

These Are Our Bairns

a **guide** for community planning partnerships
on being a good corporate parent



The Scottish
Government

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on being a good corporate parent

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FOREWORD

“Looked After children and young people need continuity and stability and essentially they need listening to. In my opinion we need to improve the communication between local authority workers, from social, residential and education workers, to foster carers and senior officers, to make sure their roles and responsibilities are having a positive impact. Putting the young people at the centre of all they do will, I believe, improve the future of many.”

This is the view of a young care leaver. With this guidance, we want to set the scene for achieving this goal. The Scottish Government and local government in Scotland are committed to improving life outcomes for all children, and we have a special responsibility for those who are Looked After. We must be aspirational for all our children – they are the future.

Like any good parent, we want our children to enjoy school and do well there; we want them to be healthy and happy, secure and confident. We want them to go on to college or university, to find good jobs, to have loving relationships and happy lives. In addition, we want them to be included and effective members of our communities, indeed in the fullness of time to be good parents themselves.

“You may feel that ‘corporate responsibility’ and ‘corporate parenting’ are rather obscure concepts, or at least concepts that bear little relation to activities in the real world. However, the fact is that children’s lives are directly and profoundly affected by the quality of corporate parenting offered to them! ...This is not to replace or replicate the selfless character of parental love; but it does imply a warmth and personal concern which goes beyond the traditional expectations of institutions.”
(Sir William Utting, 1991)

That is the challenge for all those involved in corporate parenting – how do you give a child in your care the love, security and chances that any good parent would give their child? We hope that this guidance will go some way to laying the foundations for achieving that.

We recognise that ours is not an easy task. Children and young people who become Looked After often come from chaotic backgrounds and their behaviour can be challenging as a result of the damage they have suffered. As corporate parents, we have not only to provide the opportunities and supports that any good family would provide, but we must address significant early disadvantage and that can take time and perseverance. However, even very small things can make a difference to young people and you will get great satisfaction from seeing the impact that you can make.

Like most extended families, the corporate family consists of many parts – local authorities as a whole; health services, both universal and specialist; independent sector providers; the police and all those parts of the system which support service delivery agencies. Bringing up a child successfully depends very much on all family members playing their parts. It may be at a particular point in a child’s life, or it may be constant, but together all of those parts are a powerful force for good.

Our underpinning theme is working together, one of the key themes identified in *Looked After Children and Young People – We Can and Must Do Better* (Scottish Executive, January 2007). We are already seeing some excellent work being achieved across Scotland to deliver the actions outlined in that report. This guidance emphasises the key role that local authorities have as corporate parents, and the vital contribution of community planning partners as members of the wider corporate family. It aims to demonstrate the part you can play to make a difference to the lives of children in care, and care leavers, and what you can do to make sure that they have positive experiences that will prepare them for a successful future; one in which they contribute positively to their local communities, and to a successful Scotland.

Collectively, we are moving to an outcomes-based approach to public services and this guidance promotes a focus on improving the outcomes of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities – children and young people whose outcomes have historically been less than we would hope for. Each child is an individual; early intervention, prevention, flexibility and personalisation will recognise their needs and make sure that they are able to be all they can be in the future.

Being a good corporate parent is more than fulfilling your statutory duties. Over the years, despite good intentions and investment, we have collectively failed the children and young people who have been entrusted to us. We have a social and moral obligation to do our very best for those most vulnerable members of our communities and to show that we can and will do better as corporate parents.

We are particularly grateful to all of those people who told us their stories to illustrate this guidance. Their words inspire all of us to make a positive and enduring difference to the children and young people in our care.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Ingram".

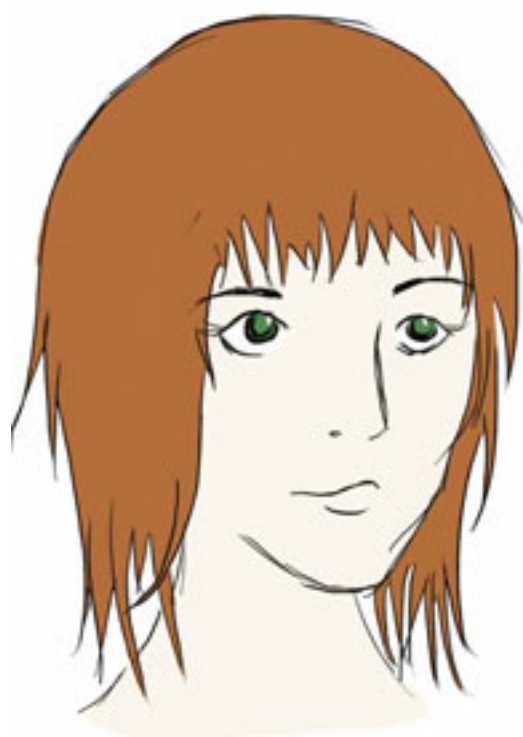
ADAM INGRAM MSP
Minister for Children and Early Years



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isabel Hutton".

CLLR ISABEL HUTTON
COSLA Education
Children and Young People Spokesperson

WHAT DO WE NEED?



01 / INTRODUCTION

01



We have changed the emphasis coming into government to pursue an early intervention and prevention agenda. We are very keen to get to the root causes of young people going into care and to try to prevent that happening, as well as improving the circumstances of young people who are being Looked After or leaving care.

“I really want outcomes for children who have had experience of the care system to be no different to their peers in terms of educational attainment or other types of outcome. Unfortunately, the experience to date has been that young people are very disadvantaged by having to be taken into the care system. We know, for example, in terms of educational attainment there’s significant under achievement and that damages their life chances. We want to eradicate that. What I want for children who have to be brought into care, at the end of the day, is that they are not damaged by that experience. I want to see excellence in the care system, and that young people’s outcomes will be much better than in previous years.

“Corporate parents’ attitude should be ‘these children are my responsibility, are in my care, and I need to do the best for them.’ The buck stops with them.



Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years.

WHAT IS A CORPORATE PARENT?

Corporate parenting means 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*, Scottish Executive, 2007)

Corporate parenting operates at the strategic, operational and individual level. The three key elements are:

- 1 the statutory duty on all parts of a local authority to co-operate in promoting the welfare of children and young people who are Looked After by them, and a duty on other agencies to co-operate with councils in fulfilling that duty.
- 2 co-ordinating the activities of the many different professionals and carers who are involved in a child or young person's life, and taking a strategic, child-centred approach to service delivery.
- 3 shifting the emphasis from 'corporate' to 'parenting' defined by Jackson et al in 2003 as '*the performance of all actions necessary to promote and support the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of a child from infancy to adulthood*'. The local authority delegates this function to those providing day-to-day care for the child or young person.

Corporate parenting is not only a responsibility but a real opportunity to improve the futures of Looked After children and young people; recognising that all parts of the system have a contribution to make is critical to success. The concept of corporate parenting is inherently paradoxical; good parenting demands continuity and organisations by their nature are continuously changing. Staff move on, elected members change, structures change, procedures change. One challenge of being a good corporate parent is to manage these changes while giving each individual child or young person a sense of stability.

Being a good corporate parent means we should:

- accept responsibility for the council's Looked After children and young people;
- make their needs a priority; and
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

There are several reasons why the community planning partnership needs to act collectively:

- 1 it is important for vulnerable children and young people, who may have been separated from their families, to know that they are still important in their own communities, and that extra special planning is going into their care;
- 2 children and young people, like all of us, need to feel that services are "joined up" and that the people who are providing their services are working effectively together to protect, support and encourage them; and
- 3 it has the backing of the law – the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 says health, housing and education must work with social work to look after the children and young people in their care. In effect, they are all members of the corporate family.

Good parents make sure their children are well Looked After, making progress at school, healthy, have clear boundaries for their own and others' safety and wellbeing and are enjoying activities and interests. As they grow older, they encourage them to become independent, and support them if they need it, to become part of the local community and access further or higher education, training or work.

Corporate parents must do the same, albeit that many more individual people will be involved in the corporate family than some ordinary families. Every family is different and lifestyles across Scotland are becoming more and more diverse. Corporate parenting needs to be "the same but different" across different communities, while delivering the essential components that children need throughout childhood and young adulthood.

WHO ARE OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

The term *Looked After* includes children Looked After at home, subject to a supervision order from a Children's Hearing, but living at home with their birth parent(s) or with other family members, as well as children Looked After away from home who live with foster or kinship carers, in residential care homes, residential schools or secure units.

Of the 14,060 Looked After children in Scotland at 31 March 2007:

- 41% were Looked After away from home in foster care, residential or secure settings, while 58% were Looked After at home by their parents or by other family members (kinship care).
- 55% were male, 45% female.
- 68% were aged between 5 and 15 years old; 19% were under 5 and 13% were 16 or over.
- Just over 65% of children in foster care were under 12 years old.
- 12% were in residential care.
- Just over 89% of young people in non-secure residential homes or schools were 12 years old or more.

WHY DO CHILDREN BECOME LOOKED AFTER?

The number of children and young people becoming Looked After has increased year on year over the last two decades. The reasons for children becoming Looked After are more complex, but the number placed as a result of offending behaviour has remained fairly static. The overwhelming majority are placed for care and protection reasons and that number is increasing annually. Children and young people may be Looked After for short or long periods; some return home, some are adopted, and some remain Looked After for many years until they reach adulthood.

There are many reasons why children become Looked After. Some have experienced neglect; some have experienced mental, physical or emotional abuse; some parents are unable to look after their children because of their own substance misuse or poor parenting skills; some young people need a bit of time away from their birth family or community while a package of support is put in place to try to rebuild family relationships or their ability to function; some have complex disabilities and need to be placed in specialist residential schools; some have become involved in the youth justice system.

Looked After children and young people are not a homogenous group with the same backgrounds or needs. They are individual children and young people with their own personalities, needs and experiences. The only thing they have in common is that life has not been easy for them, and for most some aspect of their life circumstances has led to a children's hearing or a court deciding that some form of compulsory intervention is required. A small number become Looked After away from home through a voluntary agreement between their parent(s) and the local authority.

When children and young people become Looked After, it is essential that there is robust and flexible planning for their future from the outset. Stability is crucial to children's development and happiness, and the system should support stability through minimising moves and seeking permanent solutions wherever possible. Most young people leaving care do not become "care leavers" – that is, they return to their birth families or find other permanent solutions before they reach their statutory school leaving age. Ensuring that their transition from care is as smooth and sustainable as possible should be an underpinning theme to care planning and decision-making.

WHEN A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS LOOKED AFTER

It is important to remember that unless parental rights and responsibilities have been removed, the corporate parent must seek to work in partnership with the birth parent(s). For example, parental involvement in a child's education should not be affected by the Looked After status of the child or young person. Parents of Looked After children and young people should be actively encouraged and supported to work in partnership with the local authority, to encourage and support the Looked After child or young person. Parent should be kept fully informed about their child's progress and consulted wherever appropriate. Working with birth parents can be challenging, but it is important to be able to demonstrate that as much as possible has been done to support the family.

It is also important to remember that a small proportion of Looked After children and young people and care leavers present a high risk to themselves or others. Their care is particularly difficult to manage and can present significant issues, for example when identifying suitable accommodation. Risk assessment and management is essential.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON STOPS BEING LOOKED AFTER?

Some children or young people will stop being Looked After to return successfully to their families, and some will be Looked After at various times throughout their childhood as their families struggle to cope in particular situations. If a young person is still Looked After at school leaving age, the council will put in place throughcare and aftercare services to support them into independent living. This transition to independence will be at a younger age than most young people leave the family home, and they will need significant support to help them to find somewhere suitable to live, take up further or higher education, training or work, and even to cope with the every day aspects of living independently.

Councils have a duty to provide advice and support to their young people up to age 19, and a power to do so up to age 21. They are encouraged to make sure that young people stay Looked After for as long as possible, preferably until they reach 18 if that is in the best interests of the young person. They should make sure that when young people do leave care they are equipped with the necessary life skills, and receive adequate financial and other support at what is a difficult time for all young people. Getting this package of support right is crucial to improving outcomes for care leavers to make sure they have the stability and support they require to fulfill their potential educationally and to develop the life skills to enable them to make a successful transition to independent living. For example, when a care leaver is at college, the local authority should make sure they have suitable accommodation particularly outwith term-time, and that they are able to buy books and equipment, or travel to and from college.

Sections 29 and 30 of the Children Scotland Act 1995 set out councils' responsibilities to care leavers, and these are detailed in appendix 3.

Corporate families are in a unique position to be able to support young people as they leave home in that they have their own housing, economic development, community learning and development, welfare rights, health and careers services all of which will be helpful to ensuring young care leavers are not left to fend for themselves. In addition, councils and their community planning partners are often the largest employers in their local areas and are in a good position to be able to offer work experience, apprenticeships and employment to their young people. This approach fits comfortably with *Getting It Right For Every Child*, a central element of which is agencies' ability to draw in support from each other when a young person needs it.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

We want all our children and young people to have successful, productive lives and we want to provide the services and supports that will help them succeed, particularly when they have problems to overcome. Our work to strengthen corporate parenting sits within the Single Outcome Agreements and the National Performance Framework. It may be helpful to express what we are collectively trying to achieve in terms of outcomes.

As corporate parents, the overarching outcome we are collectively aiming for is:

Young people who have experienced the care system will be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors whose life outcomes mirror those of their peers.

The specific outcome relating to the function of corporate parenting is:

Councils and their community planning partners will fully understand and accept their responsibilities as corporate parents and governance arrangements will be in place to make sure that work within councils and their partner organisations is child-centred and focused on achieving the overarching outcome.

Our ultimate aim is that there is no discernible difference between the outcomes of children and young people who have been Looked After and their peers who have not. The aim of this guidance is to support councils and their community planning partners in closing the gap which has existed for decades between people who have experienced the care system and people who have not. We must improve educational achievement and attainment, achieving sustained positive post-school destinations, reduce Looked After children and young people and care leavers' involvement in the criminal justice system, their levels of homelessness, and help them to live full and healthy lives.

Public services will be measured against national indicators, in the context of the National Performance Framework, and are developing local indicators which provide evidence of how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Inspectors and regulators are increasingly incorporating an evaluation of corporate parenting. Self-evaluation will increasingly be the starting point against which external scrutiny mechanisms will monitor progress. This guidance includes a specific chapter on how this might look in relation to corporate parenting. Children's services are subject to a range of inspection and regulation, and all of these take a particular interest in Looked After children and young people.

Information-sharing, and managing confidential information, is central to delivering effective, joined-up services. However, it can be a source of concern for those working with Looked After children and young people. The guiding principles should be that sensitive information is shared in a professional manner and only to the extent needed for an individual to carry out their role effectively. This will usually mean that managers will have a good knowledge of the relevant factors in a child or young person's background and current circumstances. This information will be shared through the care planning process, wherever possible with the consent of the child or young person, and their parent or carer. The information then passed on to frontline staff such as teachers, early years workers or health visitors may be limited, for example highlighting the need for increased support or vigilance as a result of family upset, change of placement, forthcoming stressful events or uncertainty in the child's life. All staff must know who they can speak to for clarification or support.

In this guidance, we look at roles, duties, responsibilities and opportunities across the spectrum of services delivered through community planning partnerships, as well as the wider community. We have included examples of individuals who have had a positive experience of the corporate family; their stories will bring that concept to life.



02 / WHAT DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
NEED FROM THEIR CORPORATE FAMILY?

02

Children and young people need the same from their corporate family as they need from their birth family – security, safety, positive regard, support and boundaries.

How those things are provided will be different when a child or young person is Looked After, but it is important that we do all that we can to make their lives as “normal” as possible. The recurring theme which emerges from consultation with children, young people and adults who have been in care in the past, is the difference that one individual can make. Those individuals can come into contact with the young person in a variety of ways – a teacher, a residential care worker, a foster carer, a project worker, a friend’s parent – but what matters is that they care, they take an interest in and believe in the young person and persevere through challenging times.

Each section of this guidance opens with the view of a young person which helps to remind us that each “case” is an individual person for whom we can make a difference. While the focus of this guidance is very much on agencies and professionals working effectively together, and that must involve robust policies, procedures, record-keeping and other activity which may seem bureaucratic but it is essential, children and young people remind us that they are not files – they are real people!

The message is to behave corporately, but think like a parent. In the words of care leavers:

“By listening, talking and including the young person in the decision-making process as regards education plans and extra support, you will help to engage them and make them feel more at ease. Something as simple as offering a word of encouragement or praise can be the best motivator; making the young person feel that there is someone who values them and cares about their welfare can make all the difference.”

“I expect a corporate parent to be someone you can feel comfortable talking to: a person who understands you and is willing to help you with different problems that you may be having. It is important for the heads of care to know the views of young people in care, that way they will be able to make decisions and plan ahead knowing what young people in care want.”

“Communication [is needed] between everyone involved, that’s parents, teachers, guardians, social workers all need to be involved ... so that if any problems arise, everybody knows what they are.”

WHAT
SUPPORT
DO I NEED
IN MY LIFE

i'm UNIQUE, LIKE
NOBODY
ELSE

WHAT
CAN I
EXPECT
FROM YOU

WHO WILL
LISTEN
AND
UNDERSTAND
ME





Politicians bring forward lots of excellent ideas based on their experience and knowledge as constituency MSPs. Practitioners also come up with ideas for good practice which can be harnessed and spread. As far as I am concerned we should be aspiring to be the best in the world.

“Our aim for Looked After children is that they should achieve the same level of outcomes as their peers who are not Looked After. We want them to fulfil their potential. There should be no difference. In the past it’s fair to say there have been targets for Looked After children which were significantly lower than other young people.

“We know what the ingredients are for young people to do well – living in a stable and loving home. That won’t always be a family situation. Some young people may do better in a residential setting. One of the challenges is to have better planning to enable children to get the right placement for them and to reduce the uncertainty and flux.

“Also important is to meet their health and education needs, wherever they are, and to sustain that commitment when other things change. This is the key thing: to put the needs of children first.



Olivia McLeod, Depute Director, Care and Justice, Scottish Government.

At a national level, the state establishes a legal framework and provides resources for services that orchestrate broad welfare aims, such as regulating those who select, vet and train carers. At a local level, professionals... assume responsibility for various aspects of a child's life, such as placement in a family, safety, education and health. At the personal level, parenting responsibilities are allocated to carers who provide the face-to-face aspects of looking after children and therefore the long-term benefits. (Bullock et al, 2006)

"It is important for the heads of care to know the views of young people in care: That way they will be able to make decisions and plan ahead-knowing what young people in care want." (Sam)

Politicians and policy makers in Scottish Government are responsible for setting the legislative framework within which corporate parenting can be as effective as possible. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and associated regulations (see appendix 2) provide that framework. The policies which support this work are described in appendix 1. These policies are all aimed at achieving a culture change in Scotland where we take an outcomes-based approach, with long-term commitment, where we value all of our citizens including the most vulnerable.

In partnership with local government and others through the Concordat [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf], Scottish Government is committed to improving public services to deliver excellence, through early intervention and prevention and multi-agency working. Scottish Government will help to improve outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers through demonstrating that national leadership and doing everything possible to support joint working across public services, and to remove barriers where they exist.

You will want to:

- Make sure that the legislative framework is in place to provide the best possible experience for Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, and is kept up to date.
- Make sure that policy development across Scottish Government activity takes cognisance of the needs of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers.
- Make sure that young people, including Looked After children and young people and care leavers, are consulted and engaged in policy development.
- Make sure that stakeholders are fully engaged in policy development and legislative change.
- Make sure that policy development across government is consistent and joined up.
- Monitor and evaluate the effect of your activity and policies, in consultation with stakeholders.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

You will be an effective member of the corporate family when:

- Scottish legislation and regulations support the corporate family to provide excellent services to Looked After children and young people, and care leavers.
- Scottish Government policy embeds the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and professionals can clearly see where their specific interests fit within the wider policy context.
- When stakeholders are actively engaged in policy development and legislative change.
- When the views of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are reflected in policy development and implementation.

HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY



04 / ELECTED MEMBERS

04



As far as corporate parenting is concerned, I am keen to encourage all councillors that they have a responsibility for the wellbeing of children in the council's care. We as an organisation have a real responsibility for seeing that we are good parents.

"I would like [Orkney's Looked After children] to have the same opportunities as children who have more normal families, the same career and educational chances and health and housing opportunities as their peers.

"[Corporate parenting means] seeing that my colleagues and I have a concern for the welfare of the children for whom we are legally responsible. It means ensuring that we have enough resources to look after these children and we hold our officials to account for the standard of care they give to the children.

"I would stress that our Looked After children should not be disadvantaged at school or in further education. When they need housing they should have the same opportunities as any other young adults and we should continue to help them.



Cllr Roderick McLeod,
Chair of Orkney Islands Council's Social Services and Housing Committee.

As corporate parents, local authorities have a challenging role, and acting like good parents and being aware of the needs of their children and young people must be a key priority.

“Throughcare stepped in and found me supported lodgings where I was able to carry out on my studies. They supported me financially and also supported anything I did. After completing my studies and starting a job they helped me find and set up my own flat, furnishing it and also helped with all the paperwork that this involved. I’m still able to pick up a phone for advice, even though I’m not under their care anymore. For young people who have been in the care system for long periods and may not have any other support, this is important. I know not all local authorities provide this kind of support perhaps other authorities could learn from Throughcare.” (Anonymous)

When a child or young person is taken into local authority care, the council is making a commitment that they will do better with the council as a corporate parent than with his or her birth parent(s).

As elected members you are responsible for making sure that the council meets all of its statutory responsibilities. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places specific duties on councils in relation to Looked After children and young people, and care leavers (see appendix 2). You are accountable to the electorate for the services you provide and for ensuring that the council develops and implements both policies and strategies for improvement.

Your council will deliver services directly to children and young people and care leavers; through residential care, foster care, social work, children’s rights and advocacy, education, leisure, housing. Your council will also deliver services to families whose children are, or may become, Looked After such as social work, housing or community learning. Your council will also commission services from the independent sector (voluntary or private sector). Your corporate parent responsibilities remain, wherever the child is placed.

You also play an important role as community leaders. You will often be the public face of the council, championing innovation, and particular policies; speaking up for those who find it hard to do so themselves and, at times, defending decisions. An ever-present concern for all the activities you are involved in and all the decisions you make should be, *how will this impact on our Looked After children and young people, or care leavers?*

Even if you are not directly involved with children's services, you still have some very important responsibilities as a corporate parent. For example:

- **Schools** – are children and young people in your care receiving the best possible support to help them reach their potential?
- **Housing** – are care leavers housed appropriately and supported to sustain independent living arrangements?
- **Culture and Leisure services** – how are your Looked After children and young people and care leavers able to access a wide range of good quality arts, culture and leisure provision, and given the opportunity to influence the development of such provision in ways which try to meet their aspirations?
- **Planning** – how are decisions made about where children's homes are built?
- **Finance** – are resources for Looked After children and young people and care leavers adequate and being used to achieve the best outcomes?
- **Human resources** – does your council have a scheme to support care leavers into employment?
- **Scrutiny** – are you asking your officers challenging questions which enable you to demonstrate that your council is delivering the best possible services, and making the best use of resources?

THE KEY QUESTION FOR YOU IS “IS THIS GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY CHILD?”

You will want to:

- Know how many children and young people are Looked After by your council, why they are Looked After, that they are safe at all times and how well they are doing.
- Make sure that your schools are inclusive, aspirational for all children and young people including those who are Looked After, and have in place strategies to ensure that Looked After children and young people are not disproportionately represented in poor attendance, exclusions, bullying and underachievement.
- Actively promote and support high standards of care for children and young people, and care leavers, taking account of their cultural needs.
- Actively seek high quality outcomes for your Looked After children and young people and care leavers and take responsibility for those outcomes.
- Remove barriers, where possible, which prevent your Looked After children and young people and care leavers achieving the desired outcomes.
- Challenge professionals to work in new ways which always promote inclusion.
- Make sure that the physical, mental and emotional well-being of your Looked After children and young people and care leavers are being addressed at the earliest opportunity.

- Make sure that your Looked After children and young people are given the same opportunities that any good parents would provide for their child and that you have the same expectations and aspirations as you would for your own children.
- Champion the needs of, and be aspirational for, your Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Know who your care leavers are and make sure that there is support available to them.
- Be certain that the services your council provides or commissions for your Looked After children and young people and care leavers are meeting their needs to the highest possible standard, including when the child is placed outwith your own services or geographical area.
- Make sure that you have effective scrutiny mechanisms in place to hold officers to account for local outcomes.
- Consider making a reference to improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers in your Single Outcome Agreement, or at least make sure that their needs are recognised in your broader local outcomes and indicators and performance management system.
- Work with local health board members and other key partners to make sure that services are scrutinised across the community planning partnerships and this includes monitoring, integrated working, setting shared goals and values and continuous improvement.
- Make sure that all services in your authority are able to protect, support and encourage Looked After children and young people and care leavers, individually and collectively.
- Promote a positive view of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and help to raise public awareness about the care system.
- Recognise and show pride in children or young person's achievements, build their confidence and defend them against unfair criticism.
- Make sure that the views of children and young people and care leavers are heard and listened to, and when decisions are being made that their views are being taken into account.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When your Looked After children or young people or care leavers attend school regularly, passes exams, find and sustain jobs or a places at college or university on leaving school, find somewhere suitable to live and manage to sustain it.
- When families have been supported to enable them to look after their own children, where appropriate, and are able to enhance their parenting role.
- When your staff have job satisfaction, feel confident and competent in what they do, and your carers feel supported and valued.
- When your internal scrutiny and self-evaluation processes demonstrate that outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers are improving, when your external inspection reports highlight good practice in your authority.
- When there is no discernible difference between the educational, health, employment and other life outcomes of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, and those of their peers.

REMEMBER I EXIST



05 / CHIEF EXECUTIVES

05



Ultimately, as the council's head of paid service, I'm responsible for all that the council does and it's hard to imagine anything more important than the life circumstances of those children for whom we have had to step into their parents' shoes. I have to satisfy myself that we are doing everything we possibly can do to secure much better outcomes for them than historically, they may have experienced.

"I need to know the reasons for us looking after [East Ayrshire's Looked After children]. It's not just about catering for the here and now, it's preventing the circumstances in future which require them to be Looked After. I need to know where they are and know that we are positively intervening in their lives and that we are inspirational for them, providing any kind of support they need in order to be all they can be.

"We want the best possible outcomes for children we look after. Sadly when you look at the life circumstances of these children, over time you find significant disadvantage both educationally and socially. There's a much greater likelihood of them getting into trouble and not reaching their potential.

"For many, coming into the care system can also signal an escalation of difficulty which they carry into adulthood. So what we need to do is secure better outcomes for them so they are able to enjoy childhood and adolescence and able to reach their potential and make a positive contribution to the community. In short, you want for these children, what you want for your own.

"When you become a parent yourself you realise how much you want to do for your own child, and how you need to radically raise your voice for children who don't have their parents there for them.



Fiona Lees, Chief Executive, East Ayrshire Council.

It is essential that the individuals and agencies who form the corporate parent for Scotland's Looked After children and young people are more aware of and alert to their children's needs and work together to deliver for them.

"It is important for the heads of care to know the views of young people in care. That way they will be able to make decisions and plan ahead-knowing what young people in care want." (Sam)

Chief executives are uniquely placed as responsible officers for the organisation as a whole, as well as for its relationships with other key partners. As chief executive, you have the authority and overall responsibility to make a real difference in the lives of Looked After children and young people and care leavers. You must make sure that their interests are taken into account when major decisions are being made both within your own organisation and within your community planning partnership.

From a community planning perspective, real and effective joined-up working and the strength of shared resources make a significant impact on the lives of our Looked After children. From a chief executive's perspective, the interests of children and young people should therefore be placed firmly within this wider corporate family of community planning partners.

Being a corporate parent in the local authority context equates in many ways to being a birth parent. You have the overall responsibility for ensuring that Looked After children and young people and care leavers grow up to be successful, confident and responsible citizens. You are also well positioned to shape the health, leisure and other services your Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, receive.

Chief executives should therefore focus on what you can do to provide your Looked After children and young people and care leavers with an environment in which they can achieve their aspirations, beyond just what you must do to fulfill your statutory obligations.

You will want to:

- Know how many children and young people are Looked After by your authority, the reasons for them becoming Looked After and how well they are doing.
- Know that you are addressing the needs of your Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Know that all of your staff are being aspirational for your Looked After children and young people and care leavers and doing all they can to ensure better outcomes for them.
- Make certain that arrangements are in place to track and report on the progress your Looked After children and young people and care leavers are making.
- Make sure that your Council's budgetary processes make the right resource provision for meeting corporate parenting needs and aspirations.

- Assure yourself that your staff are procuring, providing and expecting the best services for your Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Assure yourself that your recruitment and selection procedures are robust, that you have robust procedures in place for monitoring and managing the performance of staff, and that your staff have access to training and development opportunities to make sure that the best possible people are providing the best possible services to Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Assure yourself that you and your relevant staff adhere to the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice, and that other staff are adhering to their own professional codes of conduct and fulfilling their CPD requirements.
- Make sure that effective arrangements for governance and scrutiny are in place so that your elected members can be assured that the council is doing all that it can for its Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Make sure that your single outcome agreement takes full account of the needs of your Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Personally champion the needs of your Looked After children and young people and care leavers, promoting excellence and encouraging services to share learning with other councils.
- Know that your Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, are able to have their say in all that you do, and that what they are listened to and their views are acted on wherever possible.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When your internal scrutiny and self-evaluation processes demonstrate that outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers are improving, when your external inspection reports highlight good practice in your authority.
- When there is no difference between the educational, health, employment and other life outcomes of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, and those of their peers.
- When your Looked After children and young people attend school regularly, pass exams, find jobs or places at college or university on leaving school, find somewhere suitable to live and manage to sustain it.
- When your staff have job satisfaction, feel confident and competent in what they do, and your carers feel supported and valued.





I have personal knowledge of how you can feel isolated, unloved, rejected and misunderstood, because you blame yourself. If you are a child you don't understand why next-door neighbours' children are living with mum and dad.

"If you've been in a care home then you can understand how your schooling is disrupted and access to medical facilities may not be routine. Children take visiting friends' homes for granted. If a Looked After child wants to play at a friend's house it's more complicated.

"Traditional provision for Looked After children was a Cinderella service. But that's all changing. At the risk of sounding like a cliché, it's a matter of joined-up working now.

"In West Lothian we have an excellent children's information sharing system called C Me. It aims to improve the way professionals work together and share information, to ensure that all children and young people get the right help from the right people at the right time.

"Just because our Looked After children have faced some very difficult family circumstances, doesn't mean that we should not have the same ambitions for them as we do for our own children.

"I want our members, who are councillors across Scotland who can make a difference, to be asking the right questions in their councils to make sure the services we provide really do fulfil our role as a corporate parent.



Cllr Isabel Hutton, West Lothian Council and COSLA Spokesperson.

It is essential that the individuals and agencies who form the corporate parent for Scotland's Looked After children and young people are more aware of and alert to their children's needs and work together to deliver for them.

"Everyone is responsible for me ... provide me with the information that I ask for and listen to me a bit more. But my experience in care has allowed me to meet a lot of people who do care." (Nicole)

Councils cannot work in isolation to improve outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers; the corporate parenting responsibility must be shared across the whole community planning partnership as the wider corporate family. The corporate family comprises those agencies and individuals who have a responsibility to provide services to Looked After children and young people and care leavers. Health services, independent providers, the police, the children's hearings and criminal justice systems, and further and higher education providers all play an essential part.

Community planning partnerships will be the vehicle through which the corporate family ethos is promoted and nurtured. In this context, the best interests of Looked After children and young people and care leavers should be an ever-present priority. Improving well-being, learning, inclusion, safety and opportunities within communities are high level priorities and this is especially true for Looked After children and young people, and care leavers.

As members of the wider corporate family ***you will want to:***

- Make sure that the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are articulated within the Community Plan, associated Action Plans, Integrated Children's Services Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.
- Make sure that your independent sector partners are actively engaged in the community planning partnership.
- Be confident that there is a joint focus of activity, ensuring that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible, and included.
- Be aspirational for Looked After children and young people and care leavers, holding the same expectations good parents would have for their own children.
- Make sure that all employees within your organisations are aware of their responsibilities in respect of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Deliver integrated high quality services that meet the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Make sure that the widest range of choices and opportunities are available to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, particularly at transitional stages.

- Make sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are able to play a positive part in the life of their community.
- Make sure that in all that you do, Looked After children and young people and care leavers are actively involved in decisions that affect them.
- Make sure a robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of activity to support Looked After children and young people and care leavers, thereby enabling you to report on and account for your progress.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers are integrated into their community, whether at school or with their friends; when they participate in the local youth activities and when they feel comfortable with their own history.
- When your Looked After children and young people and care leavers achieve the same or similar goals and achievements as other children and young people.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers fulfil their potential, no longer feel stigmatised and excluded from services and communities.
- When all children and young people access the local services when they need them, and their experience is of the highest quality.
- When staff in different organisations know who to talk to, feel comfortable working together and sharing information and are jointly accountable for their work.
- When joint inspections demonstrate excellent collaborative integrated working.
- When there is no difference between the educational, health, employment and other life outcomes of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, and those of their peers.

DON'T GIVE UP ON ME



07 / SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

07



We have tried to get some understanding of the accommodation needs of Looked After children, and also their need for throughcare and aftercare.

“When a Looked After child reaches 16, he or she has an entitlement to ongoing support services. Essentially these aim to help them make the transition from a child in care to an independent young adult. There’s a transition phase called throughcare and aftercare which is designed to develop life skills to enable you to become independent. And when they finally leave care we offer an ongoing support role. That’s part of the support service for Looked After children.

“We have a very active group of Looked After children who come together with a representative voice [Having Your Say]. They’ve become a very effective group for giving us their views on what it’s like to be in care – for example the impact on their education.

“[West Lothian Council] bought PCs for all the kids in our residential units and in foster care. We also developed with our partners WL Netguard which is effectively an internet control. Clever software decides whether they are going to a safe site or not.

“West Lothian has also been developing the C-Me system which will enable information about children to be shared between the right people at the right time. It allows practitioners in health, education and social policy to share information about children in a safe and secure way. All the information was held somewhere within the agencies, but no-one had the whole picture. Now we can bring information from social work, health and education and put it together to give an integrated view of the child and his or her circumstances.



Grahame Blair, Head of Social Policy, West Lothian Council.

All Looked After children and young people should be provided with the same types of opportunities as other children and young people, so that they may grow into valued, effective lifelong learners and successful and responsible adults.

“My experience of care has meant that I have had support and stability. I feel that the love that my foster family have given me is the most important thing. I would not class them as my foster family, they have become my family. This has given me confidence and made me positive person.” (Guy)

Social workers, residential and other care staff, staff providing support to fostering and kinship carers, throughcare and aftercare workers, managers and other support staff form vital relationships with children and their parents. It is through these relationships that social work services staff contribute to the challenging and complex task of the day to day corporate parenting of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

Foster carers and residential carers provide corporate parenting on a daily basis, while the social worker is the glue which holds the child’s plan together. It is likely that the child or young person’s social worker will be their lead professional under *Getting It Right For Every Child*, and he or she will be central in making sure that everyone involved with the young person is focused on the young person’s needs and contributing effectively to planning and delivering services.

Moving into independence too soon can have serious and damaging consequences for young people and can contribute to an unsettled future lifestyle with significant financial and social costs for those involved and for society as a whole. Preparation for the time a child or young person ceases to be Looked After, at whatever age or stage, is therefore crucial, and is the duty of all corporate parents; the positive impact of careful planning and preparation cannot be overestimated.

You will want to:

- Have the same aspirations, hopes and expectations which all good parents have for their own children.
- Be the professional who holds together the life story of the child or young person and makes sure that life events which are important do not get lost but are recognised and stored.
- Be confident that the child or young person is safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible, and included.
- Make sure that wherever the child or young person lives they feel they belong, are secure and that they can grow in confidence as their developing needs continue to be met.
- Make sure that a child or young person is only moved if it is in her/his best interests and the transition is carefully planned, managed and explained to the child or young person.
- Make sure the child or young person is truly involved in decisions which affect them and that they get the support and opportunity to state their views which are listened to and taken seriously.
- Expect the best from all services so they can help the child or young person to reach their full potential and that there is someone who advocates for them in the same as good parents do.
- Make sure that all the child or young person’s achievements are recognised and the ones most important to the young person are remembered and recorded.

- Make sure that the child or young person's care plan takes full account of their educational needs and identifies how adults with different roles can help their achievement in school.
- Encourage and support the young person to consider post-16 education, training or employment.
- Make sure the child or young person has the opportunity to have new experiences, for example, staying overnight with a friend or going on a school journey and to try out new skills such as sport, music, drama, arts and culture.
- Make sure that the child or young person is part of their local community and can use local universal services without discrimination. Where there are institutional barriers you will be confident in approaching the relevant agencies to tackle these.
- Understand the strengths and difficulties of the child or young person's family relationships and recognise family members who are important to them and support professionals in recognising and helping these relationships to be positive.
- Encourage the child or young person to make and keep friends.
- Encourage young people to continue to be Looked After until they are 18, if that is in their best interests. They should be ready to live independently and should not move into independence as a reaction to placement breakdown.
- Recognise that taking risks is part of growing up and to support carers of the child or young person to let them take reasonable risks at age appropriate stages.
- Help the child or young person negotiate each life transition and that a child or young person Looked After away from home does not miss out on what might be taken for granted by good parents, for example remembering the age they started to walk; joined local youth groups, took part in religious festivals or family events when relatives gather and family history is updated and exchanged.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When every child or young person in your authority has a care plan or pathways plan that meets their needs and helps them to fulfil their potential.
- When young people are able to be Looked After until they are ready for independence and are well supported into independent living.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers no longer feel stigmatised and excluded from services and communities.
- When your staff and carers feel they are competent and confident, valued and aspirational.
- When self-evaluation and inspection reports demonstrate that your service has delivered excellence to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and when you can confidently report to elected members or the public on the outcomes of your Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- When there is no difference between the educational, health, employment and other life outcomes of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and those of their peers.

INDIVIDUALS CAN AND
DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



08 / EDUCATION SERVICES

08



All pupils are part of a monitoring system and this proves invaluable when supporting pupils who are fostered or Looked After and accommodated. There are regular reviews with guardians, pupil support staff, depute heads, Joint Action Team and with the Reporter of the children's panel to make sure the pupils are in the best place. There is regular contact with social work. Classroom teachers are kept informed of relevant information which would help support the pupil. These pupils' needs vary depending on their individual circumstances.

"The child in care can go through quite a traumatic time. There can be all sorts of feelings of rejection, which can lead to disruptive behaviour in school. However, for a lot of these kids, school is the one stable thing in their lives. They know where they are and what they are doing. They often feel safe in school because things stay constant and they know how we will react.

"It's a matter of trying to find out these children's strengths and resiliencies. We can offer extra support and training, but they don't always buy into it. We find it motivational if you offer canoeing, orienteering and mountain biking to pupils who are experiencing a variety of problems. When they enjoy success in these activities it can have a knock-on effect elsewhere in the curriculum.

"We make use of our Spectrum unit within the school to help meet the individual needs of the pupil. These pupils can have experienced an interrupted education for many reasons and not feel confident in a full class. A more individualised programme often helps the pupil see success and progress. There are close links with Looked After Children teachers and key workers to ensure that all support is co-ordinated.

"The reward is to see these pupils move on and feel we have helped. Some go back home and rebuild their family relationships. Our pupil and family support staff work closely with myself, the young people and their families to try to support them. Others find foster families and settle well into family life. It is nice to see some of the older pupils move on into further education or training and take control of their lives.



Beverly Paterson, Principal Teacher of Pupil Support, Dumbarton Academy.

All of our Looked After children and young people should have the required support needed to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

“I have learning difficulties and the communication between my foster parents, school and social worker, helped me to stay on at mainstream school and leave school with seven standard grades. I am now at college doing computing. I have always had encouragement and extra support when I needed it. That makes the biggest difference: I know I am cared for.” (Guy)

Education is fundamental to all other life outcomes. A positive experience of education and the development of relevant skills directly influence future employability, earning power, engagement in society, even health outcomes and the life of future generations. Education services include residential special schools and other educational provision as well as mainstream schooling.

All staff in education have an important role as corporate parents and unique opportunities to support and guide Looked After children and young people and care leavers through their everyday interactions. Teachers are cited by young people as the most influential or constant person in their lives.

To carry out this important role successfully, education staff must work effectively in partnership with other agencies, involving children and their families, to provide appropriate, timely responses. Information-sharing and communication are central to achieving better outcomes for all children and young people.

All schools, including residential schools and nurseries, should appoint a designated senior manager with specific responsibility for Looked After children and young people. The designated senior manager has a key role in guiding and supporting school staff and linking with the wider multi-agency network.

You will want to:

- Know who your Looked After children and young people are and to work closely with carers, including foster, kinship and residential carers; and/or birth family to meet the children or young people’s needs.
- Make sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers have the same opportunities as their peers who are not Looked After to benefit from high quality education through *Curriculum for Excellence*, including progression to further and higher education.

- Work in a child-centred way, promote attendance, make additional arrangements where necessary in order to support learning; overcome disadvantage; and encourage participation in the broadest sense.
- Promote well-being in Looked After children and young people, encouraging positive behaviour and assisting them to achieve their full potential from the broadest range of learning opportunities available, through *Curriculum for Excellence*, including opportunities to build skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, and other activities such as the arts or sport.
- Make sure that each child or young person's particular needs are met, in a way which does not single them out from other children but promotes aspiration and engagement.
- Make sure your strategy for parental involvement includes corporate parents and carers.
- Strive to build positive relationships among individual children and young people, be open and approachable and encourage all children and young people to speak to you about their concerns.
- Have high expectations of Looked After children and young people and care leavers and give them encouragement and support.
- Be confident you can identify any indicators of concern and be able to co-ordinate the support needed by children and young people, working in partnership with other services and involving other support mechanisms where needed and ensuring that those children and young people who fulfil the statutory requirements have a co-ordinated support plan.
- Use the unique opportunities within an educational setting to help Looked After children and young people and care leavers develop positive relationships with adults, feel safe and encouraged to achieve.
- Ensure that council-wide policies and school policies such as anti-bullying policies take account of the particular needs of Looked After children and young people.
- Consider any decisions to exclude Looked After children or young people very carefully, including the impact which any exclusion from school may have on their engagement with education, their care placement and consequently life chances.
- Make sure that Looked After children or young people who require additional help for problems with behaviour or delays in educational progress can readily access targeted support, either within the school or via specialist resources within the local authority and partner agencies.

- Maintain stability in schooling, whenever appropriate to the interests of the child or young person, even where a placement has to change and the child has to move to a different locality.
- Measure your effectiveness in supporting and developing children and young people who are Looked After through effective tracking and monitoring attainment, achievement and engagement.
- Ensure that the progress of children and young people in residential special schools is reviewed regularly with a view to them returning to mainstream schools when appropriate.
- Collaborate with other education staff in the extended school team, like the educational psychologist, to gain a holistic understanding of the child or young person's circumstances which informs action.
- Be able to represent the views of the child or young person, or to advocate on their behalf in appropriate forums, where necessary employing the skills of people who can use alternative forms of communication such as British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton.
- Take opportunities to review your practice and engage with other professionals and development opportunities to learn from and share good practice, including the *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* Training Materials.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When pre-five centres, schools or other educational establishments are places where Looked After children and young people and care leavers people feel happy, safe and valued, through teaching and learning approaches which are sensitive to their needs.
- When young people who are, or have been, Looked After make the transition from school into sustained placements in further or higher education, employment or training.
- When you can give a positive answer to the question “Would this be good enough for my child?”.
- When there is no difference in the rate of attendance or exclusion of Looked After children and young people as compared to their peers who are not Looked After.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers are just as likely as their peers to participate in out of school activities and wider school community activities such as sporting competitions.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers receive the additional support they require to participate in mainstream education, regardless of whether they are placed out of authority.
- When the educational outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers, in terms of attainment and achievement, are the same as those for their peers who are not Looked After.

DON'T TREAT ME UNFAIRLY
JUST BECAUSE



09 / HEALTH SERVICES

09

“

I would like [Looked After children] to have the same healthy outcomes as children who are not Looked After. I want to get rid of the health inequalities.

“That’s a tall order and probably not achievable. In a broader context, I would like to see all outcomes for Looked After children on a par with those who are not Looked After – educationally and in terms of jobs. Unfortunately Looked After children are much more likely get pregnant earlier and their life opportunities are substantially reduced. I would like to see that changed and I do my best from the health point of view.

“I think of my role as a parent to my three children and the love, care, attention and security you give. If you are a Looked After child those things may be absent. As corporate parents we must look at what we can do to provide that love, care and security. If you are a growing child part of your development is to learn to form attachments with people.

“However, some children may not get the chance to and their disaffection is said to be one of the causes of the problems we have in society. We have to do whatever we can for children who have missed the boat in this way.

“Some of the experiences you have working particularly with foster parents are remarkable. Foster carers are doing a great job, working all the time with kids in their care for little more than expenses. They are genuinely doing it out of the kindness of their hearts. To help them is humbling and rewarding.

“A lot of the kids are genuine characters and fun to work with. Their behaviour is challenging, but also entertaining. Then there are the kids we don’t manage to deal with for whatever reason. You think if you had done more you might have made a difference. Potentially the circle repeats itself. [A care leaver’s] baby might be at risk of a sub-standard parent because the mother doesn’t have the wherewithal. It’s possibly another generation of the same problem.

”

Dr Andrew Eccleston, Consultant Paediatrician, Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary.

Scotland's Looked After children and young people will benefit from access to a range of appropriate services designed to meet their emotional, mental and physical health needs. Professionals, foster carers, residential workers, teaching staff and parents will be trained to understand the importance and value of meeting these needs. All of our Looked After children and young people should grow to be emotionally, mentally and physically healthy.

"I had to get my social worker to request my mother's death certificate as I did not know what she had died of ... and the doctors were asking ... in case it was anything genetic." (Hayley)

The health and well-being of Scotland's children and young people is essential to the future health and well-being of our nation. Looked After children and young people and care leavers have historically experienced poorer health than their peers (eg dental health, early pregnancy), and are less likely to engage with health services partly as a consequence of disruptive early family lives and sometimes due to being moved frequently when in care.

Looked After children and young people and care leavers are more likely to need specialist health services than their peers, whether Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, help with addictions or sexual health advice. For example, *The Action Framework for Children and Young People* (Scottish Executive, 2007) [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/165782/0045104.pdf] indicates that 40% of children in care will have mental or emotional health problems. This is considerably higher than their peers who are not Looked After. However, they are also less likely to engage with universal health services such as GPs, dentists and opticians. Addressing the needs of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, depends on effective assessment and planning. *Better Health, Better Care* (Scottish Government, 2007) includes a commitment to addressing the health needs of Looked After children and young people [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/206458/0054871.pdf].

For the NHS across Scotland to play its part in the corporate family, health services must be able to identify the population of Looked After children and young people accurately and councils must help them to do this. The NHS provides services to assess individual need and provides access to therapeutic services resourced to meet those needs. Transitions are crucial to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and health services must support children and young people as they move through the Looked After system and into adult life, acknowledging and addressing the effects of their earlier lives in relation to all aspects of their health and ability to engage with services. Health professionals will also support parents, carers and professionals working with Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

NHS provision is generally provided free at the point of contact with the service. For children and young people, the NHS must provide services across the spectrum of health; to promote health, to protect health, to assess and identify health-related risks and to treat health problems. For Looked After children and young people and care leavers, these services must be provided both on an individual level and a population level to focus on the particular health needs of this cohort.

The number of children and young people with complex health needs who become Looked After is increasing, and they are likely to need a range of specialist or secondary health services. The most significant need is likely to be in relation to mental health services such as consultant paediatricians who will diagnose and treat any tertiary mental illness, therapeutic nurses, art, play or occupational therapists, psychotherapists, child psychologists.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services also provide support and mentoring to parents, family members, carers and other professionals working with Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

Increasingly, there are schools-based services which encourage young people to engage with health services. Where children are not within mainstream education provision, access should be co-ordinated by educational establishments as recommended in *Health for All Children 4* (Scottish Executive, 2005), known as Hall 4 [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37432/0011167.pdf] to make sure that children receive health promotion advice and child health checks and other health improvement activity. Provision in schools should provide support to individual children and young people as well as wider health promotion advice to support healthy lifestyles.

You will want to:

- Be able to identify all Looked After children and young people and care leavers in your area.
- Make sure that local authorities placing Looked After children and young people give the health board where they will be living written notice of the placement and any relevant information. Health professionals should be informed as early as possible about a placement and you should make sure that it is clear who should be informed and how.
- Consider ensuring that health professionals are involved in the decision-making process regarding care placements.
- Work with your local authorities to meet the requirements of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which states that a local authority shall, where possible before the child is placed:
 - (a) make sure that arrangements are made for the child to be examined by a registered medical practitioner (*where the placement or series of placements is likely to last for a year or more*); and
 - (b) obtain from the medical practitioner who has carried out the examination a written assessment of the state of health of the child and her/his need for health care unless the child has already had such an examination with the 3 months prior to becoming Looked After.
- Work with the placing authority to make sure that arrangements are made for Looked After children and young people to be provided with health care services, including medical and dental care and treatment.
- Provide clinically effective services to assess need at individual level including accessing records detailing information relating to the child or young person's medical history.

- Make sure that whilst in the health board area the child or young person (either as an individual or through carers) is able to access primary medical care and specialist health services, as well as public health population-focused services identified and provided according to need.
- Make sure that young people in transition to adult services are provided with support to access primary and secondary care services as required to support their ongoing health and well-being.
- Make sure that your Looked After Children's Nurses, School Nurses and community paediatricians have the capacity to:
 - receive referrals,
 - identify health records and request them from the NHS Board in whose care they are held,
 - provide a comprehensive health assessment,
 - make sure that the child or young person is engaged with primary care, specialist care and secondary care as required,
 - facilitate information transfer as the child or young person moves to another health board area, including addressing the resource implications.
- Make sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are registered with their local primary health care services, including GP services, dentists and opticians. The vulnerability of children and young people who become Looked After means that they may not have accessed routine services previously and they may have significant levels of undetected need which must be identified and addressed if they are to lead normal healthy lives.
- Encourage GPs to make sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are able to access medical care as necessary and to participate in public health programmes through universal screening and surveillance, and the routine vaccination programme.
- Encourage dentists to offer dental care and oral health advice as necessary, and opticians to offer eye checks and provide spectacles or other interventions as required.
- Engage with young people as they move out of the Looked After system and into independence, to make sure they are engaged with health services to meet their changing needs. As well as primary care services, it is likely that they will need to access sexual health services and may need to be actively directed towards these services as part of their throughcare and aftercare needs assessment (Pathways Plan).
- At NHS board level, actively seek to promote the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers within service design and improving patient care.
- Support board members to champion the needs of Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, in their local area and challenge community planning partners to share their commitment. NHS Boards may wish to nominate a Director who is the lead for Looked After children and young people and care leavers in their area.

- At chief executive and senior management level, promote a culture of aspiration and genuine inclusion in which your staff actively seek to tackle disadvantage and reach those children and young people who are least likely to engage with their services.
- Develop a charter approach in which the rights of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are explicitly described, consulting with young people and their carers to make sure that services are designed to meet their needs.
- Review the services within your local area and consider whether there are sufficient resources, for example in relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or school nurses, and use the data to monitor changing demands on services and whether your aims in relation specifically to Looked After children and young people and care leavers are being met.
- At practitioner level, consider whether services are accessible to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and their carers or parents, and whether you are proactively engaging with this group.
- Challenge traditional stereotypes and guard against making assumptions about children and young people who are, or have been, Looked After and make sure that your approach to patient care is as inclusive as possible.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- In the longer term, when health outcomes for people who have been Looked After have improved until there is no difference between the health outcomes of those who have experienced the Looked After system and those who have not.
- In the shorter term, when you can say that you understand your contribution to the corporate family and your service has systems in place to enable you to know who your Looked After children and young people and care leavers are, what their needs are and how you are meeting those needs.
- Your service is accessible and inclusive, and this is reflected in inspection reports and feedback from other professionals as well as service users.
- An increased number of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are using universal health services and they achieve the same rate of vaccinations or routine health checks as their peers who are not Looked After.
- Children and young people in residential care, foster care and secure accommodation have the same access to GPs, dentists, opticians and other universal health services as children and young people living at home with their birth families.
- Young people leaving care have their health needs included in their pathways plan and are supported in making the transition into adult services.
- Children and young people who require specialist health services such as CAMHS or sexual health advice are able to access those services when they need them.

**I NEED TO BE ABLE TO COME BACK
FOR HELP**



10 / HOUSING SERVICES

10



Our Throughcare and Aftercare team has developed a specific Care Leavers' Flat Scheme which is a partnership arrangement with supported accommodation providers within Edinburgh. The partner agencies are Rock Trust, Horizons and Barnardo's 16+, all of whom specifically provide within their tenancy provision supported accommodation flats for formerly Looked After young people. Young people can stay in these flats for up to two years, during which time they will be assisted to move to permanent accommodation with or without ongoing housing support, if required.

"A particular example of this in practice was a worker's involvement in supporting a young man make the transition from being Looked After and accommodated within a young people's centre to a care leaver's tenancy. The procedure required the worker to submit a referral on behalf of the young person, outlining their background and accommodation needs using the seven Pathway headings, and supporting the young person complete an application for their views. The scheme was instrumental in supporting the young person make a positive move towards independence and prevent the possibility of having to be accommodated through the council's homeless route.



Helen Heatlie, Throughcare and Aftercare Team Manager, City of Edinburgh Council.

Scotland's Looked After children and young people will live somewhere they feel safe and nurtured; a place they can call home, a place free from abuse and harm, a place where they feel supported and confident in expressing their views to develop into well-rounded, successful and responsible adults.

"You come out of care and they [housing officers/landlords] automatically think, oh we have got a hooligan ... we've got someone who is going to smash up the flat. They don't listen ... I think they think ... what is the point just give her somewhere to stay ... anywhere." (Hayley)

Where we live is important to every other aspect of our lives. Housing services in councils, whether directly provided or in partnership with housing associations, are an integral member of the corporate family. Where a child or young person is Looked After at home, the family may be living in a council house, or other social housing. The family's accommodation will form part of the any needs assessment for the child or young person, and the housing provider will have an additional responsibility in relation to them.

The transition into independent living is a key milestone and a life-changing event for any young person. For young people leaving care, it is probably the most significant transition and securing accommodation that meets their needs will impact significantly on how successful it is. Looked After young people experience stigma throughout their lives and one way to reduce such stigmatisation is to ensure that relevant partners effectively plan a young person's transition from care to avoid unnecessary homelessness.

Moving into independence is about more than simply finding a roof. Corporate parents will want to satisfy themselves that young people leaving care have the necessary life skills and confidence to cope with independent living and the supports they need to sustain the move must be in place. Some young people will need more support than others and a range of services may need to be available. A permanent, single person's tenancy may not be the best option for a young care leaver.

Care leavers are particularly vulnerable to homelessness and prevention of homelessness amongst care leavers should be recognised in local strategies and plans.

Addressing anti-social behaviour is a sensitive issue for councils, particularly housing services. Children can be disadvantaged by the anti-social behaviour of their families, and indeed some children become Looked After as a result of anti-social behaviour, or behave anti-socially whilst Looked After. It is important that staff within the authority involved in addressing anti-social behaviour understand their special responsibilities as corporate parents to Looked After children and young people, for example when considering pursuing an anti-social behaviour order.

It is also important to remember that there is a small but significant number of Looked After children and young people and care leavers who present a risk of serious harm to themselves or others. Their care is particularly challenging to manage and can present significant issues for the corporate parent, for example when identifying suitable accommodation. Particularly in these circumstances, multi-agency risk assessment and management is essential.

You will want to:

- Make sure that children's needs are at the centre of decisions made around housing and any housing support offered to families.
- Make sure you work closely with housing associations and registered social landlords to raise their awareness of corporate parenting and our responsibilities to Looked After young people and care leavers.
- Make sure that staff working in housing services understand their additional responsibilities to Looked After children and young people, and care leavers.
- Make sure that staff working in allocations, arrears recovery and estate management receive appropriate training to better understand the particular needs of care leavers.
- Make sure that you work closely with colleagues in throughcare and aftercare services to develop realistic and sustainable pathways plans.
- Make sure that your housing allocation policy is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of care leavers without resorting to the use of homelessness legislation.
- Always consider the following basic questions:
 - (a) Does the accommodation meet any identified health or disability needs?
 - (b) Is the landlord or provider suitable?
 - (c) Does the accommodation meet the young person's needs in respect of education, training or employment, for example access to public transport?
- Think about all possible options, including starter flats, peer support arrangements and other creative options to offer young care leavers.
- Consider the community within which the young person will be living and the supports it offers, the positive friendships and relationships which need to be maintained.
- With colleagues across the council, support young people who are in full-time further or higher education, for example if they require vacation accommodation or through the provision of financial support to meet rent costs.

- Put in place effective joint working arrangements with clear procedures and effective resolution mechanisms.
- Consider providing supported accommodation, supported lodgings or supported carers schemes, supported flats or communal living opportunities. You may also wish to consider putting in place specialist housing and/or other support services where practical and emotional support is provided by dedicated staff, perhaps in partnership with the independent sector.
- Work with social work at the earliest opportunity to identify young people who are at risk of becoming homeless and arrange suitable accommodation for them, backed up by multi-agency support to help them to sustain the tenancy or other arrangement.
- Make sure that your joint protocols recognise that where a young care leaver becomes involved in anti-social behaviour, all services should take into account their care leaver status and the corporate parenting responsibilities that you have for that individual.
- When addressing a family's anti-social behaviour, be aware of whether there are children or young people living in the family home who are on supervision orders.
- Make sure that support for independent living includes an awareness amongst young people of their responsibilities to the community within which they live, and the potential consequences of their actions.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When young people leaving care are able to access suitable accommodation without recourse to homelessness services.
- When there are a variety of options available to young people moving from care into independent living with appropriate levels of support.
- When you have been actively involved in Pathways plans for all care leavers.
- When care leavers' accommodation supports their ability to sustain further education, training or work.
- When you are able to demonstrate that your care leavers have sustained tenancies and they are making a positive contribution to the communities in which they live.
- When anti-social behaviour strategies and practice recognise the council's corporate parenting responsibilities, including ensuring that young people recognise the possible consequences of their own behaviour.

BE MY PUSHY PARENT



11 / THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR
(voluntary organisations, faith groups,
private care providers)

11

“

I am actively involved with a high number of children in foster care and young people in children's units, as well as some young people in residential schools across Scotland.

“Young people have my phone number in case they want to get in touch with me, as do foster carers, residential and social workers. My role is pure and simply to reflect young people's viewpoints, often in formal decision-making forums.

“I will meet the child beforehand [before attending a Children's Hearing] to find out what they want me to say to the panel. Ideally, you should empower young people to speak for themselves. But if they can't, I'll be their voice.

“If you are able to make someone feel a bit better that's a reward in itself. If, by taking forward an issue, you are able to effect change which makes a positive difference for a young person, that's what it's about. There's real satisfaction for me when young people feel that my involvement has helped to improve their situation.

”

Liz Ray, Who Cares? Scotland, East Ayrshire.

For children and young people who are Looked After, it is our job to ensure that we are creating as many opportunities as it is possible to create; and that we put in place safety nets at every stage of their journey, which can help safeguard each child or young person when they come across barriers to success. It is our job to create a safe environment for Scotland's children and young people and to assist them as they navigate their potentially trickier journey through life.

“In this day and age there is no excuse for young people not to have access to information to the support that they need to go into further education or employment. Support for young people who may have been in the system for a long time and not have the necessary skills required when moving into their own home ... teach them skills that they may otherwise have gained from their parent.” (Anonymous)

Most parents do not bring up children on their own – they rely to a greater or lesser extent on extended family members to support them. In a corporate family, those extended family members include independent sector providers.

All providers must be able to demonstrate that they can deliver the good parenting and support that corporate parents expect for their children and young people. They must respect and work in partnership as part of the extended corporate family. This should be clarified before deciding on a placement for a child.

For some children, emergency placements will be inevitable at some times. These should be kept to a minimum. Ongoing relationships between purchasers and potential providers should make sure that most of the necessary protocols and arrangements are already in place rather than starting afresh with each placement. Establish and maintaining positive relationships is equally important between organisations as it is between individuals.

Contact between the placing authority and the provider should be frequent and purposeful, particularly when the child is placed a long way from home. Both the placing authority and the host have a responsibility to meet the child or young person's need for contact and to work out between them how best to arrange it, with regular reviews.

Communication is equally important in community placements and with families. It is important that the carer fully understands the reasons for the additional support or intervention and is committed to the desired outcomes; they need to be aware of the support they should be providing to make sure that the young person fully engages with the work, and any information-sharing protocols which are being used.

Planning for children and young people must take account of their short and longer term needs. We need to plan and prepare for the end of a placement from the beginning. The transition from care back to the birth family or into independence is crucial, and can be particularly problematic for those placed outwith their home authority. Providers should engage in planning for a smooth transition, making sure supports are in place to enable the young person to return successfully to their community or to establish themselves independently.

Even the shortest intervention can have a big impact on a young person's life, and we should all be mindful of our part in the bigger picture, contributing to any permanence planning, children's hearings reviews or other activity about the child or young person's future.

You will want to:

- Make sure that your services are individualised around the particular needs of the child.
- Demonstrate how you can add value to the corporate family; how your service delivers better outcomes for Looked After children and young people, or care leavers.
- Demonstrate that what you offer is worth the investment, in terms of outcomes for children and young people and preventing the need for higher tariff intervention or services later.
- Build excellent relationships with purchasers, and participate in community planning processes so that you can influence local service design.
- Be ambitious for your service as well as for the children and young people you serve.
- Establish clear protocols around finance and information-sharing, clearly define responsibilities and demonstrate that your business practices are efficient and effective.
- Maintain regular and effective contact with the placing authority.
- Encourage the placing authority to maintain regular and genuine contact with the child.
- Avoid emergency placements where possible, and in any event make sure that contractual/financial arrangements are sorted out in advance of the child being placed.
- Involve children and young people in the design and development of your services.
- Actively seek feedback from your purchasers and engage in genuine dialogue to make sure they understand what you can offer and you develop your services so that they are fit for purpose.
- Actively promote and participate in throughcare and aftercare planning from the earliest possible stage.
- Make sure that your workforce is competent, confident and flexible.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When you have relevant, person-centred and flexible contractual arrangements in place with your purchasers.
- When children and young people with whom you work have better outcomes, whether in terms of education, employability, health or any other aspect of life.
- When the children and young people with whom you work have seamless, successful transitions into independence, back to their communities or universal services or back to their parent(s).
- When young people are unaware of the financial arrangements and procedures underpinning their placements, and the placement is not adversely affected by financial disputes.
- When your purchasing local authorities communicate effectively with you, listen to your views and regard you as an effective community planning partner.
- When the children or young people in your care are in regular contact with their social worker or other lead professional.
- When you listen to the views of children and young people, and to the views of your purchasers, and you are able to show you have responded.
- When you have excellent quality assurance mechanisms in place.

I'M NOT JUST FOR XMAS



12 / THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

12

“

[When I was 14,] I was robbing shops, taking Valium, up all weekend. I walked across the road, then staggered back into the path of a double decker bus. It was doing 30mph. Doctors said I was lucky to live.

“I was getting mad with it all the time. I was taking Valium and smashed my mother’s place up, got the jail and came here. I’m off all that now. Don’t touch it.

“This is a good place man because the staff help you to think clearer. I’d like to get a job, get out of here and get on with my life. You cannae be causing trouble all your life. I’ve matured basically. I’m thinking clearly now. I’ve changed. You learn from your mistakes.

“I haven’t been to [mainstream] school since my first week in second year. I battered a teacher. You can get peace and quiet here, learn to be independent. I’ll be here a few months and then up the road to move on.

”

Graham, student in residential school, 16.

Looked After children can too often become needy, disenfranchised and alienated adults. It is widely accepted that they are more likely to: need mental health services; go to prison; be homeless; and have their own children removed from them. The cost of wasted potential, of long-term support services including the cost of imprisonment, and of another generation of children in public care is almost beyond comprehension.

*"I was getting mad with it all the time. I was taking valium and smashed my mother's place up, got the jail and came here [a residential unit]. I'm off all that now. Don't touch it."
(Graham)*

Research into outcomes tells us that children and young people who are Looked After are more likely to be involved in offending or anti-social behaviour. For a small minority, this may be why they have become Looked After. Young people's life circumstances are likely to be significant contributors to the reasons for their offending behaviour and it is therefore important that police officers are aware of those circumstances when considering how to address the behaviour, especially when a young person has been detained within a police station.

The police are also likely to be involved in prevention and diversionary activity in local communities where they will have an opportunity to promote the inclusion of Looked After children and young people, to build positive relationships and to provide good role models.

The majority of Looked After children and young people are Looked After for care and protection reasons. Child protection is a key priority for the police. Operational officers are alive to signs of abuse and neglect with a crucial role to play in identifying children at risk. Looked After children are also more likely to become young runaways: the police have a clear role in locating them, and helping to find out the reasons why they run away.

The police are also likely to encounter children who are affected by the actions of adults who offend, are involved in anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse, or who engage in substance misuse. Minimising the impact of such actions is a shared priority for all agencies across the corporate family.

Within the wider corporate family, the police will build on the work which has already been achieved to promote a more holistic approach to dealing with children and young people, a better understanding of the implications of referral to the Children's Reporter and building safe, inclusive communities.

Children who are Looked After at home are less likely to be known to the police as Looked After. However, their circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. It is important therefore for relevant and appropriate information to be shared to allow the police to have a full picture of the circumstances affecting the child and their home environment.

When young people do get involved in antisocial behaviour and offending it is reasonable to expect that parents (including corporate parents), families and agencies work together quickly and effectively to address this behaviour and the underlying issues that may be impacting on the way a child or young person behaves.

Children and young people who are involved in offending or who display problematic behaviour are likely to be in greater need of help to change their behaviour. Many children and young people who are Looked After are unlikely to be able to rely on support from their parents to help them to address their behaviour, and indeed their families may be part of the problem. Some children and young people with a poor experience of family life may be attracted to gangs as this can provide replacement attachments; a feeling of belonging and acceptance.

Most young people (between 70% and 80%) caught offending once do not come to the attention of the police again for further offending. This suggests that appropriate and proportionate action taken at an early stage is often the most effective response, and this is addressed in *Preventing Offending By Young People: A Framework for Action* [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/228013/0061713.pdf] and associated guidance.

When children and young people do offend or behave badly, relevant agencies must act promptly and consistently to provide appropriate responses that are timely, proportionate, effective and that inspire community confidence. All agencies should be able to provide early and effective responses, so that children and young people can relate their actions to impact and consequences and learn from the experience.

An early and effective response will support the child or young person to engage with services, including universal services such as education, youth work and healthcare, to address identified needs. Looked After children and young people and care leavers are less likely than their peers to trust universal services, or indeed to have positive previous experience of engaging with them, so additional support may be necessary. Restorative practice encourages young people to think through the consequences of their actions, including the impact they have on their victims and communities, as well as the negative impact on themselves.

You will want to:

- Be aware of the Looked After status of the children and young people you work with.
- Make sure that staff are aware of the issues particularly affecting Looked After children and young people while maintaining a view of each child as an individual with their own strengths and pressures.
- Contribute to the community planning partnership's strategy to address the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Positively promote the inclusion of Looked After children and young people and care leavers in diversionary and other community activities.
- Build positive relationships with local residential care homes for young people, residential special schools and secure accommodation to make sure that children and young people feel confident to engage constructively with the police and that staff do not resort to police intervention inappropriately.

- When addressing the antisocial or offending behaviour of adults, consider the needs of the children who may be affected.
- Consider involvement of senior officers in the local authority's children's champion schemes.
- Where children and young people become involved in offending, consider what the response of a good parent would be and assist in ensuring this response is provided.
- Promote the need for consistency when dealing with children and young people and view each child or young person holistically, not according to the type of incident they may be involved in: the background of the child should be considered where appropriate.
- Be aware of the possibility that Looked After children and young people may regard gangs as replacement families.
- Work with staff in councils, particularly those in residential units, and with foster carers to raise awareness of restorative practice and to engage the corporate family in supporting young people for whom this is the best course of action. Help those caring for children to understand that, in some cases, too much formal intervention too soon is very likely to do more harm than good.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When you are aware of your contribution to the corporate family, and understand the special responsibility you have for Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers participate in diversionary activities in local communities.
- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers are confident in engaging constructively with the police.
- When you have agreed consistent practice in addressing offending or anti-social behaviour with carers, schools and other services.
- When you understand the impact of your actions on the child's journey, and are confident about your role in improving outcomes for children and young people.

FEELING LONELY, NOWHERE TO
GO ON THE WEEKEND



13 / CULTURE, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY LEARNING
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

13

“

I was asked to organise something for Looked After children. They were young people who had become disengaged from formal education. They weren't attending school for various reasons. They came along to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. We found that they were mainly interested in art and we set up various activities.

“A South American artist, a sculptor, took part in the sessions. He didn't know any English. Young people who had pushed things to the limit with other staff seemed to engage with him.

“The pupils invited us to visit their residential units. One came on a placement with us and I ended up writing references for him.

“The sessions developed into something positive. The main thing was to get them to come along. Sometimes we had to phone them to get them out of bed in the morning. Quite a lot of our staff became involved with Looked After children.

“Though it started at Kelvingrove the sessions continued at different venues including the Burrell. It was a real learning curve for all of us.

”

Anne Wallace, Education Officer, Glasgow City Council museums.

In all cases and in all settings the ethos should be one of warmth; physical health, activity and mental and emotional well-being should be promoted and supported.

“Opportunities to do sports or activities with other young people are a good way of having a healthy physical lifestyle. Feeling lonely when I ain’t got somewhere to go on the weekend – having more social events would eradicate this.” (Sam)

What we do outwith education or work makes us into confident individuals and effective contributors to our communities and can help us to learn throughout our lives. Access to play, sport and other leisure activity can be difficult for Looked After children and young people and care leavers for a variety of reasons such as practicalities like transport and cost of clothes or equipment, and less tangible issues like lack of confidence, low self-esteem, feeling excluded, not having experience of participation in earlier life, fear of the unknown.

As corporate parents, councils are privileged to have leisure facilities and cultural facilities at their disposal. What parent would not encourage their own children to use their swimming pools, tennis courts or theatres? Engagement in sport, the arts and other similar activities can provide a foundation for lifelong learning, build friendships, promote active citizenship, promote physical, mental and emotional well-being. Participation in the arts and cultural boosts confidence, fulfilment and contributes to young people leading happier lives.

It is an important function of the corporate family, then, to encourage Looked After children and young people and care leavers to take up hobbies and interests and to make sure that culture and leisure services are accessible to them, including those children with disabilities.

Libraries can be the only source of access to the internet for some Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and may be their principal source of support for homework.

Some councils have already successfully promoted better use of culture and leisure services by providing smart cards, equipment, and transport for Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and their carers. Access to cultural facilities can be encouraged through holding informal meetings in art gallery cafes, for example, or foster care recruitment in museums.

Carers and professionals working with Looked After children and young people may themselves be unaware of the significant benefits to young people of taking part in culture and leisure activities, of what is available locally, or lack confidence in taking children to them. Raising awareness amongst carers is essential to ensuring that young people are supported to take part in cultural and leisure activities, and education officers will have a key role in promoting engagement with their facilities and developing approaches which reach Looked After children and young people and care leavers, and carers, including those with disabilities.

You will want to:

- Ask children and young people about their aspirations and what they would like to have access to, giving them the opportunity to try things out, and attempt to take their preferences into account in developing local culture and leisure provision.
- Think creatively about using facilities such as art galleries or museums to encourage access to cultural services.

- Consider access to sport and leisure and make sure that facilities are as inclusive and supportive as possible to all Looked After children and young people.
- Develop programmes specifically targeted at Looked After children and young people, care leavers and carers.
- Make sure that programmes aimed at children, young people and families actively include corporate families.
- Make sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are supported to make the most of the cultural and leisure opportunities available to them.
- Consider the practical barriers such as cost, equipment and clothing, transport and take action to overcome these barriers.
- Consider other barriers such as fear of the unknown, lack of confidence or lack of awareness amongst children, young people, care leavers and their carers and take action to overcome these barriers.
- Be aware that young people and youth culture may favour different kinds of cultural activity, so identify good practice and take advice from culture professionals and relevant national bodies. You will also want to be aware of your local voluntary and independent arts sector provision, and work with those providers in giving access to good quality opportunities that young people will want to keep accessing.
- Make sure that professionals understand their corporate parenting responsibilities and are actively engaged in promoting services to Looked After children and young people and their carers.
- Make sure that library staff understand the important contribution they can make to Looked After children and young people's homework, and other school work, as well as care leavers' ability to engage with further education.
- Encourage other council services such as social work to use your facilities for meetings and other events, so that professionals and carers develop a better understanding of what is available.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When Looked After children and young people and care leavers participate in sports, the arts or other cultural and leisure activities, you will know you are an effective member of the corporate family.
- When carers actively encourage their children and young people to use your services, and indeed use them themselves, you will know you have made a difference.
- When libraries are inclusive places where Looked After children and young people and care leavers know they can go to get help with their schoolwork, you will have made a difference.
- When no Looked After child or young person is debarred from participating in an activity because of practical problems, you will be an effective member of the corporate family.
- When young people continue to engage in arts, culture and leisure provision as they grow older, as participants and audiences.

I'M A REAL PERSON





It's tiring, very tiring. The biggest drawback is I don't drive. When my girls were going to school they walked there and back. But my grandson attends a city centre primary and we didn't want to change that, so we've kept him there. But it means we have to leave at twenty past eight in the morning for the bus into town. I work in a canteen in another school, so I drop him off and pick him up later. It means I get school holidays. When he's off school, I'm off.

"He is not entitled to bus fares or free school dinners. We get a kinship carer's allowance of £35 a week which covers bus fares and lunches. And we get his family allowance which works out to £70 a month. That buys clothes for the winter and holiday time.

"She [the child's mother] realises her [alcohol] problem and is getting medical care for it. There was never any option that her son would go into care. We are his family, he is one of our own, so we just took it on board.

"I actually have more time to spend with him than I had with my own girls growing up. When you are a bit older you have patience and are wiser second time around as a parent.

"The social work's kinship carers group arranges short breaks at the caravan. We have a meeting once a month. It's all families who are looking after someone who belongs to them.

"At Christmas my grandson received a laptop computer from the group. That should help his school work.



Margaret Fairburn, Kinship Carer, Inverclyde.

As corporate parents, local authorities have a challenging role, and acting like good parents and being aware of the needs of their children and young people must be a key priority. In discharging their corporate parent responsibilities, they need to put and keep the needs of the child or young person at the centre of everything they do.

“Looking back, I think one of the high points was getting into university, and having all the help I needed through social work funding. Also my foster carers were there for emotional support. I went into halls of residence during my degree course.” (Cheryl)

Those of us working in the central services such as finance or human resources may feel more removed from the corporate parent role; if you don't deliver frontline services to children and young people how can you be a good corporate parent? But your work impacts directly on the experience that Looked After children and young people and care leavers receive. It is also the area in which systems and procedures, generally in place for sound reasons, can feel the most bureaucratic and obstructive, leading to the call for “less of the corporate and more of the parenting”.

FINANCE

Robust financial procedures are required for audit purposes and to reassure council taxpayers that their money is being spent appropriately. However, central purchasing systems and bulk-buying do not readily provide flexibility, nor do they allow children and young people to learn about how households buy their supplies. Most families do not have time-consuming hierarchies of authorisation for even quite small amounts of expenditure, to enable, for example, a mobile phone to be topped up or transport to be arranged. The challenge for financial managers is to make sure sound financial management while at the same time making sure that children and young people are not disadvantaged or isolated from their peers by bureaucracy.

Disputes between agencies, or even within one organisation, about who pays for what can lead to children not receiving important services, such as specialist health care or support for learning. These services may be essential to ensuring a placement is successful or sustained, and without them the child's problems can escalate. It is therefore essential to being a successful corporate family that timely decisions are taken which are seamless to the child, young person or carer. There are circumstances where decisions will have to be made quickly and unexpectedly, and this is already traumatic enough for the child or young person without adding in another factor. This is particularly important in relation to out of authority placements.

You will want to:

- Consider whether carers have sufficiently delegated authority to meet day to day costs, and flexibility to make spending decisions in the way that a parent would, while maintaining sound financial management and control.
- Make sure that unnecessary bureaucracy does not get in the way of giving young people a Looked After experience which is as close to being in a family as it can be.
- Make sure that your financial regulations make provision for you to be able to address immediate and unexpected events.

- Promote a “spend to save” approach that support early intervention as a way not only to improve outcomes for children and young people, but prevent higher tariff, more costly, intervention being necessary later in the young person’s life.
- Make sure that your staff understand the implications of their actions for children and young people, and are aware of their particular responsibilities as corporate parents.

PURCHASING AND COMMISSIONING

Increasingly, councils and NHS boards purchase services from the independent sector both within their own local area and outwith. This brings with it many challenges, not the least of which is the need to secure Best Value. It is essential that purchasers and providers alike demonstrate best value and consider what option is best for the child. The *Getting It Right For Every Child* model promotes professionals working together continuously to make sure that services meet the needs of the child at the time those needs are identified and are reviewed regularly to recognise where changing needs require changing solutions.

Purchased services could be care placements, educational placements or specific specialist inputs such as therapeutic interventions or models of support to address, for example, risk-taking behaviour. There are particular issues when a child is placed outwith their own local authority and a long way from home. As well as emotional challenges out of authority placements can bring administrative challenges such as who pays for services.

In drawing up specifications and contracts, it is important to remember that children and young people have feelings, hopes and fears. When the needs of the child or young person have been identified and agreed, a specification for what service would best meet those needs should be drawn up. This should include not only their educational or physical accommodation needs, but their health needs, their hobbies and interests, their family ties, their cultural background including religion or language needs. It is likely that a single provider will not be able to meet all of the child or young person’s needs, and a package will need to be put together. This should be the best option for the child or young person, not the provider who happens to have a place on the day.

In these circumstances, it is even more important that the corporate parent behaves like a parent. That is, the child should not be placed and forgotten about; proper consideration must be given to health needs, financial support, long-term planning, return to community, links with family, ongoing support, work with the family while the child is away.

You will want to:

- Make sure that the needs of the child are paramount.
- Undertake careful preparation and planning.
- Consider support for the child and the family while the child is placed outwith the local community.
- Consider what support will be needed to enable a successful return.

- Make sure effective communication between agencies or services.
- Put in place effective contract management and administration/monitoring.
- Consider developing global contracts which can be adjusted to suit individual circumstances.
- Make sure that systems are in place to ensure that care leavers receive any payments regularly.

There are complex financial arrangements pertaining to out of authority placements and it is important that these are resolved before the child is placed. Interagency protocols which cover a general principle or a cohort of children should be the norm, but there will be times when a specific resource is needed for an individual child. Disagreements about funding should not get in the way of a child or a carer receiving a service when they need it. For example, it is not acceptable for a child to be denied educational support because there is a dispute about who should pay. Any delay will have an adverse affect on the child, and can lead to placement breakdown. It is essential that information is shared in advance of the child being placed in the specialist provision so that receiving services know who the child is and what their needs are, or that an urgent assessment is necessary.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The HR function also has a key contribution to make to the corporate parent function. The challenge is to think of innovative ways to engage in improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people, through good personnel practice, sound leadership and management, forward-thinking organisational development and realising the potential of councils as employers.

Councils are often the largest employer in a local area with a wider range of jobs than any other organisation in either the public or the private sector. Councils should be able to offer Looked After children and young people and care leavers support into employment, whether this be in terms of work experience or building capacity such as preparing job applications or interview skills. It could also be through reserving a number of apprenticeships or training placements for their care leavers, sometimes referred to as “the family firm” concept. This is not to suggest preferential treatment, but rather to fully utilise the potential to expose young people who are Looked After to the range of employment options which are available to them and the skills they need to take them up. What other parent has access to such a range of jobs – administrative work, caring, finance, sport, education and childcare, engineering and trades, to name but a few? Some councils even have theatres and art galleries, harbours or ski slopes. When we broaden this out to encompass the whole corporate family, there are even more options.

When providing support to young people in accessing employment, it is important to preserve their privacy and keep the experience as “normal” as possible. Information about a young person’s background should only be shared where absolutely necessary and staff should have a good understanding of how that information should be used.

Care leavers consistently report being discriminated against when applying for jobs. Thinking around equalities has moved on considerably since the 1980s in favour of a generic approach to tackling disadvantage, although some groups remain protected in law. Where there are groups of people locally who experience persistent disadvantage, you should take action to addressing that. For example, care leavers may need additional support when they first start working in the same way that other disadvantaged groups do.

HR managers must work with operational managers to make sure that staff are confident and competent, ensuring that training and development needs are identified and met, promoting the registration of residential staff with the SSSC, and ensuring that job descriptions, person specifications and reward packages recognise the valuable contribution that staff dealing with Looked After children and young people, and care leavers, across all services make, as well as ensuring that recruitment processes for all staff working with Looked After children and young people and care leavers (not just those in residential childcare) are robust.

Corporate parenting is only one area where better working across services is essential to delivering excellence. How structures are designed impacts on how services are managed and how individuals operate in their posts. Taking an outcomes-based approach focusing on the needs of the service user will help to achieve a structure that delivers effectively.

Promoting a culture of aspiration and inclusion is a key role for managers at all levels. Being aspirational for children is more likely to follow if managers and elected members are aspirational on behalf of their services and their employees, therefore your leadership and management development programmes should reinforce this message.

Effective performance management based on robust self-evaluation and reliable data is crucial to ensuring continuous improvement. This could be managing the performance of services or of individuals.

You will want to:

- Consider offering work placements to all Looked After young people or employment opportunities such as apprenticeships or summer jobs to care leavers.
- Consider what can be done corporately to support Looked After young people and care leavers in applying for jobs and attending interviews.
- Consider whether care leavers experience discrimination in council recruitment processes.
- Consider including in equalities statements and policies a commitment not to discriminate against care leavers.
- Make sure that staff understand their responsibilities as corporate parents and have access to training and CPD activity which reinforces and refreshes their knowledge and skills.

- Have in place robust but proportionate recruitment and selection procedures. Care leavers may have been involved in offending behaviour in the past and it is important that employers make sure that their use of Disclosure information is proportionate and considered.
- Make sure that all relevant staff are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council and fully understand the Codes of Practice.
- Consider including corporate parenting in performance appraisals for senior managers.
- Embed a culture of aspiration in leadership development programmes, and include awareness raising of the corporate parent role.
- Make sure that organisational structures facilitate joined-up working.
- Make sure that staff working with Looked After children and young people and care leavers are aspirational, confident and competent, and properly supported and rewarded.

Other corporate functions also have a role as corporate parents – for example, does your IT system enable Looked After children and young people to communicate with their friends through social networking sites? Are they able to access the internet to support them with their homework?

RISK

Much of our corporate activity is designed to assess, minimise and manage risk. Whether this is through robust financial or human resource procedures, health and safety functions or planning and evaluation of services, it is critically important in relation to Looked After children and young people and care leavers – any risk to children is of significance and it essential that councils make sure the safety of the children and young people in their care. As well as the risk to children, councils and their community planning partners must manage financial risk and risk to reputation.

It is little wonder then that public services can seem risk-averse. However, it is an important part of growing up for children and young people to learn how to take risks, how to take responsibility for themselves and their behaviour and we must be careful not to deny them that opportunity through risk-averse behaviours.

Professionals working with children, and particularly senior managers must strike a balance between protection and preventing young people developing essential life skills.

You will want to:

- Make sure that as they grow older Looked After young people are able to experience risk and learn how to manage it; for example learning how to cook, travel independently or stay with friends.

- Recognise that Looked After children and young people will be more likely than their peers to indulge in risk-taking behaviour and build into their care and education activity to help them to address this.
- Make sure that your procedures are proportionate and allow children and young people to live as “normal” lives as possible.
- Make sure that your procedures are developed in consultation with young people and carers so that they understand the reasons for them and continually review and up-date procedures and practice to make sure that young people’s needs are met on an ongoing basis.
- Make sure that carers are kept up-to-date with current policies and practice, and that they involve the young people in their care in decisions around their day-to-day activities.

HOW WILL I KNOW I’VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When your financial procedures allow carers to take responsibility for day to day expenditure for children in their care.
- When decisions around Looked After children and young people and care leavers are made promptly.
- When children’s education and care placements are not adversely affected by financial disputes.
- When you find a new pool of potential recruits amongst care leavers, not only will you have made a difference to the lives of young people but you will have benefited the organisation too.
- When your care leavers are more ready for work as a result of work experience and other support they have received from you or your community planning partners.
- When you do not discriminate against care leavers in your recruitment practices, and proactively seek to address the disadvantage experienced by care leavers.
- When your staff are competent, confident professionals who understand and accept the contribution they make to the corporate family, and are valued for it.
- When you assess and manage risk in a way which is proportionate and genuinely takes account of the views of children and young people.

GOOD PARENTS GIVE CARE,
ATTENTION AND HELP



15 / ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

15

“

I see her [a young person in foster care] once a week. My role is to give her a positive, younger influence in her life. She has very low self esteem. Her family don't have much contact with her.

“We do lots of different things, like ice skating, swimming and horse riding. The idea was to find some activity that she could enjoy and be good at. The social work department have given permission for her to have several skiing lessons. The hope is at the end of it she will be able to ski and maybe take up the sport.

“I think it's fantastic to see how [children in foster care] have come on by leaps and bounds. Their language and social skills were limited. Now, a year later, they have progressed so much. The children can be quite jealous of one another, but overall fostering has been a very positive thing for all our family.

“My gran was babysitting the children soon after they arrived. When my parents arrived home, Gran got up to leave. The little boy asked her 'Is that the end of your shift?' He had only been used to people looking after him because it was their job.

”

Claire McLean, social work student, befriender of a teenage girl in foster care.
Claire's parents are foster carers.

Much more needs to be done to ensure that all Looked After children and young people can access the same opportunities as their peers and are supported to develop to their full potential. Scotland needs all of its young people to succeed and we need to be ambitious and aspirational for each and every one of them.

“My Looked After background has not proven to be a barrier in relation to me following my goals. However, like many young people in care, in the past I have experienced negative stereotyping. There have been times when divulging your background can have the effect of changing people’s attitudes towards you.” (Nicola)

The corporate family sits within the wider community and engaging members of the community in improving outcomes for Looked After children and young people and care leavers will help to build capacity, and to raise public awareness.

Each of us, as individual members of the community, can make a difference to the lives of Looked After children and young people and care leavers. There are many ways in which we can do this, ranging from mentoring and befriending schemes, to enabling young people to participate in work experience or even find employment. If we are involved in any organised activities for children such as sports, the arts, or volunteering, we could consider how we can involve vulnerable children and work with our local authority to provide the necessary support. For example, if we are on parent councils in local schools or other similar committees through churches or other faith groups, we should identify Looked After children and young people as a group that needs special attention and consider how the parent forum can work with the school to integrate all children into the school community.

Adults spend a lot of time transporting their children to and from clubs and other activities, taking them to visit their friends, or discussing with them their experience of school, mentoring and advising, however informally or unconsciously. Often Looked After children and young people do not have the supports other children take for granted, and there is an opportunity to look beyond the traditional scope of practitioners who work with children and young people and care leavers and consider what the wider community can do to fill this gap.

It is important that councils engage effectively with local communities around services to Looked After children and young people and care leavers, for example the location of residential provision, as well as how to build capacity in terms of foster carers, befrienders and other less formal supportive roles.

Work needs to be done to raise awareness within communities, and encourage parents and wider family groups to take responsibility for their children.

Communities can have negative views of the care system, and of individual children and young people who are or have been Looked After. It is important that as much as possible is done to counter this negativity, whether through providing better information to the public (including school children) about what it means to be Looked After and the reasons why children become Looked After, or through celebrating success and demonstrating the positive impact that both services and the young people themselves can have in their local community.

The corporate family can be instrumental in raising public awareness and increasing community capacity.

You will want to:

- Consider awareness raising through your communication with communities.
- Make sure that elected members and others who regularly represent the corporate family in public take every opportunity to present a positive view and to encourage people to become involved, perhaps through foster care or befriending or respite care.
- Make sure that parent councils, and other mechanisms for parental involvement, in schools understand the particular needs of Looked After children and young people, and that they make sure the views of the corporate parent are taken into account.
- Encourage residential workers, foster carers and kinship carers to get involved in their local school council or other less formal parental involvement.
- Engage with community organisations such as sports clubs, uniformed youth groups, or faith groups to ensure that they are inclusive and as accessible as possible to Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Think of innovative ways to encourage community participation – small things can make a difference like advertising for foster carers on council vans.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When local youth groups include Looked After children and young people, including those with disabilities.
- When community groups who receive grants from the council demonstrate their commitment to including Looked After children and young people or care leavers in their activity.
- When your schools' parent councils seek your views as a corporate parent.
- When the number of foster carers increases and the number of people interested in respite care or befriending increases.
- When your communities are welcoming, inclusive and supportive to Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- When Looked After children who want to attend faith groups or places of worship, feel confident they will be accepted and supported to attend by their carers.

DON'T STOP JUST BECAUSE I'M 16



**16 / ENGAGING WITH THE CHILDREN'S
HEARINGS SYSTEM, COURTS AND OTHER
DECISION-MAKING BODIES**

16

“

I suppose our primary responsibility is to make the best decisions for that child at that time, given the information we have. We have to consider the child's views and make his or her safety the paramount consideration. We want the best for them; a more stable life, a more normal life, for them to be safe and secure and to have an equal chance of education.

“What frustrates me is when there isn't the money to support families in the way they need. We see children coming in and out of care and we can't find the right placements for them, because there aren't enough. Not having the right resources is one of the biggest headaches. There aren't enough social workers. We are spending a fortune on residential placements for children which don't always solve their problems.

“The rewards are when you see a family who have managed to make changes and turn things around for themselves. It does happen. A family which has been pretty dysfunctional and which has managed to pull things together. In my view in 90% of cases the problems are caused because parents are unable to sort themselves out and deal with their issues.

“[The biggest challenge is] dealing with parents who haven't got the wherewithal to parent children in the way we think they should, for lots of different reasons. It may be because they weren't parented themselves, or it may be because of drug and alcohol problems. You have to have hope, trust and work towards helping them.

”

Gill McBride, Children's Panel Member and Chair of Stirling Children's Panel.

There can be tension between deciding whether to provide family support or to remove the child and place in foster care or residential setting at an early stage; such decisions are never easy. The long-term objective of fostering and residential care should be that each and every Looked After child or young person goes on to live a happy, successful and fulfilling life, regardless of their initial experiences.

“Fundamentally I felt better in care, but it wasn’t a magical overnight thing. It took a couple of weeks to trust my foster carers.” (Cheryl)

The majority of children and young people who become Looked After are involved with at least one external decision-making body. For many there is an element of compulsion involved in becoming Looked After, therefore there are associated legal processes through court or a children’s hearing. This is a very complex area and this section offers only a simple introduction. More detailed information is available from the Scottish Courts Service or the Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration.

The Community Justice Authority will need to take account of the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers, in terms of their potential to become offenders and as the children of adult offenders.

You will want to:

- Consider involving the local children’s reporter, Children’s Panel Chair, and children’s panel members in strategic children’s services planning, joint staff training and awareness-raising sessions around corporate parenting and the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers.
- Consider involving Community Justice Authorities, Judges, Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace in strategic children’s services planning or participating in awareness-raising sessions around corporate parenting and the needs of Looked After children and care leavers.
- Work with your local children’s panel to make sure that panel members have access to up-to-date training and information on local policies and procedures, and that they are fully aware of how their work interacts with the care system.
- Make sure that everyone involved with a Looked After child is able to fully participate in case conferences, children’s hearings and preparing reports for Hearings or court proceedings so that the information presented to the external decision-makers is comprehensive and robust.
- Make sure that social workers and others who attend hearings and court are fully trained and have access to sound support to enable them to perform at their best.
- Make sure that children and young people who are required to attend Hearings or court are offered as much support as they require to ensure that the experience is as straightforward as possible.

- Make sure that your systems and case management are as good as they can be to prevent unnecessary appearances in hearings or court and particularly to reduce the need to reconvene, to limit the stress on children, young people, their families and staff.
- Make sure that planning for permanence is built in from as early a stage as possible, and that all necessary procedures are followed properly to minimise the disruption to children and young people and their families, to reduce drift and to prevent children from “yo-yo-ing” around the system.
- Know that panel members are confident in challenging social work and education constructively.
- Act on decisions made by Children's Panels.

HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

- When you achieve a good outcome for a child or young person from a children's hearing or court proceeding.
- When your staff are confident and competent in dealing with Children's Hearings or court appearances.
- When unnecessary delays, drift and bouncing around the system are prevented.
- When you can communicate openly and productively with panel members, children's reporter and sheriffs.

JUST DO IT



17 / HOW GOOD A CORPORATE PARENT CAN WE BE?

17

“I expect a corporate parent to be someone you can feel comfortable talking to: a person who understands you and is willing to help you with different problems that you may be having.”
(Sam)

As part of an overall approach to performance management, a major challenge for councils and their partners is to make sure that internal self-evaluation leads to improvement and complements external scrutiny. This can be achieved if councils and their partners adopt robust self-evaluation which enables each authority to plan for, and deliver, real improvements in services, management and leadership.

The purpose of self-evaluation is to improve quality and performance as well as to focus on the impact of services delivered by the Council and its community planning partners on users, staff and the wider community.

The Concordat announced between Scottish Government and COSLA in November 2007, based on a new national performance framework, provides the basis for enabling more effective partnership working to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. It puts in place a single set of outcomes and indicators for local authorities and their community planning partners to use in developing their Single Outcome Agreements with Scottish Government. The associated performance information will form part of the evidence base for self-evaluation, inspection and scrutiny.

A generic quality indicator framework based on high level questions has been developed for children’s services (*A Guide to evaluating services for children and young people using quality indicators. HMIE October 2006*). The evaluation framework on which the guide is based is increasingly being used by other inspectorates and scrutiny bodies. A specific self evaluation tool Evaluating the effectiveness of corporate parenting is under development by HMIE. This is based on the *Guide to evaluating services for children and young people*.

A web-based suite of CPD and training materials designed to build capacity for self-evaluation within and between services was launched by HMIE in December 2007.

Using the framework internal and external evaluators can consider the inter-relationship between different aspects of provision of services for children and young people:

- the outcomes and impact of services;
- the processes used in delivering services; and
- the leadership and direction shown in providing and continually improving services.

The *Guide to evaluating services for children and young people* using quality indicators provides a framework through which a Council’s corporate parenting can be evaluated.

For example, self-evaluation using quality indicators can be applied at three related levels:

- strategic management across a range of services or organisations, for example in the formulation and implementation of an Integrated Children’s Services Plan within which there would be a specific section on planning to improve outcomes for vulnerable children;
- operational management of services or organisations within a broader structure, for example where schools, social workers, primary health care professionals and police officers work together to deal with the operational management issues associated with providing an integrated service to meet the needs of vulnerable children;

- delivery of a specific service, for example where inputs from social work services, education and housing within a Council combine with the Children's Reporter and the health service to deal with children and young people who are Looked After at home or away from home.

The Care Commission, which regulates services specified in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, such as fostering services, secure accommodation services, residential schools and care homes has published Quality Statements, based on the National Care Standards, against which regulated care services are expected to self evaluate their own performance in delivering good outcomes for children and young people. The engagement of children and young people who use these services, their families and carers, in the evaluation of the service will be central to ensuring that good evaluations are verified by the Care Commission during inspection. As good corporate parents, Councils who place children and young people in regulated care services should also inform the evaluation of these services, whether these services are provided by the Council or by its partners.

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) is responsible for inspecting local authority social work services many of which are available to Looked After children their families and if Looked After away from home, their carers and staff. SWIA routinely inspects councils' arrangements for financing and commissioning services for children and young people and the councils' approaches to corporate parenting responsibilities.

SWIA has recently (2008) completed a pilot project including former Looked After and accommodated young people as lay inspectors of services for children, in their inspection of local authority services.

SWIA is working with partner local authorities to develop a general self evaluation guides and three specific guides on comissioning, leadership and performance management to support local authorities to develop their ability to judge their own outcomes.

Through self-evaluation, the Council and its partner organisations can identify strengths and areas for development of the services they provide, identify improvement objectives, and agree strategies for achieving them. In this way, services begin to develop a common language and a common set of expectations regarding the improvement of their corporate parenting. It helps answer the question "How good are we now?" and "How good can we be?" It helps check processes against the vision they have for their services, and against national indicators.

Inspection is recognised as a driver for continuous improvement and increasingly, joint inspection of children's services and inspection of individual regulated care services aims to put in place a proportionate, supportive regulation and quality assurance regime which helps services not only to identify shortcomings in existing practice, but to build on good practice and to strive for excellence. Inspection reports, national reviews of the quality of services published by inspectorates and regulators and inspectorate events are important vehicles for sharing good practice and developing learning across the country. Councils should use these outputs from inspection and regulation to help them reflect on the quality of their own. Additionally, web-based resources such as HMIE's The Journey to Excellence and the Looked After children website hosted by Learning and Teaching Scotland, are important sources of good practice.

The public will be able to make their own evaluation of how public services are improving through the Scotland Performs website [www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms].

18 / APPENDICES

18

APPENDIX 1

POLICY CONTEXT

The Purpose of Government

The Scottish Government is committed to creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. This is set out in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/202993/0054092.pdf] As well as making a real difference to the lives of individual young people, improving outcomes for Looked After children through effective early intervention and prevention will help to make Scotland wealthier and fairer; smarter; healthier; safer and stronger and greener. In order to build a dynamic and growing economy that will provide prosperity and opportunities for all, while ensuring that future generations can enjoy a better quality of life, we must make sure that every one of our young people has the best possible start in life.

The characteristics of Scotland in the future – solidarity, cohesion and sustainability – are mirrored by what we need to achieve as strong corporate parents. Scottish Government is working across public services to deliver five strategic priorities:

- Learning, Skills and Well-being
- Supportive Business Environment
- Infrastructure Development and Place
- Effective Government
- Equity.

Government in Scotland is creating a new environment which will:

- generate greater and more widely shared employment;
- create more highly skilled and better-paid jobs;
- provide better quality goods and services and additional choices and opportunities for Scotland's people;
- stimulate higher government revenues, supporting better quality public services;
- foster a self-sustaining and ambitious climate of entrepreneurial advance;
- encourage economic activity and investment across Scotland, thereby sharing the benefits of growth;
- bring a culture of confidence and personal empowerment to Scotland; and
- secure a high quality environment today and a sustainable legacy for future generations.

In November 2007, the Scottish Government set out its spending priorities, together with a Concordat with local government and a national performance framework containing 15 strategic outcomes, with 45 indicators by which collectively we will be judged.

(www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/concordat).

This approach represents a significant change in the relationship that central government has with other public services, particularly local government, and provides an opportunity to make real improvements in how services work together locally to improve outcomes for children.

The underpinning principle of our approach is inclusion. All of our citizens must be able to participate in this new successful Scotland, including those who have experience of the care system. Achieving better outcomes for Looked After children and young people will be different to achieving them for other young people. Whilst it is important to make sure that they get the best opportunities in each aspect of their lives, a holistic approach is important. It will require a variety of resources and will involve many different agencies and individuals. Where a range of different people are working with, and responsible for, Looked After children and care leavers they may each concentrate on specific aspects of their lives, e.g. education, health, leisure, etc. without seeing the whole child.

We are committed to delivering a series of major change programmes for children's services – *Getting It Right For Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence and More Choices, More Chances*. These programmes all sit within the context of the *Early Years and Early Intervention Framework* which promotes a culture of early intervention and prevention.

Government in Scotland's commitment to *Early Years and Early Intervention*

[\[www.scotland/Resource/Doc/215889/0057733.pdf\]](http://www.scotland/Resource/Doc/215889/0057733.pdf) recognises that giving all children the best start in life and improving the life chances of all children, young people and families at risk will make a major contribution to delivering solidarity and cohesion to Scottish society. The early years are a period of rapid development and have a major influence on the rest of a person's life. The early years provide the first and best opportunity to set children off on the right trajectory and reduce the need for later interventions that are more costly in both financial and social terms.

Getting It Right For Every Child provides the vehicle for achieving this holistic, child-centred approach. The role of the lead professional in facilitating this approach to service delivery will be crucial. *Getting It Right For Every Child* is a long-term change programme across services to all children whose central aim is to make sure that children are at the centre of thinking and action. It aims to improve children and families' experience by simplifying systems, working together better, providing a better quality of help or intervention, thereby improving outcomes for children and young people. The principle behind it is that universal services should be able to meet most of the needs of most children through high quality support for children, families and communities, but recognising that there are some children who will need input from specialist services on a short-term or long-term basis. For children who need multi-agency support, that support should be child-centred, joined up and accessible. One lead professional will be identified who will be the child and their family's guide through the system, ensuring that they receive appropriate, proportionate and timely support. *Getting It Right For Every Child* will also join up with adult services working with parents to make sure that the child's needs are not lost in transition.

Information-sharing is central to the success of this work, and systems and protocols are being developed to promote confidence in professionals. This work should underpin the child's plan, and should encompass all the adults in the child's world who can contribute to addressing all the child's needs to help them fulfill their potential.

[\[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec\]](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec)

Within the frameworks of *Getting It Right For Every Child* and *Early Years and Early Intervention, Curriculum for Excellence and Skills for Scotland* provide the foundations for all children to achieve successful life outcomes.

Curriculum for Excellence is about providing the best possible learning opportunities for all children and young people to help them become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, and make sure that they have the skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life [www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence].

Curriculum for Excellence will offer better educational outcomes for all young people and will provide more choices and more chances for those young people who need them. This means:

- a coherent curriculum for all from 3 to 18 wherever learning takes place;
- a focus on outcomes;
- a broad, general education up to about age 15;
- a focus on literacy and numeracy at every stage;
- time to take qualifications in is best suited to the young person;
- more opportunities for developing skills for life and skills for work for all young people at every stage;
- appropriate pace and challenge for every child; and
- ensuring connections between all aspects of learning and support for learning.

Included, Engaged and Involved recognises that in order for all children and young people to be able to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, they must be included, engaged and involved throughout their time at school. Attendance at school is fundamental to achieving this aim and for some Looked After children and young people this can be particularly challenging. Guidance on promoting attendance and managing absence which includes specific reference to the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including those who are Looked After. (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/05100056/0>).

The Scottish Government is currently developing complementary guidance on exclusion from school which will focus on the prevention and management of exclusion with a focus on vulnerable children and young people, including the impact of exclusion to Looked After children and young people. Until the guidance is finalised Circular 8/03 Exclusion from School remains current and is available from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/11/18496/28823>.

The *Skills for Scotland Strategy* places the individual at the centre of learning and development and aims to keep young people in education post-16, and to put in place effective processes for identifying early those young people least likely to secure and sustain training and employment. It also includes a commitment to encouraging partnership working and encourages schools to see themselves as part of a wider lifelong learning system.

MORE CHOICES, MORE CHANCES

More Choices, More Chances aims to provide additional support to young people who are not in education, employment or training to be able to move into learning or employment by:

- ensuring that *Curriculum for Excellence* provides opportunities to young people under 16 that are tailored to individual need, with flexibility and appropriate support for every young person;
- ensuring that every young person has a clear pathway from school into learning post-16; with supported transitions and sustained opportunities;
- ensuring that learning is a financially viable option, by considering the financial support and incentives available to young people;
- ensuring that the right support is available to young people to find out about, engage with and sustain learning and employment; and
- making a joint commitment to action between central and local government, employers, learning providers and support agencies to develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

All of these actions are about ensuring that young people are able to access the universal services from which they should benefit, aligning mainstream systems to cater for all young people including those who need additional support.

APPENDIX 2

CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) ACT 1995

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: A BRIEF SUMMARY

This is a brief summary of the legislation about Looked After children and young people, it should not be taken as a comprehensive statement of the law. People should consider seeking their own legal advice as they consider appropriate.

The majority of children and young people who are considered to be Looked After will come into one of the following two categories.

- **Looked After at home**, where the child or young person is subject to a *Supervision Requirement with no condition of residence* through the Children's Hearing system. The child or young person continues to live in their normal place of residence (i.e. often the family home).
- **Looked After away from home** (i.e. away from their **normal** place of residence), where the child or young person is subject to a *Supervision Requirement with a condition of residence* through the Children's Hearing system, or is provided with accommodation under section 25 (voluntary agreement) or is the subject of a Parental Responsibility Order (section 86). The child or young person is cared for away from their normal place of residence, e.g. in a foster care placement, residential/children's unit, a residential school, a secure unit or a kinship placement.

The undernoted is a brief guide to the main parts of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which governs many areas of a local authority's duties, powers and responsibilities in relation to Looked After children and young people and care leavers.

Section	Provision
17	This section imposes a duty on local authorities towards children who are " <i>Looked After</i> " by them by ensuring that they safeguard and promote the child's welfare, promote contact with those who have parental responsibilities, whilst taking into account the views of the child. A further duty is the provision of advice and assistance with a view to preparing a child for when the child is no longer Looked After-often referred to as "throughcare".
21	This section sets out details regarding co-operation between authorities and other bodies to help in the exercise of their functions.
22	This section imposes a duty on local authorities to provide a range of services to children who are "in need". Such services should be offered to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and to prepare young people for when they are no longer Looked After.

Section	Provision
25	<p>This section imposes a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation for children, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one has parental responsibility for them • They are lost or abandoned • The person who has been caring for them is prevented from providing suitable accommodation/care.
29	<p>This section (entitled Aftercare) sets out the main local authority responsibilities, both duties and powers, to young people who leave the “<i>Looked After</i>” system following their school leaving age. Section 29 was amended on 1st April 2004 by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.</p>
30	<p>This section sets out when local authorities may give financial assistance towards the education or training expenses of those who have ceased to be Looked After following their school leaving age.</p>
31	<p>This section ensures that each child who is “<i>Looked After</i>” by the local authority has their case formally reviewed at regular intervals.</p>
53	<p>This section imposes a duty on local authorities to make initial inquiries, if information is received suggesting compulsory measures of supervision may be necessary for the child, i.e. a Children's Hearing report.</p>
55	<p>This provides a local authority with the power to apply to a Sheriff for a <i>Child Assessment Order</i>, where access to a child for the purposes of gathering information is denied.</p>
56 (4)(b)	<p>This section provides the Reporter with the power to refer any case to the local authority for advice, guidance and assistance to a child and/or their family. This is commonly referred to as “<i>Voluntary Supervision</i>”.</p>
57	<p>This section allows a Sheriff to make a “<i>Child Protection Order</i>” where there are grounds to believe that a child is being ill-treated, neglected or will suffer harm. Whilst any person may apply for such an order, this is normally pursued by Social Work Services.</p>
70	<p>This section covers the disposal of a “<i>Supervision Requirement</i>” by a Children's Hearing, the 2 main sub-sections being:</p> <p>70 (1). The supervision requirement would, in most circumstances, stipulate that the child continues to reside in the family home. The child would be deemed to be “<i>Looked After at home</i>” by the local authority; and:</p> <p>70 (3). The Supervision Requirement would require the child to reside outwith their normal place of residence (i.e. place a condition of residence), e.g. a foster care placement, residential/children's unit, a residential school, a secure unit or a kinship placement. This child would be deemed to be “<i>Looked After away from home</i>”.</p>

Section	Provision
71	This section imposes a duty on a local authority to give effect to the Supervision Requirement of a child decided by a Children's Hearing and to any conditions contained within the Requirement.
73	This section ensures that "no child shall continue to be subject to a Supervision Requirement for any period longer than is necessary in the interests of <i>promoting or safeguarding his welfare</i> ". Section 73(2) ensures that no Requirement will remain in force for a period longer than one year without that Requirement being reviewed by a Children's Hearing.
86	This section provides the power for the local authority to apply to the Sheriff Court, to transfer parental rights and responsibilities to the local authority.

Other legislation which may be relevant:

Throughcare Regulations 2003

Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003

Additional Support For Learning (Scotland) Act 2004

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004

Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003

APPENDIX 3

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD: VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Getting It Right For Every Child relates to a broad spectrum of agencies providing services to children and their families and a shared set of values and principles is essential to making it work. The values summarised below are intended to support reflection and self-challenge for any professional with a part to play in promoting the well-being of children.

- **WELL-BEING:** *GIRFEC* is about the well-being of individual children and the overall goal of the policy and any related activity is to ensure that every child is: safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.
- **SAFETY:** Recognise each child's right to be safe. Being safe and feeling emotionally as well as physically safe is fundamental to all aspects of healthy development and all other indicators of well-being. Ensuring safety goes beyond child protection activity, and relates also to security, stability and appropriate self-care.
- **CHILD AT THE CENTRE:** The experience and needs of each child are central to any assessment, plan or intervention. Their views should be considered. The experience of those too young to articulate their views is equally significant, and they may need advocacy support. Listen to children and involve them in decisions about their lives in ways and at a pace which suits the child, their age, stage and circumstances.
- **HOLISTIC APPROACH AND EARLY INTERVENTION:** Whatever your professional specialism, consider the whole child. Although your involvement with a child may be short-term, consider the child's needs for longer term support.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING:** Respect the right to confidentiality of children, and of families, while recognising that the duty to safeguard children comes first. If concerned about risk to a child, be alert to the implications for other, perhaps equally vulnerable, children in the situation. If there are grounds for sharing information without consent in order to protect a child, then that which is shared should be relevant and proportionate.
- **PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES AND VALUING DIVERSITY:** Actively promote opportunities for children who face discrimination and extra barriers. Respond positively and creatively to diverse potentials and perspectives among children and families, and also amongst colleagues.
- **PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES:** Recognise how parents, family members and those in the child's network, are (or may become) the most significant contributors to meeting a child's needs in most situations. In many circumstances they can lead the plan of action. Listen to those who know the child well, have a sharp sense of what the child needs, of what works well for the child in his/her family and of what may not be helpful.

- **BUILDING ON STRENGTHS:** Work to engage the strengths and resources within the family network in plans to address needs and risks (as far as this is safe, achievable, and in the child's interests).
- **BRINGING HELP TO THE CHILD:** If you can play a part in a plan of help, consider how help can be brought to the child rather than automatically passing on information and responsibility.
- **SUPPORTING INFORMED CHOICE:** Support children and families in understanding what help is possible and what their choices may be.
- **BRINGING HELP TOGETHER:** Play your part in ensuring that children and families experience a co-ordinated, and unified approach when several professionals are involved. Try to ensure that families are not subjected to stressful repetition of information, avoidable delay or to assessments without a plan of action to help.
- **TEAMWORK BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND AGENCIES:** Respect the contribution and expertise of other professionals; and co-operate with them to meet the needs of children, as far as may be appropriate for your role and context. For example, this may be through consultation, sharing information, shared assessment, planning, action or material support.
- **PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND STANDARDS:** Recognise that sharing responsibility between agencies does not mean acting beyond our competence or responsibilities. Take action if safety or standards are compromised.
- **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT:** Commit to professional learning and development. Commit to improvement upon inter-professional practice in work with children and families.
- **VALUES ACROSS ALL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:** Be sensitive to the impact of your work on other professionals. Beside the well-being of children and families, consider the well-being of colleagues and value their support. Recognise that respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience and integrity are qualities valued by children, families and colleagues.

APPENDIX 4

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Looked after Children web-site – www.ltscotland.org.uk/lookedafterchildren/index.asp

UNCRC – www.unicef.org/crc or www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/uncrc

For Scotland's Children – www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/fcsr-00.asp

Extraordinary lives – www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/140731/0034643.pdf

Sweet 16? – www.sccyp.org.uk/webpages/Leaving_Care_Report_for_Web_20080325.pdf

How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service? (STAF) –
www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk/docs/forum/How_Good_Is_Your_T_and_A_Service.pdf

Preventing Offending By Young People: A Framework for Action –
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/228013/0061713.pdf

Examples of good practice under Section 30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Curriculum for Excellence – www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence

HMIe website – www.hmie.gov.uk count us in reports

Count us in, Achieving Inclusion in Scottish Schools –
www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/cui.pdf

Count Us In: We're still here: Successful Transitions from Secondary School –
www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/cuiwsh.pdf

Count Us In Improving the education of our Looked After children
www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/Final%20PDF%20of%20LAC.pdf

SWIA web-site – www.swia.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner's web-site – www.sccyp.org.uk

Who Cares? – www.whocaresscotland.org

Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum – www.scottishthroughcare.org.uk

Concordat/national performance framework –
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf and
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/203078/0054106.pdf

Scotland Performs? – www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms

Improvement Service? – www.improvementservice.org.uk

What Makes The Difference –
www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx1062nw_17670841468995q93g335805625

NCB – www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp

APPENDIX 5

THANKS TO:

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