

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	COG 01/18

**Meeting:** **Community Planning Partnership Chief Officers' Group**

**Date:** **20 February 2018**

**Report Title:** **Corporate Parenting**

**Report By:** **Head of Children's Services**

**1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The report covers a range of matters related to statutory responsibility for Corporate Parenting, including a range of improvement activity and issues impacting on cost and service delivery.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 COG is asked to support the proposal to the Community Planning Partnership to establish a Corporate Parenting Board.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Whilst Councils have always had a statutory duty for children in care (Looked After), this was strengthened with the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which named 24 public bodies as Corporate Parents. The definition in the associated statutory guidance is given as “An organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.” This applies up to the age of 26 years.
- 3.2 Young people who are or have been Looked After are increasingly referred to as Care Experienced Young People (CEYP). They have often experienced many adverse experiences in life, and often go on to experience profound disadvantages into adulthood as a consequence.
- 3.3 There are currently around 500 Looked After children and young people in Highland, as shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 There is a requirement on all Corporate Parent bodies to produce a Corporate Parenting plan.

### 4. Corporate Parenting

- 4.1 Part 9 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) 2014 Act puts ‘corporate parenting’ onto a statutory basis in Scotland. It establishes a framework of duties and responsibilities for relevant public bodies, requiring them to be systematic and proactive in their efforts to meet the needs of CEYP.
- 4.2 The Act also introduces new reporting and accountability structures, with national progress on improving outcomes reported to the Scottish Parliament every three years.
- 4.3 Schedule 4 of the Act specifies the public bodies which are considered to be ‘corporate parents’, which include The Highland Council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Colleges, Universities, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
- 4.4 Every corporate parent is expected to fulfil the corporate parenting duties in their own way, consistent with their own purpose and functions. These duties include:
- Being alert to matters which adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers;
  - Assessing the needs of those children and young people for the services and support they provide;
  - Promoting the interests of those children and young people;
  - Seeking to provide opportunities which will promote the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers;
  - Taking action to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.
- 4.5 All corporate parents must prepare, publish and review a ‘corporate parenting plan’, which details how they will exercise their ‘corporate parenting responsibilities’ and other Part 9 duties. The Act encourages collaborative working between corporate parents to develop, enact and monitor plans.

- 4.6 There is guidance for community planning partnerships about being a good corporate parent in the 'These Are Our Bairns' document (<http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/236882/0064989.pdf>)

## 5 Strategic approaches to improve outcomes

- 5.1 One of the *For Highland's Children* Improvement Groups for children's services is designated for Looked After Children, and is chaired by the Head of Children's Services. There is an improvement plan and the meetings are well supported, with the plan being active and wide-ranging. This plan now also incorporates several actions which arose from a Council Redesign review of these services. This highlighted the need to work across established professional groupings, as education emerged as a high priority along with continued development of placement resources and a renewed emphasis on foster care. There is now a LEAN project in Fostering and Adoption, which is seeking to bring efficiencies and ultimately to increase the number of available foster carers. A second review is now considering commissioned services, including those for Looked After Children, and this will report shortly.
- 5.2 Highland has in place a CHAMPS Board (Children have Amazing Minds, Personalities, Potential and Stories) where some CEYP and senior professionals meet together, develop relationships and understanding, discuss challenges in the Highland area and develop new initiatives.
- 5.3 An example of the work of young people on the CHAMPS Board is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjCqgayyD0M&feature=youtu.be>  
CHAMPS also has its own Twitter account at: <https://twitter.com/HighlandCHAMPS>
- 5.4 The Highland Council has recently taken the view that there is a need for enhanced strategic leadership of corporate parenting across community planning partners, in order to:
- Oversee the development and implementation of the Corporate Parenting Plan(s) of the various agencies;
  - Ensure that those Plans are informed by the CHAMPS, and active engagement with CEYP in a range of ways, underpinned by a Participation Strategy for Highland's CEYP;
  - Support the implementation of the Care Leavers Covenant which was endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership.
- 5.5 It is therefore proposed that a Corporate Parenting Board be developed, to report to the Community Planning Partnership. The outline of this is attached at **Appendix 2**, and Chief Officers are asked to agree that this be taken forward to the CPP.

**Sandra Campbell, Head of Children's Services**  
**January 2018**

## Appendix 1: LAC numbers (November 2017)

<b>Responsible Family team</b>	<b>Number</b>
Caithness	67
East Ross and Disability	71
Inverness Central, Badenoch and Strathspey	60
Inverness East and Nairnshire	32
Inverness Health and Disability	18
Inverness West	92
Lochaber	43
Mid Ross	34
Skye, Lochalsh, Wester Ross and Assynt	35
Sutherland and Disability North	21
Youth Action Central, South and East	16
Youth Action Inverness, Badenoch and North	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Corporate Parenting Board proposal**

#### **Purpose**

1. To promote the corporate parenting role of statutory agencies and to promote awareness of the duties towards care experienced young people in the Highland area.
2. To consider matters brought forward by the CHAMPS board and assist with the related action plan.
3. To take forward the Care Leavers' Covenant and support the Corporate Parenting plans of statutory agencies.

#### **Membership**

To include elected members, senior officers of relevant agencies, care experienced young people and representation from key Third Sector agencies that support care experienced young people.

#### **Responsibilities**

1. To maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for care experienced young people and make appropriate recommendations for action.
2. To ensure there are good working arrangements between services and agencies in support of the plans and strategies.
3. To provide a forum for care experienced young people to influence policy and to share their experiences of services they've received.
4. To promote the Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities across all relevant bodies in Highland.

#### **Accountability**

To the Community Planning Partnership.

#### **Operational arrangements**

1. The chair will be agreed by the Community Planning Partnership.
2. The meetings will be minuted and the minutes provided to the Community Planning Partnership.
3. The Head of Children's Services will act as Lead Officer for the Board with assistance from other senior officers and will facilitate the drawing up of the agenda and supporting papers.
4. The Looked After Children Improvement group will provide regular updates on its improvement plan.
5. The CHAMPS board will nominate young people to sit on the board to represent the views of Care Experienced Young People across Highland and to act as a conduit with CHAMPS.
6. The board will put in place appropriate ways to involve young people to ensure that their engagement is maximised and meaningful.

#### **Frequency of meetings**

Meetings will be held quarterly.