

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	17 August 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Corporate Parenting: Annual Update 2015 - 16
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/16/034
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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 responsibility, for the benefit of looked after children and care leavers within Aberdeen.
- 1.2 Implementation of corporate parenting 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 Action Plan for the development of the Champions Board.
 - (ii) Instruct officers to report back on the further implementation of the corporate parenting responsibility to Council in 2017.
 - (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.
- 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. As described below, this funding supports the

Keen4Work project in partnership with Action for Children to provide intensive support for those participating in Keen4Work. This initiative is jointly funded with contributions from Inspire Scotland and the EU.

- 3.3 With regard to developing Aberdeen City's corporate parenting Champion's Board a proposal was submitted to attain funding from the Life Changes Trust. As highlighted below, £219,117 funding has been granted to allow for the development of the Champions Board over three years.
- 3.4 Corporate parenting duties included in Part 9 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Act came into force on 1st April 2015. These duties are designed to ensure that the attention and resources of various publicly funded organisations are explicitly focused on the task of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of looked after children, young people and care leavers. This Part extends the duties of corporate parents and the reporting responsibilities of local authorities. Aberdeen City Council now has a duty to report to Ministers every three years on how it is meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities detailed in the Act.
- 3.5 In November 2015, guidance¹ was published by CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland) to assist the implementation and enactment of the duties included in Part 9. CELCIS are providing ongoing support to local authorities to deliver on their increased responsibilities. The CELCIS guidance supports corporate parents through a six-step process to ensure successful implementation of Part 9. No additional costs were identified in relation to the delivery of corporate parenting reports.

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, its community partners and other public bodies to provide good parenting for our looked after children and care experienced young people. By ensuring that the needs of our looked after children and care experienced young people are being met they will achieve positive outcomes irrespective of their care experience.
- 5.2 The term *looked after children* (LAC) is the legal term used in the legislation to describe children and young people who have experience of

¹ https://www.celcis.org/files/8014/4829/6138/Corporate_Parenting-Enabling_implementation_Part_9.pdf; further implementation notes can be found at <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/spotlight/implementing-corporate-parenting-duties/>

being in care. In recent years, the term *care experienced young people* (CEYP) is increasingly being used nationally to describe looked after children and young people as well as care leavers.

- 5.3 We currently have 569 looked after children between the ages of zero to eighteen years old. The number of looked after children in Aberdeen City has gradually decreased over the past year. Following the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Act research was undertaken on how many children would be potentially eligible for support under Section 9. On the 1st April 15 there were 881 young people aged between 16 – 21 years with carer experience². Of these, 29 were currently looked after. They included 148 sixteen year olds; 150 seventeen year olds and 579 eighteen to twenty-one year olds. Of the 881 young people, Children's Social Work were actively working with 135, with 75 having allocated social workers. Please see Appendix 1 for further details of Aberdeen City's looked after and care experienced population.
- 5.4 With the new legislation, 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 specified young people leaving care, up to their 26th 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 they have positive outcomes and are supported to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The Act also extends the range of public bodies required to act as corporate parents as well as introducing new responsibilities on corporate parents to plan and collaborate to promote the wellbeing of care experienced young people. The Act requires local authorities to develop a corporate parenting plan detailing how it intends to deliver on its responsibilities. The action plan for the development of the Champions Board and associated areas provides the basis for Aberdeen City Council's initial corporate parenting plan.
- 5.5 In advance of the introduction of the recent legislative responsibilities, the Aberdeen City Council corporate parenting policy 2012 - 15 provided a clear framework for identifying specific actions and interventions to close the outcome gap between looked after children and care leavers, and their peers. The focus of the policy was 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.
- 5.6 Part of the corporate parenting policy included the introduction of the Family Firm policy that underlined the Council's commitment to creating and developing training, work experience and employment opportunities for care experienced young people.

² This number includes every child we have ever looked after for a minimum of two years. Not all of these young people will meet the eligibility criteria or wish to take up a service.

5.7 Following the expiry of the previous policy 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.

5.8 Life Changes Trust Funding

5.8.1 In 2015 Aberdeen City participated in a competitive three stage application process to receive funding from the Life Changes Trust to help further develop our Champions Board and associated activities. The Life Changes Trust is an independent Scottish charity established with a Big Lottery Fund with endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: care experienced young people and people affected by dementia.

5.8.2 The application process included a self-assessment as well as an intensive residential that helped to inform the final bid for the funding and was led by Children's Social Work in collaboration with partner agencies.. It also helped us produce an ambitious action plan for both developing the Champions Board and consolidating corporate parenting duties over the next three years³.

5.8.3 We are delighted to advise that in April, this year, it was announced that Aberdeen City Council was being awarded funding from the Trust. Aberdeen is one of eight local authority areas receiving funding to support or establish a Champions Board. A total of £2 million has been awarded to Aberdeen, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Dundee, Falkirk, Highland and Dumfries and Galloway. Aberdeen will receive £219,117 contribution from the Life Changes Trust over three years which will be further boosted by contributions from partners.

5.9 Champions Board

5.9.1 Aberdeen City's corporate parenting Champions Board was established in 2013 and held its inaugural meeting in January 2014. It was based on what has become known as the 'Dundee model'. Champions Boards are relatively new in Scotland but are proving to be an extremely effective opportunity for young people to articulate the challenges that being in care can bring and how these challenges can be faced and overcome with the right support.

5.9.2 In 2015 the Board was under review whilst the application was submitted to the Life Changes Trust. Following the announcement in April this year the Champions Board has regrouped and work has begun to develop the future direction of the Champions Board and the roles and responsibilities of each Champion.

³ Please see the *Champions Board Action Plan 2016 – 2018*, available in the Member's Library.

- 5.9.3 The three year Champions Board action plan details the strategy for our local corporate parents to build on young people's participation and to ensure that it is making a meaningful contribution to improving outcomes for individual young people. Future plans include the appointment of an Advocacy & Participation Worker in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland; the development of a participation group; the appointment of care experienced Development Assistants; the introduction of individual grants for young people; and the development of a website for all looked after children and care experienced young people.
- 5.9.4 The Champions Board is scheduled to meet quarterly. It is currently comprised of looked after young people, elected members and Chief Officers from Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian and the Third Sector. The membership includes new organisations and following the announcement of funding from the Trust there is a renewed enthusiasm to take forward the Champions Board work. Members fully understand that by their authority they can make effective and meaningful change to the services that affect our looked after children and young people. The membership will need to be expanded to include representatives of those groups to which the corporate parenting duty was extended in the 2014 legislation, for example higher education and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 5.9.5 The Champions Board is next scheduled to meet once the Advocacy & Participation Worker who will be employed by Who Cares? Scotland has been appointed. Previously sustaining participation from young people at Champions Board meetings had been a challenge and it is hoped that the new Advocacy & Participation Worker will help empower and enable those who are looked after or had experience of care to share their views and issues with the Board. The Advocacy & Participation Worker will hopefully support the establishment of a consistent cohort of young people to help lead the Champions Board.
- 5.9.6 The format of the Champions Board meetings will be reviewed with a focus on removing the barriers faced by young people taking part. Future areas of focus will be determined by the young people, supported by the Advocacy & Participation Worker.

5.10 Young People's Participation

- 5.10.1 The former YPPG (Young People's Participation Group) was established at the same time as the Champions Board with the aim that young people, supported by the Council's Children's Rights Officer, would identify and present areas for service development, review or redesign. It proved difficult to establish a consistent group of young people to attend Champions Board meetings and as a result it has proved difficult for a balanced and aggregated view to emerge.
- 5.10.2 Alternative activity approaches to encourage participation were trialled. Building on from the enthusiastic response from the October 2014 events a summer programme of events was arranged for July 2015. These events were relatively well attended and provided views to inform service development but were unfortunately not any more successful in

consolidating a group of young people. The experience from these will also help inform the 2016 Cromdale first annual residential detailed below.

- 5.10.3 As stated above the Advocacy & Participation Worker will hopefully support the establishment of a consistent cohort of young people. By spending more time building relationships with young people and in supporting them to attend and join in the Champions Board's activities, our aim is that young people will over time have the confidence to engage with and lead the Board in its direction. It is proposed that there will be two groups one for under 12s and the other for over 12s. The young people will provide their views on issues that matter to them; this will also include their ideas on how to progress areas of change.
- 5.10.4 The recent changes in Children's Social Work as part of the implementation of Reclaiming Social Work has seen two full-time Children's Rights Officers being appointed. This increase from one part-time worker previously provides for more looked after children and young people to have their needs met and views heard. Children's Rights Officers continue to attend resident's meetings in Aberdeen City Children's Homes to ascertain the views of looked after young people. Along with this, they advocate for and represent children and young people accommodated across the whole of the country, in placements varying from secure accommodation and residential schools to foster and kinship placements. The Children's Rights Officers are also involved with their colleagues from various parts of Children's Services in implementing positive change such as the review of the Secure Procedure policy.
- 5.10.5 The Children's Rights Officers are also working closely with young people and our partners to develop a website specifically for Looked After Children, again funded through the Life Changes Trust. This website is being developed with SHMU (Station House Music Unit) and includes input from the Virtual School Head Teacher and the LAC Teacher as well as from residential services and the Youth Team. The website is scheduled to be launched in autumn of 2016.
- 5.10.6 As part of the Action Plan the Children's Rights Officers are supporting the development of individual grants for care experienced young people together with ACVO, the Third Sector Interface for Aberdeen City, who will be actually managing the grants. Individual grants will be awarded on a case by case basis and will look to actively involve young people setting the criteria and making the decisions.
- 5.10.7 The Children's Rights Officers are also taking forward the implementation of the Development Assistant posts and will retain line management responsibilities for the care experienced young people who will be recruited to these posts. From the experience of developing the Life Changes Trust application we want to keep the momentum going and encourage more young people to be involved in the Champions Board. We recognise the importance of continued evaluation so that the Champions Board is meeting the young people's ongoing needs. As part of this Development Assistants would speak to other young people to gather their views on an ongoing basis. Development Assistants will be employed in part-time opportunities and it is hoped that they will be approachable and easy to speak to so that they can talk with other care

experienced young people and provide peer support and mentoring.

- 5.10.8 Included in the action plan, and building on from the previous experience of activities and the residential which was part of the Life Changes bid process, is a week-long residential that is being organised with Adventure Aberdeen and will be held at Cromdale in the autumn. This first annual residential will look to prepare young people to engage with the Champions Board and move the focus away from individual experiences. The residential will look to promote leadership skills; build relationships; develop confidence; increase communication; encourage team work and build the young people's understanding of the Champions Board. It will be attended by Development Assistants and hopefully by members from the newly developed participation group and the Champions Board itself.
- 5.10.9 Following the previous involvement of a group of young people in the recruitment of Children's Right's Officers and the Head of Children's Social Work position another cohort of young people helped with the recruitment of the two full-time Children's Rights Officers earlier this year. The young people provided their own questions and had the opportunity to interview the candidates and their feedback contributed to the final decision on which candidates were appointed.
- 5.10.10 For the academic year 2016-17 the members of the LAC group at Northfield Academy have returned to their mainstream educational classes focussing on gaining qualifications at National 4 and 5. One member of the LAC group has become the Aberdeen's Young Ambassador for Inclusion; young people who face barriers to education are given a voice at a national level to help make a significant impact in raising awareness of the issues around additional support needs and inclusive education.
- 5.10.11 The Aberdeen's Young Ambassador for Inclusion group are working together to share views and experiences of inclusive education and act as a 'voice' at a national level. As a member of the group, each Ambassador participates in national meetings and shares the work of the group in their school and local authority area, and work to take forward the outcomes of national meetings. The Ambassador from the LAC group is keen to find out the views on inclusion of P7 - S3 pupils in Aberdeen City. In order to help with this task, they have produced a video clip explaining what is needed. There was also a link to a survey monkey questionnaire available. The Ambassador has recently applied for and secured a role in school as a Prefect and has been nominated for the Inspirational Young Person Award at the Aberdeen Children and Young People Service Awards which will take place later in 2016.
- 5.10.12 In addition to this work and in partnership with the City Council's Youth Work in schools team there is currently a care experienced young person taking part in a Keen4Work work experience placement. Given the low number of potential participants in the LAC group there are no plans to deliver a group in the coming academic year, although this will be reviewed as and when the need arises.

5.11 Raising Awareness

- 5.11.1 The corporate parenting agenda is both a Council and public authority wide commitment and inspires enthusiasm from all directorates. However, corporate parenting training sessions continue to be provided internally to specific teams or individuals.
- 5.11.2 The continued support that corporate parenting receives from the Council leadership has contributed to the momentum that, for example, continues to create work experience placements as part of our Family Firm policy. The Family Firm policy has helped raise awareness of the corporate parenting responsibilities amongst staff who would not otherwise be aware of them.
- 5.11.3 Aberdeen City Council continues to work closely with a range of partners to raise awareness of corporate parenting. Whether this be sharing corporate parenting action plans and strategies; participation in multi-agency meetings and events; or sharing resources for the benefit of care experienced young people.
- 5.11.4 Aberdeen City Council and its partners send practitioners to attend networking and information sessions hosted by the Scottish Government or national organisations about corporate parenting. 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; new psychoactive substances (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.
- 5.11.5 A draft corporate parenting online interactive learning (OIL) course had been developed in 2015 and was due to be launched in the autumn 2015. However, due to the change of staff, the OIL course is now being reviewed and further developed by Bon Accord Care. The aim is to re-launch this in the autumn at the same time as the Keen4Work re-launch. 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.
- 5.11.6 Practice Improvement Sessions held within Children's Social Work in late 2015 and may 2016 have also helped raise awareness of new throughcare as well as corporate parenting responsibilities, including information on the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, detailed below, and Kinship Care.

5.12 Positive Destinations /Children'

- 5.12.1 Aberdeen Guarantees continues to aid the work being done to prevent vulnerable young people 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 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.

- 5.12.2 Aberdeen Guarantees is a significant resource used by the professionals working with care experienced young people in getting them into positive destinations.
- 5.12.3 Activity Agreements continue to be vital in developing the skills of some of our care experienced young people. The Activity Agreements team provides support for children and young people in their transition journey from school to employment. There were 90 young people supported in Activity Agreements in 2015/16 with 74% achieving positive progressions into either employment; training; or education. This is higher than the national average of 74%. Looked after children and care experienced young people represented 31% of their cohort. The Activity Agreement team will refer suitable care experienced young people to the Keen4Work programme.
- 5.12.4 The work experience unit that deals with all school work experience placements continues to offer extended work experience as part of the City Campus initiative. These are open to all children who are at risk of negative destinations and are tailored around the needs of the child.
- 5.12.5 The latest data set for 2014/15⁴ is continuing to show improvement in looked after children's attainment, leaver destinations, attendance and a decline in exclusions. The data shows that 69% of looked after children achieved positive destinations compared with 40% in 2009/10 and exclusions are down to 218 per 1000 looked after pupils compared with 360 in 2009/10. Although, the outcomes for looked after children are showing gradual improvement, work continues to reduce the number of exclusions and minimise the attainment gap for this vulnerable group. It is encouraging that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has enabled a wider range of corporate parents to become involved in supporting looked after and care experienced young people on their journeys to adulthood.
- 5.12.6 The development of the Virtual School is intended to help address the educational needs of looked after children. The Virtual School Head Teacher was appointed in November 2015. The core purpose of the role is to support improvements in the educational progress and attainment / achievement of all children looked after by the authority, including those that have been placed in schools in other authorities. The role will evolve as we establish and evidence what makes a difference to our children in Aberdeen City.
- 5.12.7 Children who are part of the Virtual School remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled. The Virtual School is a term time provision and an organisational tool which has been created for the effective co-ordination of support for this vulnerable group at a strategic and operational level. The key responsibilities are:
- To ensure that there are systems at school and authority level to rigorously track and monitor the attainment of children who are

⁴ Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2014/15,
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/7455/0>

looked after.

- To support multi-agency working to ensure that effective plans are in place that support access to appropriate and timely support for children who are looked after and that are in line with the Children and Young People's Act 2014.
- To champion the educational needs of looked after children across the authority and those placed out-of-authority (linking with schools, partnership working within the authority and across authorities as well as links with parents / carers).
- To provide support and advice to schools and services and to be an advocate for children and young people who are looked after.

5.12.8 The LAC Teacher continues to work closely with our care experienced young people, their social workers and carers to improve their educational attainment and attendance. The LAC Teacher also advises other education or social work staff about the additional support that young people may require to succeed in education or in a work experience opportunity. Training about 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.

5.12.9 Educational psychology and the LAC Teacher have been involved in the Permanence & Care Excellence (PACE) project, detailed below. 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 is being developed and will undergo a trial using improvement methodology. Initial feedback from the adoptive parents in the trial indicates that the information was "positively useful". It is envisaged that this information will be made available on the new LAC website.

5.12.10 Another incentive that will contribute to the long term positive outcomes for children is the implementation of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a monthly book gifting for looked after children aged 0 – 5 years. It is supported by the Dollywood Foundation and the Scottish Book Trust. Aberdeen City Council are joining all other Scottish local authorities by offering these books to looked after children under 5 years. The books are a fantastic opportunity for our looked after children and contribute to them having the best start in their early years. The books also help promote sharing of books; the development of speech, language and communication; and positive attachments.

5.12.11 Along with the implementation of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Aberdeen City Council have worked closely with the Scottish Book Trust to have Book Bug At Home training delivered to practitioners within Children's Social Work. This attachment based training builds on existing knowledge and offers a variety of tools that practitioners can use in their work with families. The training will help practitioners support families to share books and will contribute to positive attachments between families

as well as increasing the confidence of parents and carers to share books with their children. In addition, there are plans to have “Seekers and Referrers” training for practitioners, delivered by the Adult Learning team. This training will help practitioners identify and signpost those parents and carers presenting with adult literacy concerns to get appropriate support. The first books from the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library will be received by looked after children in August 16.

5.12.12 Children’s Social Work are leading on the Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme, which began in March 2014 and aims to reduce drift and delay for looked after children in achieving permanence. The PACE programme has been operating in Aberdeen City for the past two years. This multi-agency programme is supported by the Scottish Government and CELCIS. During this time a number of changes, across all agencies, have been made to the permanence planning process which have individually and collectively contributed to significant improvement in reducing delay and drift experienced by children in their journey to achieving permanence. The improvement work in Aberdeen, has been a flag ship for other local authorities working to reduce drift and delay for looked after children. The Scottish Government produced a short video of Aberdeen’s PACE work that can be viewed via the Scottish Government website⁵ - <https://vimeo.com/144868345>

5.12.13 PACE uses the model for improvement; to strengthen and build on existing services and enable us to test, measure, implement and scale up new ways of working. At a national level there is a move to align PACE along with several other children’s improvement programmes, including Early Years Collaborative and Raising Attainment for All. The new national stretch aims will provide a measurable framework and there is a commitment to further promote the ‘all teach/all learn’ approach. This is an opportunity for practitioners from across Scotland to listen, to share, to observe and to gather knowledge from each other to take back to the workplace.

5.13 Family Firm

5.13.1 Over the past year the Family Firm opportunities have focused on the development of Keen4Work. Keen4Work had emerged from a pilot work experience undertaken by two care experienced young people within Building Services, at Kittybrewster in 2014.

5.13.2 In 2015 Aberdeen City Council entered into a joint venture with Action for Children to deliver the Keen4Work programme part funded by Inspire Scotland and the EU. It allows for 40 young people per year to take part in the programmes and will offer intensive support tailored to the needs of the individual young person throughout their employment journey. For example, from pre-programme stage into a sustained economic destination.

5.13.3 The three year service agreement between Aberdeen City Council and

⁵ Information regarding PACE can be found on the Scottish Government website at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac/pace>

Action for Children was concluded at the end of 2015 with Action For Children formally starting in 2016⁶. Action for Children currently have one manager and two young people's practitioners for the Keen4Work programme. The young people's practitioners act as mentors to deliver support and co-ordination of the work experience programmes. A third practitioner will take up post in the near future.

- 5.13.4 Keen4Work offers a 12 week (two days per week) supported work experience opportunity alongside an SCQF Employability Award qualification. These placements which are non-employment training opportunities can be matched with the interests of the young person. This allows them to both experience the working environment and to help them to develop transferrable knowledge and skills. Young people are expected to be at stage three on the Employability Pipeline prior to commencing a work experience placement thus ensuring that they are being set to succeed on the programme. Where a young person is not ready, young people's practitioners can work with them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to progress. Referrals are accepted from care experienced young people aged 16 – 26 years.
- 5.13.5 Keen4Work has three operational strands; referrals; placements; and mentoring/support. Referrals are received and co-ordinated within Children's Services; placements are sought and provided through the Council's work experience unit; whilst the mentoring and support for young people is provided by Action For Children. The young people are supported to be ready for the work experience and can be supported into sustained positive destination. Action For Children also provides support to the staff taking on the young person for work experience.
- 5.13.6 Keen4Work continues to encourage closer working links with our partners. Skills Development Scotland continue to provide support to our young people through job coaches and provide a vital function within the Keen4Work process; especially with regard to informing decisions and forward planning with our young people.
- 5.13.7 Since July 2014 there have been seven intakes on the Keen4Work programme. The spring 2016 cohort saw four young people on placements whilst the summer intake is due to begin in July 2016 with eight young people. A re-launch of Family Firm is planned in the autumn. This will showcase the work that has been done and include young people who have completed the programme. The aim is to have 40 young people annually supported through Keen4Work.
- 5.13.8 The North East Developing the Young Workforce Corporate Strategy⁷ published in February 2016, provides a three year strategic strategy for the direction of the Developing the Young Workforce initiative and a strong framework under which to operate. Developing the Young Workforce refers to a seven year programme that aims to better prepare children and young people for the world of work. The initiative was formed following the Wood Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce report that provided 39 recommendations. Recommendation

⁶ Please see the Keen4Work Service Agreement 2016, available in the Member's Library.

⁷ Please see the *Developing the Young Workforce, North East Scotland, Corporate Strategy, February 2016*, available in the Member's Library.

37 focuses on care leavers and recommends that “education and employment transition planning for young people in care should start early with sustained support from public and third sector bodies employers available throughout their journey toward and into employment as is deemed necessary.

- 5.13.9 The previous focus of Family Firm was on creating two year internship opportunities for care experienced young people. These were full time positions with the goal of encouraging the young person to gain employability skills whilst furthering their education and/or training. The internship programmes have had mixed success due to a variety of reasons but not limited to, structure; individual skills and knowledge; and interests.
- 5.13.10 In future, the plan is to provide equality of opportunity for a Modern Apprenticeship with the Council, for care experienced young people as part of the Young People’s Employment Strategy⁸ being developed by Human Resources, in place of further internships.
- 5.13.11 The Young People’s Employment Strategy was drafted in early 2016 and is currently being considered by Corporate Governance. The drive for the Young People’s Employment Strategy is for the Council to contribute to a development plan to provide opportunities for work experience and employment for minority and disadvantaged young people, such as care experienced young people, young carers, young people with additional support needs and minority ethnic groups. This is an exciting proposal and would firmly consolidate Aberdeen City Council’s commitment to the city’s young people; including the additional provision for care experienced young people.
- 5.13.12 It would be a prerequisite that care experienced young people interested in a Family Firm Modern Apprenticeship will have completed the Keen4Work programme. This will give a good indication that the young person is ready to take up Modern Apprenticeship by demonstrating commitment, ability, skills, and knowledge within a work environment. This will help to address some of the issues that care experienced young people have faced in sustaining these opportunities.
- 5.13.13 Family Firm opportunities are interlinked with the aim of Aberdeen Guarantees in promoting positive destinations to the most vulnerable groups at risk of negative destinations. 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.

5.14 Communities, Housing & Infrastructure

- 5.14.1 The joint working protocol between the former Social Care and Well-being Directorate and Communities, Housing and Infrastructure

⁸ Please see the *Young People’s Employment Strategy*, Aberdeen City Council, 2016, available in the Members Library

Directorate 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.

- 5.14.2 Data captured since 2012, shows that a total of 27 individuals have moved into a permanent mainstream tenancy and of these 20 remain in the tenancy allocated.
- 5.14.3 Since January 2015 there are nine individuals in supported accommodation provided by the housing support. Of these, one is placed in a long term supported accommodation project (The Foyer) and five have moved from a looked after care placement into their own accommodation without support. The Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Housing Support Service and the Education and Children's Services Youth team 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.
- 5.14.4 The joint working Housing Options Protocol for young care leavers, which has been in place since late 2011, is currently being reviewed. Part of the review aims to identify improved joint working for individuals who are not classed as 'looked after children' but who are vulnerable young people between 16 and 18 years old and who are still in education.

5.15 Wellbeing and Health

- 5.15.1 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 100% of all children and young people who are looked after and for whom information is forwarded to them continue to be offered an assessment. In 2015, 85% of all children and young people who were looked after and for whom the relevant information and consent was received had health assessments carried out. The team actively contact parents, kinship carers, foster carers and key workers to help facilitate LAC Health assessments being carried out.
- 5.15.2 The NHSG LAC team are currently in discussion with members of the CAMHS team around the assessment of LAC/YP mental health. For example, during 2015, improvement methodology was used to carry out a test of change using strength and difficulties questionnaires (as advised in the Scottish Government's Guidance on Health Assessments for Looked After Children and Young People in Scotland⁹) which suggested that further questions need to be asked. A further test cycle, using the Plan Do Study Act approach will be carried out after the school summer holidays and further discussions will take place with CAMHS professionals.

⁹ *Scottish Government's Guidance on Health Assessments for Looked After Children and Young People in Scotland*, May 2014, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450743.pdf>

5.16 Next Steps

- 5.16.1 The priority is the development of the Champions Board. The action plan identifies specific tasks under five themes; participation; Champions Board; leadership; sustainability; and learning and improvement. Each of the themes have targets that contribute to the main drivers of the theme. Individuals and teams are identified as having responsibility for specific tasks. By working together the tasks included in the action plan will be achieved and contribute to the successful delivery of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 5.16.3 The first year of the action plan looks to build capacity. Activities that will help achieve this include, but are not limited to, the appointment of an Advocacy & Participation Worker; the recruitment of Development Workers; expansion of the Family Firm policy; development of volunteering opportunities; commitment from the Champions Board partners to review their own services to better support care experienced young people; provision of a meeting location for care experienced young people; an annual residential; raising the voice of care experienced young people; and the introduction of individual grants.
- 5.16.4 The action plan provides an ambitious framework that will help ensure that we are meeting the needs of our looked after children and care experienced young people under our corporate parenting responsibilities. Taking into consideration the new reporting duties included in the 2014 Act it is important that we can measure the effectiveness of the Champions Board and the corporate parenting policy. A robust monitoring and evaluation process will be developed based on the Aberdeen 21, a tool developed within Children's Social work that is based on the GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators. In addition, the voice of care experienced young people will be crucial in evaluating how well we are doing.
- 5.16.5 The development of the Champions Board will help us to better understand what works to reduce poor experiences and improve outcomes for care experienced young people. Ensuring that Champions Board members have a clear understanding of care experienced young people's needs, will enable them to identify future commitments that lead to sustained change. This will further develop with the extension of corporate parents as a result of the 2014 Act.

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) has been conducted for the Corporate Policy and Action Plan. This report is an update report that seeks to inform Elected Members on the progress of the corporate parenting programme of work and therefore does not

require an EHRIA to be completed at this time.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 7.1 Although, there are no specific risks identified in relation to this report the council has a responsibility to comply with its statutory corporate parenting duties and responsibilities. To ensure our statutory responsibilities are met the council will continue to deliver the services and activities detailed in this report. In addition, the council will continue to monitor and report annually on corporate parenting to ensure that we mitigate any breach of our statutory responsibilities.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- *Champions Board Action Plan 2016 – 2018, Aberdeen City Council*
- *Young People's Employment Strategy, Aberdeen City Council, 2016*
- *Keen4Work Service Agreement, Aberdeen City Council, 2016*
- *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Annual Evaluation Report, 2015*
- *Developing the Young Workforce, North East Scotland, Corporate Strategy, February 2016*

[Please note that background papers are available in the Member's Library]

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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