

**CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL**

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**Report to Council of 6 November 2008**

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**Subject: Corporate Parenting in Clackmannanshire Council**

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**Prepared by: Jim Burke, Senior Manager, Child Care Services**

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**1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 When a child is taken into care, the Council takes on the parental responsibility of supporting that child to fulfil its potential in a way set out in the strategy document published in 2007 - "*Scotland's Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better*".

1.2 The above document and the newly published "*These Are Our Bairns*"; a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent; make recommendations for Councils, teachers, social workers and health workers, including:

- reminding Councils of their role and responsibility as corporate parents
- improving training for teachers and other professionals to ensure that they have the skills to deal with these pupils
- providing key workers with guidance on their role and supporting individual young people
- ensuring that Councils continue to provide young people with support beyond their 18th birthday, including financial support for those going on to further and higher education

1.3 The Scottish Government definition of corporate parent is "*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*".

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Council is recommended to note the setting up of a Corporate Parenting Group which will produce a corporate parenting strategy addressing all aspects of the life of a looked after young person, including:

- stability and continuity of their living arrangements
- the nature and level of support expected from all Council services

- strategies and structures for the most effective and successful educational outcome for a looked after young person in our educational resources
- the health and well-being of a looked after young person during and after their period of care
- the planning and arrangements for the time after a young person leaves the looked after system including their further education, training, or employment opportunities, accommodation and support needs.

2.2 It is further recommended that the Corporate Parenting Group reports regularly to the Alliance and Scrutiny Committee, producing an annual report on progress and outcomes for looked after young people.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1. The *"Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better"* report sets out 19 specific and targeted actions designed to deliver under 5 key themes identified in the report: working together; being effective life-long learners; developing into successful and responsible adults; being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy; and, feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting.

3.2 The report highlights and addresses 8 notable messages:

- the importance of the corporate parent role
- the need to raise awareness of the educational needs of looked after children and young people and improve training for all foster carers, residential workers, lead professionals, support workers and associated professionals
- the need for clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of the designated person within schools and residential establishments
- the importance of providing flexible and appropriate support before, during, and post transition
- the importance of physical, mental and emotional health and well-being in facilitating positive educational outcomes
- the need for good quality accommodation, which supports the education, training or employment of looked after children and young people
- the importance of clear advice and a range of emotional, practical and financial support for looked after young people as they make the transition to adult hood/independent living; and,
- the vital importance of stability and continuity within education and care settings

3.3 In many local authorities in Scotland and particularly Inverclyde Council and Glasgow Council, specific corporate parenting groups and strategies have been brought into being at the highest levels within the Council hierarchy.

In Glasgow the corporate manager for child care and child health chairs a multi-agency group which reports directly to the Children's Services Committee with representation from senior elected members and senior officers from a range of Council and associated partners services.

- 3.4 In Inverclyde Council these structures are mirrored, but they have also adopted a children's champion approach which includes senior members of all Council services taking special responsibility for individual children who are looked after by the local authority.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1. In Clackmannanshire many of the issues addressed in the "*We Can and Must Do Better*" report and highlighted in the "*More Choices More Chances*" report (a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Scotland) and the "*Extraordinary Lives - creating a positive future for looked after children and young people in Scotland*" report are dealt with at a variety of groups including the Joint Children's Services Implementation Group. The Council has, of course, a "More Choices More Chances Strategy" approved in January 2007; the continued implementation of this and related strategies, will need to be taken into account in designing how the Council will wish to respond to the Government's concern that Councils should work with greater focus in support of Looked After Children. The recent publication of "Core Tasks for Designated Managers in Educational and Residential Establishments in Scotland" will also need to be taken into account. However, the Scottish Government reports and guidance is challenging local authorities to specifically organise and plan and deliver for the specific group of looked after children in each local authority area. Not to see them as a cohort within a number of cohorts of disadvantaged young people, but to specifically home in and address the needs of this one group as the most vulnerable and most important group of young people within the Council.
- 4.2 Recommendation 14 of the Clackmannanshire Council Performance Inspection report (September 2008) recommends that Clackmannanshire Council should put in place a corporate parenting strategy which sets out corporate responsibilities throughout the Council towards looked after children. The strategy should lead to improving outcomes for looked after children and an increase in the number and quality of foster care placements. This corporate parenting strategy should be developed by a corporate parenting group comprising key members of Council services including social work, education, community learning and development, housing, economic development as well as NHS Forth Valley, Central Scotland Police and that this group should meet regularly and should be represented at the most senior level of the management structure of each service. Clackmannanshire Alliance plans to develop a "theme team" which will have a focus on promoting the health and well-being of young people and should be taken full account of in the development of the Corporate Planning

Strategy. It should have the support and involvement of a senior elected member who will be the Looked After Children's Champion.

## 5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Successful progress of the Corporate Parenting Group and the production of a corporate parenting strategy has significant implications for sustainability, particularly in terms of health, employability and accommodation outcomes for young people who have made the transition from the public care system to our communities and into semi-independent and independent living.

## 6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications with respect to establishing the Corporate Parenting Group. However any future corporate parenting strategy may require us to examine the financial implications of any change to existing Council policy and practice in terms of educational outcomes, accommodation strategies and support for employability initiatives.

### 6.2. Declarations

- (1) The recommendations contained within this report support Corporate Priorities, and Community Planning commitments:

- **Corporate Priorities (Key Themes)** (Please tick )

Achieving Potential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximising Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Securing Prosperity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing the Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining an Effective Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>

- **Council Policies** (Please detail)

- **Community Plan (Themes)** (Please tick )

Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Economic Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environment and Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health Improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- (2) In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. (Please tick )

- (3) The full financial implications of the recommendations contained in this report are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. (Please tick )

Dendre Cilliers.

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Head of Service

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Director

**Report to Council**

To accompany all Reports to Council

To: Head of Administration And Legal Services

Author: Jim Burke	Date: 23 September 2008
Service: Services to People - Child Care Services	
Date of Meeting: 6 November 2008	
Title of Report: Corporate Parenting in Clackmannanshire	

Recommendation that the attached report be:

1. Given unrestricted circulation

✓

(tick appropriate box)

2. Taken in private

By virtue of paragraph \_\_\_\_ of schedule 7A, Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Appendices attached to this report (if none, state "none")

1. None.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

List of Background Papers (if none, state "none")

1. *"These Are Our Bairns"*: a guide to community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent - The Scottish Government, Sep 2008
2. Looked After Children: we can and must do better - Scottish Executive 2007
- 3.

Note: All documents specified must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of the meeting at which the report is considered.