

Corporate Parenting Board

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 An earlier report was presented to the Council on the 27th November 2012 recommending the appointment of four Children's Champions and the formation of a Corporate Parenting Board. This report follows the decision to accept those recommendations and outlines the establishment of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the proposed remit, governance arrangements and membership of the Corporate Parenting Board be adopted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Corporate Parenting is the responsibility that councils have for children and young people who are Looked After under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Most children and young people become Looked After as a result of a children's hearing or court.

3.2 Corporate Parenting has been defined as being:

"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 (2007)

3.3 These are Our Bairns (2008) says that 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.
- Seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

- 3.4 Whilst the primary responsibility for Looked After Children lies with the Council this responsibility is shared with Community Planning Partners. Community Planning Partners have a duty to work with the Council in promoting the well-being of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- 3.5 Children and young people who are or who have been Looked After have poorer outcomes than their peers who have not been in the care system. Their educational attainment, health and employment levels are well below children from conventional backgrounds. They are more likely to become homeless and more likely to offend as adults. Many children and young people enter the care system damaged and vulnerable and the system needs to offer them everything a good parent would offer their own children and more to redress the disadvantage they experienced in their earlier lives.
- 3.6 It is our duty to work together to make sure that all the services our Looked After children and young people and care leavers experience are positive, outcome focused and aspirational.

4.0 **DETAIL**

- 4.1 On the 24th May 2013 Argyll and Bute Council was responsible for 221 Looked After children and young people and care leavers. Of this 131 children and young people and care leavers were Looked After and Accommodated. The table below identifies the number of Looked After children and young people and care leavers by placement type. It is significant to note that the majority of Looked After Children and young people and care leavers are in family type placements (105) or are living at home with their parents (82).

Placement Type	No
Foster Placements	49
Kinship	56
A&B Units	11
Residential Schools (CWD LAAC)	4
Other Residential	11
Total LAAC	131
With Parents	82
Total LAC	213
CWD Respite placements	8
Total on spread sheet	221

CWD is an abbreviation to describe a child with a disability.

- 4.2 Argyll and Bute Council in conjunction with the Community Planning Partnership has taken a number of steps to refocus Corporate Parenting on improving outcomes for our Looked After children and young people and care leavers. An awareness raising event was held on the 30th October 2012 for senior elected members and officers to restate the duties and challenges of being a Corporate

Parent. This event culminated in the signing of the Give Me A Chance Promise to our Looked After children and young people and care leavers to work with them in addressing the stigma of being Looked After and in supporting them in achieving their full potential.

4.3 A consultation event was held with our older Looked After children and young people and care leavers on the 23rd November 2012. The consultation concluded in the establishment of the children and young people and care leavers S.U.P.P.O.R.T Forum. The name had been chosen earlier by our young people to represent the principles of:

- Support.
- Understanding.
- Privacy.
- Participation.
- Opportunities.
- Rights/Responsibilities.
- Trust.

The S.U.P.P.O.R.T. Forum is a partnership between our children and young people and care leavers and the Council and is formally constituted and jointly chaired by a young person and a senior manager. The S.U.P.P.O.R.T. Forum is presently organising a further round of consultations with the focus being our Looked After children and young people in foster care.

4.4 The establishment of four Children Champions (one for each area) was agreed by the Council on the 27th November 2012. Who Carers? Scotland have been contracted to provide direct training and support to the Children's Champions. The Children's Champions are envisaged to provide a link between the political leadership, the Officers of the Council and the children and young people and care leavers. In this role the Children Champions are well placed to oversee Looked After Services and further develop Corporate Parenting within the Council and across partner agencies. Central to this is the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board.

4.5 The establishment of an Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board is a key element of the Getting it Right for our Looked After Children's Improvement Plan and forms part of the Council's response to improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Board would place Looked After children and young people and care leavers at the centre of corporate activity offering improved accountability and support in the pursuit of improved outcomes. Central to this would be the commissioning, publication and delivery of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Strategy.

4.6 The remit of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board would be the following:

- To listen to our Looked After children and young people and care leavers through regular consultation and the promotion of their participation in the development of all relevant policies and strategies.

- To ensure the commitments outlined in the Promise are delivered.
- To provide leadership across the authority in safeguarding and promoting the best possible outcomes for our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- To understand the impact on our Looked After children and young people and care leavers of all council and community planning partner decisions.
- To ensure that governance arrangements are in place to implement any decisions regarding our Looked After children and young people and care leavers across the Council and community planning partners.
- To have access to both quantitative and qualitative information on all the services Looked After children and young people and care leavers come into contact with and evaluate this information.
- To undertake an analysis of the needs of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers to inform service improvement and development.
- To ensure the Council's strategic plans and joint plans with partner agencies address the needs of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- To keep up to date with emerging research findings and new initiatives that should inform the direction of future services.
- To recognise and celebrate the achievements of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

4.7 The governance of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board is illustrated in Appendix 1. The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will report directly to the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership.

- The Chair of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will be appointed by the Community Planning Partnership.
- The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will consult with and promote the participation of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers in the conduct of its business.
- The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will meet every six months.
- The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will commission the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Strategy which will form the basis of its work plan.

- The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Strategy will be formally reviewed every 3 years and updated as required.
- The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will produce an annual report on how the Council and its partners are fulfilling their roles as corporate parents.

4.8 The membership of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board would include:

- The Chief Officers of the Community Planning Partnership or their delegates.
- The Lead Councillor for Children and Families.
- The four Children's Champions.
- The Chair(s) of the S.U.P.P.O.R.T Forum.
- Representatives from our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Who Carers? Scotland.
- The Head of Service for Children and Families
- The Chair of the Getting Right for our Looked After Children's Group.
- The Children's Rights Officer.

4.9 The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board will be supported through the office of the Head of Service for Children and Families and its officers. It is envisaged that the current Getting it Right for our Looked After Children's Group will be rebranded and reassigned to the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board to support it in undertaking its duties. The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will be at the direction of the Community Planning Partnership with its inaugural meeting being held in September 2013.

5. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

5.1 In summary the justification for establishing an Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board lies in the elusive nature of corporate parenting and the need to sponsor collaborative working within a framework of high expectations and clear accountability. The establishment of an Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board offers the most effective way of jointly improving the outcomes for our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy: The establishment of the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board is anticipated to have significant policy implications through its commitment to consult with and promote the participation of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers in the development of all relevant policies and strategies.
- 5.2 Financial: The priority given to Looked After children and young people and care leavers will be subject to scrutiny and possible challenge by the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board.
- 5.3 Legal: The Council and its partners have a statutory duty to work together to meet the needs of our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- 5.4 HR: No implications have been identified to date.
- 5.5 Equalities: No specific Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Looked After children and young people and care leavers are a recognised disadvantaged group.
- 5.6 Risk: The establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board will reduce the risk of service failure.
- 5.7 Customer Service: The establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board will improve the quality of service and the outcomes for our Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

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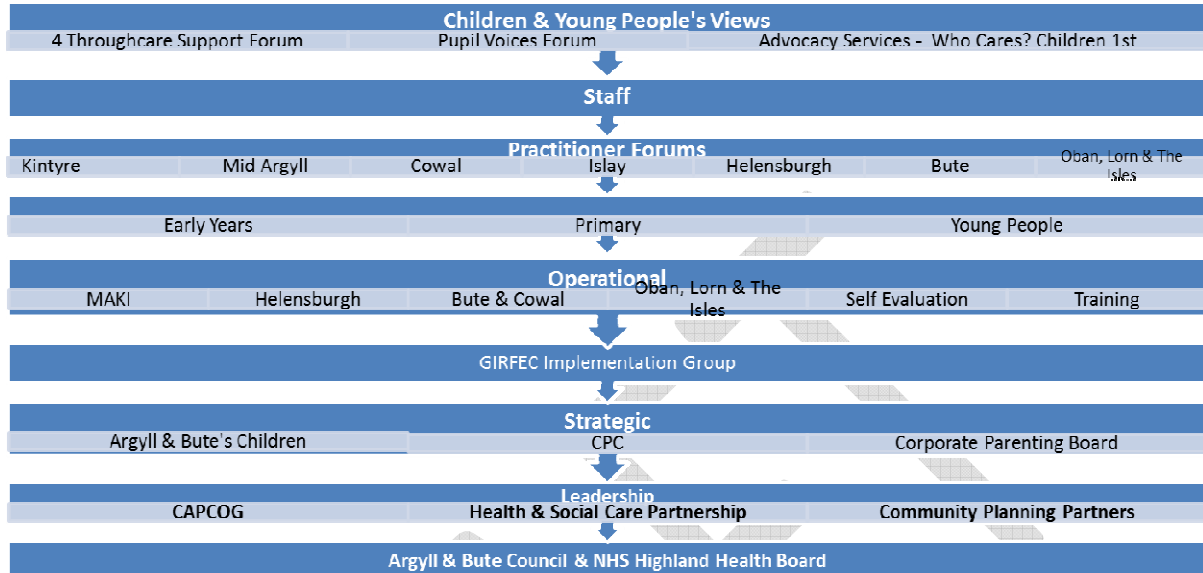
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Appendix 1

The governance arrangements for the Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board



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