

# Briefing Note No. 3/08

## Corporate Parenting

December 2008



The government published “**These Are Our Bairns**” in September 2008, which is a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent. Being a good corporate parent means we should:

- “Accept responsibility for the council’s looked after children and young people;
- make their needs a priority; and
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children”.

### **There are several reasons why the Community Planning Partnership needs to act collectively:**

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

### **Source “ These Are Our Bairns” 2008**

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

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

### **Community Planning Partnerships will want to:**

- \* Make sure that the needs of looked after children and young people and care leavers are articulated within the community plan, associated action plan, integrated children services plan and single outcome agreement.

- \* Make sure that the independent sector partners are actively engaged in the Community Planning Partnership.
- \* Be confident that there is a joint focus of activity, ensuring that looked after children and young people and care leavers are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible, and included.
- \* Be aspirational for looked after children and young people and care leavers, holding the same expectations good parents would have for their own children.
- \* Make sure that all employees within your organisations are aware of their responsibilities in respect of looked after children and young people and care leavers.
- \* Deliver integrated high quality services that meet the needs of looked after children and young people and care leavers.
- \* Make sure that the widest range of choices and opportunities are available to looked after children and young people and care leavers, particularly at transitional stages.
- \* Make that sure that looked after children and young people and care leavers are able to play a positive part in the life of their community.
- \* Make sure that in all you do, looked after children and young people and care leavers are actively involved in decisions that effect them.
- \* Make sure a robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of activities to support looked after children and young people and care leavers, thereby enabling you to report on and account for your progress”.

**Source “ *These Are Our Bairns*” 2008**

**Progress in North Ayrshire**

The corporate parenting strategy is scheduled to be completed early next year, and a range of training and awareness raising events have already taken place.

In September 2008 the new “We Can and Must do Better” training DVD/ROM was launched. The DVD/ROM contains information relating to the issues faced by looked after children and young people and care leavers, particularly with regards to improving their education and other life outcomes. The materials are designed for both self-study and tutored training courses, as well as allowing for the design of courses tailored to particular needs. The target audience for the training includes teachers, carers, social services staff, health professional, housing professionals and others involved in the lives of looked after children and young people and care leavers. It is anticipated that the training will be rolled out across North Ayrshire.

A software package, Viewpoint, has been purchased which facilitates more effective consultation with looked after children and young people. A pilot using this software has been completed and was evaluated very highly by both the young people and the staff involved.

**North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP)**

A report on corporate parenting was presented to the North Ayrshire CPP Board on the 11 December 2008. The CPP Board acknowledged the progress North Ayrshire has made to

date in improving its performance as a corporate parent, and agreed that the Community Planning Partnership take a lead role in promoting and nurturing their corporate family ethos. The CPP Board requested an updated report in March 2009 including the final corporate parenting strategy and action plan.

For further information on corporate parenting, please contact David MacRitchie, Senior Manager, Children and Families [dmacritchie@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:dmacritchie@north-ayrshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01294 317781

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