

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE          | <b>Council</b>                                      |
| DATE               | <b>19 August 2015</b>                               |
| DIRECTOR           | <b>Gayle Gorman</b>                                 |
| TITLE OF REPORT    | <b>Corporate Parenting: Annual Update 2014 - 15</b> |
| REPORT NUMBER:     | <b>ECS/15/036</b>                                   |
| CHECKLIST RECEIVED | <b>Yes</b>                                          |

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an annual update to Elected Members on the progress of the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Policy and Action Plan 2012 – 2015, for the benefit of care experienced young people within Aberdeen.
- 1.2 The Corporate Parenting Policy is also reported through both the Achieving and Respected & Included Outcome Groups to the Integrated Children's Services Board and the Community Planning Partnership.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:
  - (i) Note the progress set out in the annual update for 2014 – 15.
  - (ii) Instruct officers to report back on the implementation and review of the policy to Council in 2016.
  - (iii) Continue to be proactive in promoting the corporate parenting agenda in Council business.
  - (iv) Continue to support and invest in the Council's Family Firm opportunities.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications for the revenue or capital budget at this time. The Corporate Parenting policy will be delivered within existing resources.
- 3.2 However, with regard to developing opportunities for care experienced young people through the associated Family Firm policy, a business proposal was approved at Education & Children's Services SMT in February

2015 to allow funding from within existing budgets for 40 care experienced young people to participate in the Keen4Work 12 week work experience opportunities within the Council. As described below, this funding will also support a project with Action for Children, funded jointly with contributions from Inspire Scotland and the EU, to provide intensive support for those participating in the project.

- 3.3 Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Act came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. These sections extend the duties of corporate parents and the reporting responsibilities of local authorities as well as the entitlement to continuing care for care experienced young people. No additional costs were identified in relation to the delivery of corporate parenting reports. The implications of the continuing care entitlements will only become fully clear as eligible young people request care or support over the next few years on an incremental basis. This will be included within a full review of the Corporate Parenting policy in the forthcoming year.

#### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy implications and risks relating to this update.

#### **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 5.1 Corporate Parenting refers to the collective responsibility of the Council and its community partners to achieve good parenting to our care experienced young people. The policy aims to ensure that the needs of our care experienced young people are being met by the Council and that they are achieving positive outcomes irrespective of their care experience.
- 5.2 Care experienced young people (CEYP) is a term that is being promoted nationally to describe looked after children, young people and care leavers.
- 5.3 Following the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Aberdeen City Council, like other local authorities throughout Scotland, has a duty to provide support, advice and guidance to children who are looked after and young people leaving care, up to their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. The increase in numbers of those young people and care leavers entitled to support from the local authority over the next few years, highlights the need to have meaningful intervention, change and opportunities to ensure that all children, young people and care leavers are supported to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The Act also extends the range of public bodies covered by the concept of corporate parent and introduces new responsibilities on corporate parents to plan and collaborate to promote the wellbeing of care experienced young people.
- 5.4 The Aberdeen City Council Corporate Parenting Policy 2012 - 15 provides a clear framework for identifying specific actions and interventions to close the

gap between looked after children and young people and care leavers and their peers. The focus of the policy is to improve their educational attainment and achievement; enable them to take up and sustain positive post-school destinations in education, employment and training; reduce their involvement in the criminal justice system; reduce levels of homelessness for care leavers; and to help them live full and healthy lives. The Council and its partners work closely to achieve and measure the policy outcomes.

5.5 Part of the Corporate Parenting Policy included the introduction of the Family Firm Policy that underlines the Council's commitment to creating and developing training, work experience and employment opportunities for care experienced young people.

5.6 This report highlights our Corporate Parenting achievements over the last twelve months and details next steps and actions that will be undertaken over the forthcoming year.

## **5.7 Champions Board**

5.7.1 The Corporate Parenting Champions Board was established in 2013 and held its inaugural meeting in January 2014. The Board is based on what has become known as the 'Dundee model', the aim of which was to provide an opportunity for care experienced young people to talk directly to decision makers about how best to remove complex barriers to multi-agency working so that innovative solutions could be agreed and implemented in a timely manner. Over the past year the Board has been partially successful in its commitment to demonstrating effective change for care experienced young people.

5.7.2 Consequently, the Board is currently under review. In looking to develop it, an application was recently made to the Life Changes Trust in response to an opportunity for funding to support the development of Champions Boards. The Life Changes Trust is a Big Lottery funded charity in Scotland with the aims of promoting the lives of former care experienced young people, as well as all people with dementia. The proposal would look to give additional capacity for individual advocacy with young people, supported by an organisation such as Who Cares? Scotland. The aim would be to build on the advocacy contact to develop young people's participation and to re-inforce the enthusiasm and commitment of corporate parents within Aberdeen City for their care experienced young people. This would enhance the Champions Board's role and remit in service implementation and change, as well as ensuring that the Board is making a meaningful contribution to improving outcomes for individual young people.

5.7.3 Aberdeen was successful in its initial application to the Life Changes Trust and is now through to stage two of the application process which involves sending one young person and one lead officer to attend a 6-day residential course on the isle of Skye in August 2015. The course will support short-listed applicants to explore different approaches to empowering young people and supporting transformational and sustainable change, build joint leadership and develop their plans for their final application. Stage three is the submission of our final Champions Board proposal due in October 2015.

- 5.7.4 Aberdeen's Champion's Board members are enthusiastic about their Corporate Parenting. Training has been provided, with the support of Who Cares? Scotland, to develop their collective knowledge and to understand their authority to make effective and meaningful change to the services that affect our care experienced young people. Moving forward the Board needs to be able to evidence the difference that it can make; something that would be developed with funding from the Life Changes Trust.
- 5.7.5 The Champions Board is scheduled to meet quarterly. It is currently comprised of young people, elected members and Chief Officers from Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian and the Third Sector. Looking forward this will need to be expanded to include representatives of those groups to which the corporate parenting duty was extended in the 2014 legislation, including further/higher education and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 5.7.6 A Role and Remit and Orders of Reference was developed as a result of the Champions Board meeting held in September 2014. The Champions identified that in order to ensure that it is working effectively its role and remit as a Working Group within the City Council requires clarification and its Orders of Reference agreed. In addition, there is a need to clarify and develop the roles and responsibilities of each Champion. Further proposals will be developed as part of the submission for funding to the Life Changes Trust.
- 5.7.7 Two key issues that were presented to the Champions Board during 2014 - 15 were: access to the internet within Children's Homes; and the perception of looked after children and young people within the broader community. In spite of a number of significant obstacles, the Council is progressing with installing Wi-Fi in Children's Homes and this is expected to be completed imminently. A specific internet procedure and young people's agreement has been developed to contribute to keeping our young people safe online. In addition, our Children's Homes staff will receive online safety training.
- 5.7.8 With regard to the perception of young people one of our Champion's Board Members has negotiated free bus and cinema tickets for our looked after young people, whilst we are also working to strengthen the relationship between the Police and Children's Homes. Children's Homes Managers, for example, now have regular meetings with their local Inspectors; are in contact for advice and guidance; and invite the Police to visit their Homes. There has also been direct contact between some Board members and care experienced young people, either through meetings in Children's Homes or in participation at the Looked After Children activity days in October 2014.
- 5.7.9 All meetings of the Champions Board have been attended by between one and three care experienced young people. A Young People's Participation Group (YPPG) was established at the same time as the Champions Board. Linked directly to the Board the aim was that there should be dialogue between the two groups on a range of issues presented by the young people about service improvement or change. To date, however, this has been difficult to sustain and in spite of encouragement and support from the Children's Rights Officers (CRO), it has so far been impossible to establish a consistent group of young people to attend Board meetings. Instead, individual advocacy through the CROs has continued to seek the views of

young people to contribute to Board meetings.

## **5.8 Young People's Participation**

- 5.8.1 The YPPG (Young People's Participation Group) was established as an opportunity for young people, supported by the Council's CROs, to identify and present areas for service development, review or redesign to the Champions Board, including their ideas on how to progress the change. It has proved challenging to develop a core group of young people to take ownership and lead the group. Meetings were initially held monthly, usually arranged after school or at weekends. Attendance at these meetings has been inconsistent and the meetings often focused on the specific issues affecting the young people present that would then inform the Champions Board meetings. The experience has been that it has not always been possible to attract sufficient numbers of young people for a balanced and aggregated view to emerge and it has often been a small number whose views have fed into the YPPG or other events requiring young people's views.
- 5.8.2 An alternative activity based approach was trialled in October 2014. These were relatively well attended but were not necessarily any more successful in consolidating a group of young people around which the YPPG could be built and taken forward. Nevertheless, given the enthusiastic response that they received, this approach is being expanded this summer with a further programme of activities for care experienced young people, both under 12s and over 12s, from which it is hoped they will be encouraged to participate in a future group that will gauge their views to help inform service development.
- 5.8.3 The events in October 2014 were a mix of challenge and fun for the young people as well as an opportunity to get their thoughts on the qualities of the staff employed to work with them and the people they most trust. Two events were held, one for under 12s and one for over 12s. Rekindling the energy and enthusiasm that they engendered would be a key aim of the Life Changes Trust proposal going forward.
- 5.8.4 In order to ascertain the views of looked after young people in the city's Children's Homes, the CROs set up residents meetings in each of the Homes as a means to hear the voice of groups of young people. These meetings allow them to gauge the issues that are affecting our care experienced young people with a view to feeding into the Champions Board. This is in addition to the individual advocacy service offered to all care experienced young people.
- 5.8.5 In one Children's Home, The Willows, increasing participation has seen a staff member being identified to focus on attaining the views of the residents and their families and significant others to inform improvements.
- 5.8.6 Young people's views have also been instrumental in the structure and organisation of other events targeted at care experienced young people. For example, young people's ideas contributed to the planning of a 'drop-in' event in June 2015 aimed at promoting positive destinations, early intervention and removing barriers. Called 'SWEET' (Support, Well-being,

Education, Engagement and Training) this was held at the Welfare Hub in the JobCentre within Ebury House. The feedback from the event was positive from the young people who attended and the stall holders who supported it.

- 5.8.7 In 2014 a group of young people were asked to take part in the recruitment of the new Children's Right's Officer. The group were supported to ask questions to the candidates in a group setting. The feedback on how the young people felt the candidates performed was used to inform the decision on which candidate was offered the job. In February 2015 another group of young people were supported to take the lead in interviewing the individual candidates for the Head of Children's Social Work position. The young people formed their own questions and had the opportunity to interview the candidate. Again, the feedback from the young people contributed to the final decision on which candidate was appointed Head of Children's Social Work.
- 5.8.8 This summer a Foster Carers picnic is being organised to celebrate Foster Care. The picnic is for care experienced young people and their foster carers, as well as foster carer's own children. It is an opportunity to promote wellbeing for care experienced young people by enabling them to meet others, provide peer support and develop positive links.
- 5.8.9 In promoting participation, the LAC Group at Northfield Academy, which has been established for a few years, is working on raising awareness of the Children's Hearing system. The group have worked on a leaflet for other young people going through the system as well as a presentation that they are hoping to present to Chief Officers. The group have a session once a week within school hours, supported by the Youth Work team, and provide peer support to each other. See Appendix One for more information.

## **5.9 Raising Awareness**

- 5.9.1 The Corporate Parenting agenda is a Council wide commitment and inspires enthusiasm from all directorates. Corporate parenting training has been provided by Who Cares? Scotland to our Champion's Board and smaller training sessions have been provided internally to specific teams or individuals.
- 5.9.2 The support that Corporate Parenting has received from the Council leadership has contributed to an increased momentum that, for example, has created work experience programmes as part of our Family Firm Policy which in turn has also helped raise awareness of the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and the Family Firm policy amongst staff who would not otherwise be aware of them.
- 5.9.3 Aberdeen City is working closely with a range of partners to raise awareness of Corporate Parenting. For example, earlier this year it took part in the Scottish Aftercare and Throughcare Forum (STAF) and Who Cares? Scotland's national campaigns ahead of the launch of the new Corporate Parenting legislation. For this event it highlighted its commitment to the changes in Corporate Parenting duties through a series of photo opportunities where partners used banners to demonstrate their involvement

and commitment.

- 5.9.4 Aberdeen City Council and its partners send practitioners to attend networking and information sessions hosted by the Scottish Government or national organisations. Aberdeen City Council works closely with other local authorities and its partners to improve the lives of our looked after young people. For example, work experience programmes for looked after young people, including a highly successful internship within the local authority; NPS training; and cultivating better relationships with uniformed services such as the police in order to create more positive perceptions of our looked after young people.
- 5.9.5 A draft Corporate Parenting On-line Inter-active Learning (OIL) course has been developed. The OIL course will be mandatory for all Council staff and ways are being sought to make the course available to its partners who have corporate parenting duties. The OIL course will go live at the same time as the Family Firm re-launch this autumn.
- 5.9.6 Practice Improvement Sessions held within Children's Social Work have also helped raise awareness of corporate parenting, including information on ISAs (ie. Individual Savings Accounts) for looked after children and young people.
- 5.9.7 Issues had been raised by young people in foster care about how they may obtain a passport where their birth parents refused to sign the application. This issue has been taken forward by the CROs to Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People who are now actively pursuing the matter with the Scottish Government. In the meantime, the CROs have provided advice and guidance on alternative ways that this can be resolved.

## **5.10 Positive Destinations / Education**

- 5.10.1 The launch of Aberdeen Guarantees in Autumn 2014 has also aided the focus on preventing vulnerable young people at risk of falling into negative destinations. Aberdeen Guarantees is the commitment of Aberdeen City Council and its partners to provide education, training or employment to all those aged between 14 - 25 years within the city. It represents the collective efforts of the public, private and third sector in assisting and enabling young people to progress towards employment.
- 5.10.2 Aberdeen Guarantees profiles a range of approaches in school and post-school which are already in place to support young people into positive destinations, promote good news stories and advertise new training and work opportunities for all young people in Aberdeen. Information on youth employment related activity is hosted on the Aberdeen Guarantees website which advertises all available opportunities within the city, including Activity Agreements that have been vital in developing the skills of some of our care experienced young people.
- 5.10.3 In addition, the work experience team that deals with all school work experience placements are now offering extended work experience as part of the City Campus initiative. These are open to all children who are at risk of negative destinations.

- 5.10.4 Looked after children and care leavers have significantly benefited from the work of the Activity Agreements Team. This team provides support for children and young people in their transition journey from school to employment. Looked after children represent 20% of their cohort and care leavers 6%.
- 5.10.5 Looked after children sometimes find engaging with their school based education challenging due to their adverse life experiences. Because of this, they often lag behind their peers in their educational attainments, although the latest data set for 2013/14 is showing an improvement. It could be said that the levels of qualification and positive destinations are still too low. However, this narrowing of the gap between looked after children and the national average is encouraging. Research is showing that often a looked after child's journey through education is at a slower pace and consequently they tend to engage more successfully at a later stage (ie. post 16) than their peers.
- 5.10.6 Educational needs of looked after children are a priority and a Virtual School Head Teacher is being appointed from the beginning of the next academic session. Their task will be to drive up standards and promote the educational attainment of looked after children, including those who are educated outwith the City. The Virtual School Head Teacher will establish systems to provide robust management information to monitor children's progress whilst they continue to attend their own school.
- 5.10.7 On the school census day there were 218 looked after children within Aberdeen educational establishments (ie. 10 in Nursery, 97 in Primary, 90 in Secondary and 20 in Special Schools). Of the 218 looked after children, 96 (44%) were looked after at home, and 121 (55%) were looked after away from home (ie. in residential units, foster care or with relatives).
- 5.10.8 The LAC Teacher continues to work closely with our care experienced young people to improve their educational attainment and attendance. The LAC Teacher also advises other education or social work staff about the additional support young people may require to succeed in education or in a work experience opportunity. Training on looked after children and their education continues to be delivered to class teachers, designated managers for looked after children, adoptive parents and foster carers, trainee teachers and pre-school workers.
- “One young person has now completed their time in supported lodgings and has achieved an HNC in Mechanical Engineering and intends studying for an HND after summer. One young person remains in supported lodgings and achieved an HNC in professional cookery. They were also awarded student of the year and intend studying for an HND after summer. One young person has now moved into their own tenancy and has part-time work in a shop whilst another who is still in supported lodgings, has worked in Dobbies since their last year at school and has applied to the army.”*
- 5.10.9 Educational psychology and the looked after children teacher have been involved in the Permanence & Care Excellence (PACE) project whose overarching aim is to reduce the time taken for looked after children to be placed in their permanent placement. This involvement has meant that



these children's educational needs are assessed at an earlier stage by educational psychology. This early assessment enables effective planning to support their educational needs to commence sooner if required. An Education Guide for Adoptive Parents and Foster Carers has been developed and is undergoing a trial using Improvement Methodology. Initial feedback from the adoptive parents in the trial indicates that the information was "positively useful". The final version is expected in October 2015.

- 5.10.10 It is envisaged that with the implementation of the Inclusion Review more looked after children will be educated within their own local school and community. In 2014/15, 71.4% of P1 pupils and 50% of S1 pupils were educated within their local community, with 28.6% and 50% respectively being educated outwith their local community. By contrast, only 25% of children looked after at home were educated within their local community, although 53.3% of children looked after away from home were educated within their local community.
- 5.10.11 The Inclusion Review aims to reduce the number of pupils travelling to schools outwith their local community. Whilst in previous years an application for a targeted resource would have been made which may have resulted in the pupil being allocated an ASN Base place outwith their local community, the Inclusion Review has reallocated resources so that pupils requiring targeted support transition to their local secondary school.

## 5.11 Family Firm

- 5.11.1 Over the past year, monthly Family Firm meetings and closer working between departments within the council, as well as NHS Grampian and Skills Development Scotland, have helped drive the policy forward. The Council's Family Firm Policy as a whole is currently under review to ensure its robustness and resilience, links to the introduction of Aberdeen Guarantees, and the future delivery of the policy.

- 5.11.2 The previous focus of Family Firm was on creating two year internship opportunities for care experienced young people. These are full time positions with the goal of encouraging the young person to gain employability skills whilst furthering their education and/or training.

*"Ours is very much a success story. Our intern passed their development plan within 6 months, rather than anticipated 12, to progress to next grade and in a 14 month period was moved to G7, again through quicker than expected achievement of outcomes. The individual concerned is now in a permanent post following a competitive recruitment process."*  
*Tracy Runcie, Team Leader, HR, June 2015*

5.11.3 During the last year Family Firm has been expanded to include the Keen4Work 12 week work experience programmes which were piloted through the council's Building Services team where two looked after young people were introduced to working in a trades environment. The aim is to have a pool of non-employment training opportunities that can be matched with the interests of the young person, which allows them to both experience the working environment and to help them to develop transferrable

*"They showed me how things work and explained all the safety features they have in place. They made me ask questions so I could fully understand their line of work. They didn't make me feel like I was getting swarmed with information which was ace because previously people would tell you everything you need to know in five minutes and expect you to do fine."*

*Young Person who completed work experience.*

knowledge and skills. Since July 2014 there have been three intakes on the Keen4Work programme, with four young people successfully completing it. Structured, supported and meaningful 12 week work experience programmes have now been created throughout all directorates, including working within trades, administration, childcare, IT and catering.

5.11.4 Currently, the young people taking part in the programme have the opportunity to study for a Certificate of Work Readiness SVQ. Young people are provided with additional support and mentoring to take part and succeed in Family Firm opportunities and are given help in planning to move forward from the programme.

5.11.5 Future plans for the Keen4Work programme include a joint venture with the third sector provider, Action for Children. As previously stated a business case was approved to allow 40 young people per year to take part in the Keen4Work programmes. This funding will be matched with funding that Action for Children as obtained from Inspire Scotland and the European Social Fund to provide a service that will offer intense support tailored to the needs of the individual young person throughout their employment journey, for example, from pre-Activity Agreement stage into a sustained economic destination.

5.11.6 The model is based on a successful Transitions project that Action for Children have run in Glasgow and will include 4 full-time workers to work with our young people. The aim is that Action for Children will be in a position to start delivering support and co-ordination of the work experience programmes for the Autumn 2015 intake. A relaunch of Family Firm is planned to co-incide with the start of the Action for Children project. A Family Firm workshop will also be delivered at the ICS Conference in September 2015.

5.11.7 In future the aim is that participation in the Keen4Work programme would be a prerequisite for taking on an internship opportunity, so that the young person will have the minimum skills and commitment in which to develop. This will help to address some of the issues that care experienced young people have faced in sustaining these opportunities.

5.11.8 In planning for young people to move on from work experience programmes increased links have been developed with Skills Development Scotland,

Aberdeen Guarantees and HR, whilst the Organisational Development team are looking to provide care experienced young people with additional CV, application and interview support.

- 5.11.9 Family Firm opportunities whether internships, apprenticeships or Keen4Work work experience programmes are interlinked with the aim of Aberdeen Guarantees in promoting positive destinations to the most

*“One of our interns has just been appointed into an Electrical Engineering apprenticeship opportunity. One intern has been moved to work with the city wardens and is enjoying the new role. Another intern is continuing at College with the aspiration to become a social worker, they are currently gaining more skills within social work settings.”*

vulnerable groups at risk of negative destination. In developing Family Firm opportunities the links and communication to the Aberdeen Guarantees team has proved vital in getting the right opportunity for the right young person. In addition, Family Firm

opportunities are advertised and included on the Aberdeen Guarantees website.

## **5.12 Communities, Housing & Infrastructure**

- 5.12.1 The joint protocol between Education & Children’s Services and the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Directorates ensures that young people preparing to leave care receive an effective assessment for the allocation of appropriate housing. This ensures a planned move on for the individual and, where possible, avoids the need to resort to homelessness legislation. Nine young people were supported in their own tenancy during 2014 - 2015. For the same period, seven individuals moved into their own accommodation without support, whilst two have been placed in a long term supported accommodation project (The Foyer). Of these placements, six have successfully managed their own tenancy for a period of a year, and only three have experienced rent arrears or problems with how they manage their tenancy.
- 5.12.2 The Housing Support Service and Education & Children’s Services Throughcare teams meet monthly to review cases and ensure that plans are in place at appropriate times to support individuals to move on and receive support to enable tenancy sustainment. The meeting is also attended by a representative from the Community Safety Partnership.

## **5.13 Wellbeing and Health**

- 5.13.1 Over the past year health professionals have helped to raise awareness of health issues by providing training, information and advice to looked after young people and staff within Children’s Homes. Work has been undertaken with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) to deliver training focused on New Psychoactive substances (NPS) or Legal Highs that are a concern associated with our care experienced young people. A Substance Misuse policy has also been developed.

- 5.13.2 The introduction of the Young Women's Service based at Westburn Family Centre has addressed the specific needs of vulnerable girls in the city and is a response to preventing child sexual exploitation. The service provides a safe place for girls and young women and supports them on an individual, group and family work basis.
- 5.13.3 A joint working arrangement with NHS Grampian ensures that all looked after children and young people have access to health assessments and a GP. The NHS Grampian Looked After Children team (NHSG LAC team) report that 95% of all children and young people who are looked after and for whom information is forwarded to them continue to be assessed. The team also actively contact the parents of looked after children to offer assessments. As a result, in 2014 85% of all children and young people who are looked after and for whom the relevant information and consent was received continue to have health assessments carried out. However, the proportion of all looked after children receiving LAC Health assessments in 2014 was 42%. Consequently, the team actively contact parents, kinship carers, foster carers and key workers to help facilitate LAC Health assessments being carried out.
- 5.13.4 The NHSG LAC team are currently working in conjunction with School Nurses and Education to increase the number of young people who are outwith mainstream education completing the immunisation schedule. This includes 505 young people who are looked after and the aim is to offer the service directly to Children's Homes. In 2014 all looked after young people living in residential units, who were missing immunisations, were given the opportunity to complete their schedules at a session held at Westburn.

## **5.14 Next Steps**

- 5.14.1 The development of the Champions Board is crucial and the aim is that with additional support, whether funded through Life Changes or not, the provision of an independent advocacy worker to directly support and nurture young people and spend time building relationships with them will give them the confidence to lead the Board in its direction. The Board's development will also need to reflect its expanded role as a result of the recent legislation. The Board will be reconvened in September 2015 ahead of submission of the eventual bid to the Life Changes Trust in October. This will allow the Board to influence its shape and approve a revised role and remit, including any additional scope or membership. If the bid is successful it is envisaged that the additional capacity will be commissioned towards the end of 2015 and able to support the evolution of the Champions Board from early next year. Champions Board meetings will continue to be held quarterly thereafter. This timescale will also co-incide with the implementation of *Reclaiming Social Work* which will see changes to the Children's Rights Service. As the contribution of the CROs to the Champions Board has to date been pivotal, their future role will be reviewed dependant upon the outcome of the Life Changes bid.
- 5.14.2 The intention is to also re-launch the Family Firm policy this autumn to co-incide with the introduction of the Action for Children project to provide intensive support to care experienced young people in work experience and

internship placements and the reconvening of the Champions Board.

- 5.14.3 A housing policy will be reviewed and developed specifically directed to young people that makes clear the process and takes into account the barriers currently faced by care experienced young people.

## **6. IMPACT**

- 6.1 The programme of work contributes to the Council's commitments set out in the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement - Outcome 8 (to improve the life chances of children, young people and families at risk); and 5 Year Corporate Business Plan - SCWB 6 (review of workforce/skills mix) and SCWB 14 (reduce use of Out Of Authority Placements).
- 6.2 An Equalities and Human Right Impact Assessment (EHRIA) was completed ahead of the approval of the Corporate Parenting Policy by the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee in June 2012. This report is an update report that seeks to inform Elected Members on the progress of the corporate parenting programme of work since then. The original EHRIA was due for review in May 2015. A further EHRIA has therefore been completed in connection with the submission of this Report. Although no further risks were identified, the assessment again recognised the potential negative experience that care experienced young people face in their lives. However, this is compensated for by the fact that the focus of corporate parenting itself is on mitigating that impact and on promoting positive outcomes for those young people.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

- 7.1 No additional specific risks were identified in relation to the review of the Corporate Parenting Policy 2012 - 2015. A full review of the Policy will take place within the forthcoming year to take account of the development of the Champions Board and the legislative change noted below.
- 7.2 The Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has introduced additional responsibilities for local authorities in relation to providing continuing care for care experienced young people up to the age of 21 in terms of providing accommodation and to the age of 26 in terms of support. These provisions were introduced from April 2015 though will only apply incrementally to each age group cohort as they become eligible. In other words it will be a few years before the total consequence of this legislative change is felt. Planning is on-going however, within the context of both the implementation of *Reclaiming Social Work* and the Residential Review, and modelling has been undertaken as to the likely implications. Exact demand will not be known though until young people start to request the accommodation and support that they are entitled to.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- *Aberdeen City Council Corporate Parenting Policy 2012 - 2015.*
- *Family Firm Guidance 2012 - 2015.*
- *EHRIA Assessment July 2015.*

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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## **APPENDIX ONE: LAC Group @ Northfield Academy**

The Youth Development Team support the development and delivery of a piece of small group work at Northfield Academy which serves looked after children. The focus of this group is to provide new experiences that enable life enrichment and is a response to the City's Corporate Parenting Strategy and the needs of these young people who can have a range of backgrounds and circumstances, including living with kinship carers, in local authority care homes, with foster carers, or being under a supervision order and living with their natural parents.

The group meet weekly to work on pre-agreed challenges and targets in order to gain a Youth Achievement Award (SCQF Level 4/5). Their most recent challenge has been to reflect on their experiences, to identify something that they all recognise and to devise an approach to supporting other children in circumstances similar to their own. Having had negative experiences of the Children's Panel system the group identified a number of improvements that could be made. In partnership, teaching and Youth Work staff have facilitated the expression and gathering of ideas into a PowerPoint presentation that will be delivered to Panel members. This work has empowered the participants to collaborate and recognise the similarities in their situations.

The group have taken their experiences and shared them with a number of Children's Panel members in order to try to influence the way that they provide their service to young people. This involved the young people going to the Aberdeen office of the Children's Panel and delivering their presentation. This work has been further picked up by the local authority Children's Rights Officer and a Principal Planning Officer from Education and Children's Services as a piece of excellent practice in empowering work with young people. These city council staff have said they would like to see similar groups in schools across the city.