particularly in relation to agreeing and influencing priority areas for the local authority to progress. Elected members also have a key role in scrutinising the approach of the local authority and its partners to ensure that everyone is working as a corporate family to meet the needs of looked after children.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1 None at this time

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 None

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 The aim of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is to ensure ownership of the agenda across all resources and partners

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1 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.

Harry Stevenson
Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

26 January 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- Improving the lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Raise educational attainment for all
- Improve health and increase physical activity
- Improve community safety

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

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

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