

Argyll and Bute's Corporate Parenting Board



Introduction

Welcome to Argyll and Bute's Corporate Parenting Board newsletter.

This is the first issue of our newsletter. The Corporate Parenting Board has been set up to ensure that we are constantly improving the lives of children and young people looked after by the local authority. We have prepared an Integrated Children's Services Plan which details all of the improvements we intend to make over the two years.

You can access this on line through: [Integrated Children's Services Plan 2014-17](#) or request a hard copy of the from Yvonne Murton, Information Officer on yvonne.murton@argyll-bute.gov.uk

The Corporate Parenting Board meets formally twice a year. Members of the Board include myself as Chair, our four area children's champions who are local elected members, the Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council, the Council's Executive Director of Community Services, the Chief Social Work Officer, the Chief Officer for Health and Social Care, the Chief Superintendent of Police Scotland and the Area Commander of Scottish Fire, Chair of the Support Forum and Who Cares Scotland?

During the past year we have also had the opportunity to meet with young people, staff, kinship and foster carers, visited children's houses and attended the Support Forum for ex care leavers to hear directly from them how we can make a difference to the lives of our young people. It has been a busy time for the Board but it is by far one of the best parts of my job as Policy Lead for Health and Social Care

Children's Houses

The three children's houses in Argyll and Bute (Shellach View, East King Street and Dunclutha) have all been inspected by the Care Inspectorate in the last year and have been assessed as very good in all aspects of their care and support. In June this nurturing environment was observed by the Council's Chief Executive, Sally Loudon when she came for tea with myself, the young people and staff in East King Street.

Dunclutha

The Council has big plans for Dunclutha. We are going to build a new children's house within the grounds of the current home, which should be ready to move into in Spring 2017. Young people, staff and the community have been involved in the design of the new build for Dunclutha. Councillor Marshall, Children's Champion for Bute and Cowal and board member has been involved in this project and we have commissioned a DVD to be made which will document the new build and capture the history of Dunclutha for the future.

Argyll and Bute's Support Forum

Argyll and Bute's SUPPORT forum meets quarterly to promote, support and develop our approach to consultation and engagement with LAC and care leavers in the design and delivery of children and family services. The Forum brings together care experienced young people, residential staff, Who Cares? (Scotland) and invited guests to discuss the issues that effect our Looked After Children across Argyll and Bute.

Since establishing the SUPPORT forum, which provides a clear link between young people and the Corporate Parenting Board, our young people have requested that the Forum be held in each of our towns rather than meet in a central location. This will ensure maximum participation from workers and young people across the Authority and to ensure we have representation from young people in residential care, foster care, kinship care and Throughcare. The SUPPORT Forum also organise an annual consultation event where managers and policy makers from all corporate parenting disciplines and elected members are invited to participate in discussions and activities with our young people around some of the issues that affect their lives. These issues include "what do I expect from my corporate parents" and the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014.

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Tony's Story

In Argyll and Bute we are very proud of all of our young people. Tony MacDonald, an ex-care leaver from Argyll and Bute, has been inspiring young people across Scotland and internationally. Tony was sponsored by Argyll and Bute Council to undertake employment and studies with Who Cares? Scotland. After two years with Who Cares? he has obtained a permanent contract as an Ambassador. Tony and other young people from Who Cares? lobbied the Scottish Government to increase the age that looked after young people can receive continuing care, this is now legislation in the new Children and Young Persons Act. Tony also recently travelled to New Zealand as an Ambassador for Who Cares? Scotland.

Children and Young Persons Act 2014

This new Act places a duty on all public services to be corporate parents. Our Support Forum told us what they expected from the Act and in response the Board created a DVD explaining what it means to board members to be a corporate parent. The Act means we will be able to provide support to young people to the day before their 26th birthday.

The Act also outlines the support local authorities need to provide to kinship carers. The Board is working to redesign services and the Council has committed an additional £850,000 to meet the increased financial demand of implementing the new Act.

Fostering & Adoption

The fostering and adoption service has had two events this year with foster carers and potential adoptive parents. Members of Corporate Parenting Board were able to attend and were extremely impressed by the quality and commitment of our carers. Carers spoke about the need for more carers and better support for our carers. A recruitment campaign has taken place and we have a number of carers currently being assessed. The fostering and adoption service has had difficulty recruiting staff and this has impacted on the support received. New initiatives to support carers are being explored including the development of online support. Currently all aspects of fostering and adoption service have been assessed as good by the Care Inspectorate.



Awards



Argyll and Bute Council Children and Families Service have had a busy year winning gold in the COSLA awards in the "securing a workforce for the future" category. And two social workers, Tom Niccolls (Fostering and Adoption) and Stephen Malcolm (Oban) making the final of Social Worker of the Year. Our Looked after young people were involved in the redesign of the service which won the COSLA award and nominated both of our social workers of the year.

Finally, I hope you have enjoyed the newsletter if you have any ideas to improve it let us know by e-mailing karen.aspinall@argyll-bute.gov.uk

OR, if you would like the Corporate Parenting Board to visit you we want to hear from you.

Councillor Mary Jean Devon