

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Public Protection Committee
<b>DATE</b>	10 October 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Corporate Parenting
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/18/159
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Maggie Cruickshank
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	<i>Section 13 Public Protection Committee – 1.2 - <a href="#">Terms of Reference</a></i>

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on how we have addressed and continue to meet our Corporate Parenting responsibilities under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Part 9.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Agree that elected members who have not attended Corporate Parenting training commit to doing so within the next twelve months.
- 2.2 Request an annual update on the Council's progress in meeting its Corporate Parenting responsibilities during the past year.
- 2.3 Agree to continue to promote the Corporate Parenting agenda within Council business, by raising awareness of the issues affecting Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) and promoting service improvements which will benefit our care experienced young people.
- 2.4 Note the Life Changes Trust commitment to provide the Council with £50,000 per annum for the next two years subject to match funding.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Corporate Parenting refers to the collective responsibility of the Council, its community partners and other public bodies to provide good parenting for our care experienced children and young people. By ensuring that the needs of care experienced children and young people are being met they are more likely to achieve positive outcomes irrespective of their care experience.
- 3.2** There are currently 548<sup>1</sup> looked after children under the age of eighteen in Aberdeen City. Of these 13% are looked after at home; 20% are in kinship arrangements; 51% are looked after in foster care settings; 3% are with prospective adopters; <10% are looked after in children's homes (in and out of the city); and <1% are in secure accommodation.
- 3.3** The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act), Part 9, makes 'Corporate Parenting' a statutory concept and provides a framework of duties and responsibilities. It also provides for reporting and accountability structures. There are six specific duties termed "corporate parenting responsibilities" in the 2014 Act which every Corporate Parent has to implement with the aim of improving the outcomes of care experienced children and young people. There is a duty to provide support to children who are looked after and specified young people leaving care, up to their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. The increase in entitlements 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.
- 3.4** Corporate Parents have a responsibility to report on how they are meeting their corporate parenting responsibilities under section 58, their planning and collaborating functions under sections 59 and 60, and its other functions, detailed in the 2014 Act. A Corporate Parenting report was provided to the Scottish Government on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.5 Life Changes Trust Funding**
- 3.5.1** In 2015, Aberdeen City was successful in its application to receive funding of £219,117, from the Life Changes Trust (LCT), an independent Scottish charity, to help further develop our Champions Board and associated activities over three years from April 2016. We are now in the final year of the funding
- 3.5.2** The application process helped us produce an ambitious three year Action Plan for both developing the Champions Board and consolidating Corporate Parenting duties over three years<sup>3</sup>. We provide regular quarterly reports against our Plan to the Trust, who in turn have conducted reviews with us.
- 3.5.3** In August 2018, LCT have advised that they are intending to provide up to two years of additional funding, up to £50,000 per year, with a match funded element. This will enable us to more effectively meet original project outcomes which have been delayed due to the delayed start of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> ECS Looked After Children monthly data, July 2018, CareFirst.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the Scottish Government Corporate Parenting return dated 30 March 18, available in the Member's Library.

<sup>3</sup> Please see the Champions Board Action Plan 2016 – 2019, available at <https://aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/aberdeen-cms/files/2018-01/Corporate%20Parenting%20Action%20Plan%202016-19.pdf>

### **3.6 Action Plan 2016 – 2019**

- 3.6.1 We have completed 92% and are still progressing with 8% of our year one action plan; we have completed 80% and are progressing with 20% of year two; and are progressing with 58% of year three's action plan and have completed 5%.
- 3.6.2 One of our key learning points has been realising how dependent we were on the role of the LCT funded Participation Worker for developing and sustaining consistent relationships with our young people and supporting them in meeting with Corporate Parents. Developing those important relationships is key to the success of our participation strategy and in turn to the realisation of our Plan. There are plans to recruit a new Participation Worker and develop our approach to sustain this moving forward.

### **3.7 Champions Board**

- 3.7.1 The Aberdeen City Champions Board aims to provide care experienced young people with an opportunity to talk directly to decision makers about how best to remove complex barriers to multi-agency working so that innovative solutions can be agreed and implemented in a timely manner. Our Champions Board has met five times in this reporting period; September 17, November 17, January 18, March 18 and June 18. It continues to sustain Chief Officer representation and commitment from key corporate parenting organisations in the city to review their own services to better support care experienced young people and ensure actions agreed are followed through.
- 3.7.2 The Champions Board held its first AGM in January 2018 with the aim of reviewing its robustness and structure to ensure that it is effective and accountable. There is enthusiasm to better understand the needs of our care experienced children and young people and how to be an effective and good Corporate Parent. The Champions Board reporting structure will be embedded into the existing planning structure of the Integrated Children's Services Partnership.

### **3.8 Young People's Participation**

- 3.8.1 Young people's participation continues to be an essential component of our Action Plan. Empowering care experienced children and young people and providing them with the opportunities to develop their confidence, leadership and teamwork skills is a key element of the Plan. The Aberdeen Care Experienced (ACE) Group is one of the ways that our care experienced young people contribute their views about the wider systems in place to meet their needs. ACE is the young people's network and is as far as possible governed by them and their views. Our young people have created brick walls to represent their experiences. There are twelve areas, from Education to Health, that contain bricks representing the young people's positive and negative experiences. They help guide the Champions Board and ensure that their views are represented even in their absence.
- 3.8.2 Closely linked with ACE are activity-based opportunities provided by Sport Aberdeen. Sport Aberdeen provide leisure passes to all care experienced

children and young people and have a dedicated Officer promoting their interests and outcomes. For all activities, there continues to be a dedicated group of young people supporting the work but we are keen to further developed this by offering wider opportunities to increase capacity and competence.

- 3.8.3 Review of the Corporate Parenting participation strategy has been initiated to ensure a better fit with the corporate participation strategy for young people; to widen those invested in the approach; to better link our participation activities to a strong evidence base which is both practical and embedded and informed by children's rights. An initial workshop session has been agreed to launch this review and reset the strategy with the aim of better reflecting a co-produced, strengths based approach to its longer term development.

### **3.9 Who Cares? Scotland Participation Officer**

The LCT funding provided for the appointment of a Participation Worker from Who Cares? Scotland who was to (i) provide a nucleus for young people's participation; (ii) be the facilitator to empower young people take the Champions Board forward; and (iii) be an inspiration for all corporate parents in the city to develop participation within their own organisations. The post has been vacant since June 2018. There will be a refocus and reset of the priorities for the post holder in light of the need to ensure a robust legacy and infrastructure for the final year of LCT funding.

### **3.10 Children's Rights Service**

The Children's Rights Service (CRS) continues to advocate for looked after children and helps get service user feedback about the quality and impact of the service they receive. The CROs manage and coach the Children's Rights Development Assistants (CRDAs) to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills. The CRO and CRDAs work closely with the Who Cares? Scotland Participation Officer to strengthen participation and empower the views of young people in the city.

### **3.11 Children's Rights Development Assistants**

The LCT funding had enabled the appointment of CRDAs who themselves must be care experienced young people. The CRDA contracts are fixed-term for one year and are for six hours per week. The CRDAs are essential in helping represent the views of care experienced children and young people and work on projects related to the Champions Board Action Plan. We currently have five CRDAs with varying care experiences.

### **3.12 Raising Awareness & LAC Website**

- 3.12.1 During this reporting period young people have participated in several consultation events to inform policy and practice. Young people have also helped deliver Corporate Parenting training sessions to Elected Members and key personnel to help raise awareness.

- 3.12.2 An accomplishment is the launch of our LAC Website<sup>4</sup>. This website was developed in collaboration with young people and aims to be a go-to point for care experienced young people to find out about relevant services and information. The website is also designed to provide professionals with information for the benefit of the children and young people they work with. The website content will be monitored and developed by a CRDA.
- 3.12.3 An exciting new mobile app called Mind Of My Own (MOMO) is to be implemented in the next year. MOMO is for looked after children to share their opinions about their experience and have their say in decisions about their lives. MOMO has been used in 60 local authorities. The app will empower young people to communicate their views and help consolidate participation to ensure that children and young people can influence public services and decisions that affect their lives.

### **3.13 Positive Destinations / Education**

- 3.13.1 Since being established in December 2015, the Virtual School has been key to raising the awareness of the needs of our Looked After Children in relation to the Equity and Excellence Agenda set out by the Scottish Government. It has been instrumental in developing and implementing projects, in association with our partners that support us to fulfil our Corporate Parenting Duties.
- 3.13.2 The Virtual School Head Teacher ensures that the needs of our Looked After Children are identified and addressed in Authority policies and Guidelines that relate to children and young people who are accessing Education. Quality Assurance of the implementation of these policies and guidelines in relation to Looked After Children and Young people is supported by the Virtual School Head Teacher. The work of the Virtual School has been recognised by CELCIS resulting in a collaboration that will see the development of a Practice Profile for the role of Designated Managers in schools. The findings of the project will be shared nationally with all schools.
- 3.13.3 To enable their needs to be met some children and young people have an alternative curriculum which requires a more flexible approach. The strong partnership that has now been established with colleagues in the Third Sector, Sport Aberdeen, Further and Higher Education means that colleagues in our schools and social work who are working closely with the children and young people are able to provide a pathway that is more relevant and appropriate.
- 3.13.4 All newly qualified teachers participate in mandatory training delivered by the Virtual School Head Teacher, on understanding their Corporate Parenting duty and the needs of our Looked After Children. CPD activities are also available for classroom practitioners and senior managers to develop their understanding of how best to support Looked After Children and Young people.
- 3.13.5 A pilot project developed between the Virtual School and Aberdeen University has been highlighted by Who Cares? Scotland as 'Promising Practice'. In session 2017/18 the project will be rolled out to Primary schools across the city and involves undergraduate students supporting Looked After Children in the classroom as part of the 'Emerging Literacy' programme being adopted by schools across Aberdeen City.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://aberdeencareexperienced.org.uk/>

- 3.13.6 Partnerships have been secured with both the Wood Foundation and Shell to support the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda for our Looked After Children and Young people. As the profile of the Virtual school increases, further opportunities are being made available from providers outwith the Local Authority
- 3.13.7 Attendance at school for our Looked After Children has increased and the percentage of exclusion incidents for Looked After Children has decreased during 2017/18<sup>5</sup>.

### **3.14 Individual Grants**

- 3.14.1 The third round (part one) of the Individual Grants scheme funding for care experienced young people was launched in May 2018. The Grants are managed by ACVO, the local Third Sector Interface, who are responsible for the launch, administration and management of the grants. There is a six week timeline for applications to be received and young people aged 14 – 25 can apply for a grant of up to £500 if they are/have been looked after by Aberdeen City Council and had had at least three months care experience.
- 3.14.2 The Individual Grants that opened in May received 73 applications. Of the 73 applications 84% received funding. Some of the funding requests included athletic memberships; personal equipment for a sea cadet and ten of the applications have been return applications from young people that were awarded funding in the last round for driving theory tests and provisional licences. The impact and feedback from young people that have received funding has been very positive.

### **3.15 Communities, Housing & Infrastructure**

- 3.15.1 CEYP are now eligible for statutory Council Tax Exemption. The total number of CEYP who have been awarded a discount or exemption is 51, this figure is expected to increase throughout this financial year as CEYP become liable for Council Tax due to being allocated accommodation or reaching the age of liability (18 years of age). We have a small group of officers who are working through our databases identifying CEYP, determining whether there would be a liability for Council Tax and, if so, an application for an exemption or discount can be applied for, regardless of the Scottish local authority that they are resident within. It is predicted that there will be between 150 - 200 awards by the end of the current financial year.
- 3.15.2 Information relating to the Council Tax exemption has been shared with all frontline staff within the Integrated Children's & Families Service to ensure that should there be a CEYP that they are responsible for eligible for the exemption or within a setting where a discount is available for the householder by virtue of their residence this is applied for. All frontline housing staff within the Council and housing associations have been briefed on the exemption so that they can ensure that an application is sought were appropriate.

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<sup>5</sup> This is taken from live data and may be subject to change following a validation exercise later in the year. This is only to provide an indication of the emerging trend.

- 3.15.3 The protocol relating to housing options for CEYP is under review in light of the continuing care legislation to ensure that any CEYP who remains in the care setting until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday will be provided accommodation through the protocol.
- 3.15.4 During the last year there has been improved communication between services which has assisted with the provision of better responses and the avoidance of the CEYP making an inappropriate presentation at our Homelessness service when seeking housing. Through the maintenance of electronic recording of CEYP in line with the revised legislation, should there be any tenancy issues within ACC tenancies, the landlord is able to identify that the individual was care experienced and is able to contact the Youth Team for assistance, if required.

### **3.16 Next Steps**

- 3.16.1 Developing young people's participation and ensuring their voice is at the heart of our Corporate Parenting actions, service design, delivery and improvement continues to be a key priority over the next year.
- 3.16.2 In addition to participation, the development of our Champions Board is a key focus for the year ahead. Ensuring that the Board is fit for purpose, effective and accountable is important for the consolidation of our Action Plan and promoting our organisation as a good Corporate Parent.
- 3.16.3 We will continue to promote care experienced children and young people and raise awareness of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities throughout the organisation and the city. Raising awareness to remove barriers and promote positive outcomes for our care experienced children and young people is one way we will encourage sustainable positive change. The website will continue to be developed and Corporate Parenting training will be delivered.
- 3.16.4 As noted above we are approaching the final year of our Action Plan and funding from the Life Changes Trust. The funding has been instrumental in the developments we have made in the last two years. Funding for the future will need to be sourced. A new Action Plan will need to be developed in compliance with our statutory responsibilities and further policy and guidance will help underpin our Corporate Parenting commitment throughout the organisation.
- 3.16.5 The year ahead will include a Joint Inspection conducted by the Care Inspectorate that will explore, as one of their focus areas, how we are delivering on our Corporate Parenting responsibilities. This will provide the Council with a learning opportunity to take stock of what is going well and areas for improvement.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There is a recommendation that Council note the commitment from LCT to provide £50,000 per annum for the next two years, subject to match funding.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

With regard to legal implications, the Corporate Parenting duties included in Part 9 of the 2014 Act are designed to ensure that the attention and resources of various 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 has a duty to report to Ministers every three years on how it is meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities detailed in the 2014 Act. The first formal submission to the Scottish Government was provided in March 2018. The Council has a responsibility to continue to comply with its statutory obligations.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Financial</b>	If match funding can't be secured we risk losing support from LCT.	H	The funding will help the Council to continue to meet some of its corporate parenting responsibilities.
<b>Legal</b>	Although no specific risk, the Council has responsibility to comply with its statutory corporate parenting responsibilities.	L	Continue to monitor and report annually on corporate parenting to ensure that we mitigate any breach of our statutory responsibilities.
<b>Employee</b>	Corporate Parenting training sessions have been delivered to key personnel across the Council.	L	Training helps inform personnel of their statutory Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
<b>Customer</b>	Care Experienced Children and Young People are a vulnerable cohort whose needs require to be recognised and met.	L	Training and compliance with corporate parenting responsibilities will help ensure improved outcomes for our care experienced young people.
<b>Environment</b>	None at this time.		
<b>Technology</b>	None at this time.		
<b>Reputational</b>	A failure of Aberdeen City Council to comply and meet its Corporate Parenting responsibilities would reflect negatively on the Council.	L	As above for mitigating legal risk.



## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	The impact of being in care will be reduced, enabling care experienced children and young people to better fulfil their educational or employment aspirations within the need to improve the City's Development of a Young Workforce.
<b>Prosperous People</b>	Opportunities for improved outcomes for care experienced children and young people within the city will be maximised by the availability of increased levels of recognition and support.

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	Care experienced children and young people are actively involved in informing the effective delivery of ACCs Corporate Parenting Action Plan. In addition, participation is a key component in developing an effective Champions Board.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	Part 9 of the 2014 Act identifies several organisations as Corporate Parents and extends their responsibilities. Corporate Parents need to comply with their statutory responsibilities and report to the Scottish Government every three years.
<b>Governance</b>	The Champions Board represents Chief Officers from Corporate Parents within the city. Those Chief Officers are encouraged to make sustainable change to help improve the outcomes of our CEYP.
<b>Workforce</b>	The whole of the Council workforce is a Corporate Parent. Training has been provided to key personnel to raise awareness and will continue to be delivered to staff in the coming year.

<b>Process Design</b>	There is a Corporate Parenting Action Plan that has been published in accordance with our statutory responsibilities.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	The 2014 Act identifies 24 Corporate Parents. In Aberdeen, Corporate Parents are represented at the Champions Board and work together with the aim of improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people in the city.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	<i>An EHRIA was done for the 2017 Council report and is not required for this Committee report as there are no risks identified at this time.</i>
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	<i>Not required</i>
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scottish Government Corporate Parenting Return, dated 30 March 18, available in the Member's Library.
- Champions Board Action Plan 2016 – 2019, available in the Member's Library.
- Aberdeen Looked After Children's website - <https://aberdeencareexperienced.org.uk/>

## 10. APPENDICES

*Non Applicable*

## 11 REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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