

**FALKIRK COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORTING STATEMENT
2014/15**

Organisation Name	“Who Cares?” Scotland
Project	Children’s Rights Service
Agreement Dates	2014 - 2015
Name of Lead Officer	Vivien Thomson

A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

The Aims of the service provided by “Who Cares?” Scotland are as follows:

- To deliver an effective Independent advocacy, advice and support service to children and young people who are looked after away from home.
- To liaise with other relevant service providers and particularly to work alongside the Falkirk CRO.
- To collate client feedback and assess this information to identify needs.
- To protect children and young people defined as “in need” who are vulnerable.
- To enable children/young people who need a stronger voice to have their views listened to and actioned where appropriate.
- To enable children and young people to be involved in contributing to decisions about their personal care plan.
- To challenge discriminatory views.
- To support children and young people in ways that improve their confidence.
- To act in the child/young person’s best interests.
- To act as an intermediary between children/young people and Council services.
- To consult with children and young people about the services they receive.
- To involve children and young people in the wider work of “Who Cares?” Scotland to ensure Falkirk’s young people are represented nationally.

List of Agreed Outcomes

Regular monitoring meetings with Falkirk Council, Quarriers and “Who Cares?” Scotland ensures that work undertaken fulfils the contractual obligations outlined within the Joint Working Agreement. Agreed outcomes are discussed at the monitoring meetings in relation to work undertaken by the young person’s worker and the Children’s Rights Officer

Why Service/Project is Funded Externally Rather than by the Council

“Who Cares?” Scotland is an independent advocacy organisation who have provided a service to young people across Scotland since 1978. The organisation works across Scotland with children and young people with experience of care, to advocate and help them speak out, secure their rights and ensure their qualities and successes are recognised across society. This is done by influencing the people, culture and systems that will positively affect their quality of life. The organisation consults with young people from Falkirk Council and other Local Authority areas to ensure their views are fed into local and national policies and legislation. The organisation lobbies the Scottish Government to improve outcomes for all young people in care ensuring that young people with experience of care remain a high priority on the Scottish Government’s agenda. The council is required to consult with young people and provide independent advocacy. This service could not be provided within the Council as this could result in conflict with other legal obligations. These duties are increased in the provisions of the Children and Young People (Scot) Act 2014.

B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBEJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES**Summary of Key Achievements****Local Achievements**

- Advocacy provided for 79 young people during this period which included 204 individual meetings with young people and 69 formal meetings.
- Young people participated in Children's Hearing Training for Panel Members from the Falkirk Office and various corporate parenting and Have Your Say events.
- Young Person's Worker undertook regular visits to residential units within Falkirk and purchased placements out with the Local Authority area to ensure that young people had information about the service and their rights.
- "Who Cares?" Scotland continues to work in partnership with Quarriers Children's Rights Service to jointly provide a children's rights and advocacy service for Falkirk Council's children and young people. This has included joint service development work, jointly monitoring the services and reviewing and updating the protocol agreement.
- "Who Cares?" Is a key partner in the work to consider the development of a Champions approach to corporate parenting and are partners in a funding bid related to this.

National Achievements

- "Who Cares?" were part of the consortium to fight discrimination of children and young people in and from care. Falkirk Council signed up in 2013 to the five year campaign along with 28 Local Authorities to help challenge discrimination in our society. Falkirk Council pledged to "set up a regular 'have your say' groups for looked after young people making sure that corporate parents listen to the views of young people and do their best to take action". "Who Cares?" have been involved in facilitating and taking forward this work locally.
- Young people from Falkirk have continued to assist presenting at national and local events to ensure the voice of care experienced young people is heard.
- Young people from Falkirk have continued to be part of the consultations related to the Children and Young peoples (Scot) act 2014, particulars continuing care, after care and corporate parenting.
- .Young people from Falkirk participate in the participation and consultation forums covering the central belt.
- Phase 3 of the Corporate Parenting training commissioned by the Scottish Government is underway. Falkirk Council's young people will be involved in delivering training within the Local Authority and to partners as part of the new corporate parenting duties.

Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

The service is contracted for 18.5 hours per week. Due to high demand for advocacy provision it is difficult to respond to all requests for advocacy support within the time available. The organisation does endeavour to respond flexibly using its national links, but is also working within the budget constraints which does not allow for further partnership initiatives within the Local Authority.

How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

The service continues to work in partnership with Quarriers Children's Rights service and CLD (10 hour post) to ensure that young people both accommodated and within the community receive a robust children's rights service. The organisation ensures that the views of children and young people are fed into local and national consultations. This is a key priority of the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan.

List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

There are no areas of shortfall.

How often are Review Meetings held with Lead Officer

Joint "Who Cares?" and Quarriers monitoring meetings take place quarterly, with a Steering Group of key stakeholders which directs focus also meeting quarterly. The Service report twice yearly to the Children's Commission. Additional meetings take place to review the protocol and develop the funding bid.

C FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Total Support Provided (Financial & In- Kind Contributions)

£27,970

Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts

September 2014 – due September 2015

Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation

"Who Cares?" is a robust organisation and there are currently no known risks.

Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)

Low

D CONCLUSIONS

Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year

The service continues to meet a key priority in the Council's corporate parenting action plan. Feedback for young people and other groups is that the service is valued and significantly assists young people to express their views. This is increasingly important with the new legislation and recent changes in the Children's hearing system. "Who Cares?" Will play a key role in assisting us to meet the new corporate parenting duties.

E COMPLETED BY	
<u>Name</u>	Vivien Thomson
<u>Designation</u>	Service Manager
<u>Date</u>	10th October 2015