

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a sailing ship on wavy lines representing water. The top-right quadrant depicts a beaver standing on its hind legs, holding a cross in its paws. The bottom-left quadrant shows a grizzly bear standing on its hind legs, holding a shield. The bottom-right quadrant shows a grizzly bear standing on its hind legs, holding a shield. Above the shield is a crown with four points, each topped with a flower. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "CITY OF VANCOUVER" in a stylized font.

Agenda Item 7

Corporate Parenting

Falkirk Council

Title: Corporate Parenting
Meeting: Executive
Date: 13 March 2018
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report updates the Executive on the implementation of the Council's Corporate Parenting Duties, and specifically progress with developing a Family Firm Approach.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **The Executive is asked to agree:-**

- (1) the continued focus on the three identified Corporate Parenting priorities as outlined in the Integrated Children's Services Plan;**
- (2) that progress on implementing the Council's Corporate Parenting duties be reported annually to the Executive;**
- (3) that the proposals for the Family Firm Approach summarised in Section 4.5 be progressed and implemented.**

3. Background

- 3.1. In 2016, a Scrutiny Panel was undertaken in relation to the needs of Looked After children. This coincided with implementation of aspects of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which introduced new Corporate Parenting duties to Local Authorities and other public bodies. The subsequent report to the Executive made a number of recommendations including the establishment of a Champions Board and that a Family Firm Approach be developed.
- 3.2. In 2017, the Executive considered a report on progress with the Family Firm approach. This indicated that a Corporate Parenting Steering Group had been established within the new structure of the Community Planning Partnership and that this group would take forward the development of a Family Firm model within Falkirk.
- 3.3. The Steering Group commenced in 2017, and is overseeing the three priority areas for Corporate Parenting identified within the Integrated Children's Services Plan. These are:
- awareness raising of Corporate Parenting across the Council and partners;
 - development of a Family Firm Approach within the Council;

- establishment of a Champions Board to allow local care experienced young people to influence how services and care is provided.

4. Considerations

4.1. The Act names 24 corporate parents and outlines their duties. These can be summarised as:-

- 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;
- *acting* to help children and young people access such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided.

Additionally, all corporate parents must prepare, publish and review a Corporate Parenting report as directed by Ministers.

4.2 In Falkirk, Corporate Parenting has been given a high profile recognising the importance of promoting and meeting the needs of those for whom the Council is corporate parent. Corporate Parenting is defined as:-

“an organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted, from infancy through to adulthood.”

It is therefore about how corporate parents listen to children and young people, and are proactive in meeting their needs.

4.3 Champions Board

4.3.1 The Champions Board is a crucial aspect of the Council’s implementation of Corporate Parenting duties. It provides a forum and approach which gives children and young people a voice and the ability to influence and challenge local policy and practice.

A formal launch in September 2017, attended by a wide range of corporate parents, resulted in pledges to take forward specific actions to listen to and promote the needs of care experienced children and young people. Several corporate parents are now actively working with young people to consider how these pledges are put into action.

4.3.2 The first formal meeting of the Champions Board, chaired by a young person, was held on 22 November 2017. The four nominated Elected Members, other key individuals and young people were in attendance. Future meetings will take place after each Committee cycle to maximise the capacity to influence policy.

- 4.3.3 Priority issues identified range from mental health to “out of office hours” support. Young people are feeling encouraged by their corporate parents’ willingness to work with them.
- 4.3.4 Several participation groups are established; older young people meet weekly, and a Mini Champs group for younger children has commenced.
- 4.3.5 The Life Changes Trust who fund this work are positive about Falkirk’s partnership model and the added value this brings. A care experienced trainee opportunity remains part of the work.
- 4.3.6 Champions Board young people are well connected to local and national work such as the 1000 voices campaign which sits within the Independent Care Review.

4.4 Awareness Raising

- 4.4.1 The Corporate Parenting Steering Group continues to develop the process for raising awareness of Corporate Parenting. The approach is similar to that used for child protection and GIRFEC and incorporates three levels of awareness training:-
- on-line general awareness of duties applicable to all staff;
 - training for those providing general services to young people;
 - enhanced training for those most directly involved with care experienced children and young people.
- 4.4.2 Partners have shared their own on-line courses with a view to using this model in the Council. Additionally, “Who Cares?”, along with our Workforce Development section, are developing level two and three awareness raising material.
- 4.4.3 A briefing for new Members was held in 2017. The development of the Champions Board has also increased awareness and understanding of Corporate Parenting amongst officers and Members with a related impact on service development and young people’s participation.

4.5 Family Firm Approach

- 4.5.1 Across the country there are a range of Family Firm Models. These provide a way to promote and enhance opportunities for care experienced young people to develop employability skills and find training and employment, if required within the “Council Family”.
- 4.5.2 The Corporate Parenting Steering Group has benefited from the existing knowledge and provision of Employment and Training Unit around supported training to vulnerable groups. “Who Cares?” has shared their learning from supporting and training almost 40 care experienced young people.
- 4.5.3 It is understood that successful training has the greatest impact for young people where there are specific supports in place not only for the trainee but also for employers providing the opportunities.

4.5.4 Data on the range of contacts and training schemes already in place and numbers of care experienced young people who have indicated their status in applications have provided a baseline for development, along with details of the number of Falkirk care experienced young people in education and training. These indicate that many of our young people are not ready to access existing provision or require additional support to do so.

4.5.5 Children's Services are bringing MCR Pathways, an employability training programme focused on Looked After children and successfully piloted in Glasgow, to Falkirk. This will provide a critical early stage, focused, stepping stone to assist Looked After young people to develop core skills transferable to the world of work.

The model identifies Looked After young people early in their secondary school career, and provides them with a Mentor. The volunteer Mentor meets with the young person weekly; coaching and supporting them to develop the skills required for them to be ready for training or employment. Mentors come from a range of agencies such as local Councils and Strathclyde University.

Training and support is provided to the Mentors, and both Mentors and their agencies note the impact on their own leadership skills as well as the benefits to the individuals they mentor.

MCR Pathways also work with a range of local partners who offer young people "tasters"; the chance to try out a job, college or university in small two or three hour blocks, an approach in keeping with the Falkirk model.

4.5.6 The "Who Cares?" Family Firm Toolkit is being used to further develop our local Family Firm approach. The following principles have been agreed:-

- Falkirk Family Firm will include a range of provision which young people can choose from depending on their individual needs;
- the menu will cover support in school, guaranteed work experience, mentoring and supported training including modern apprenticeships;
- support will be person centred and flexible;
- an extension of the Council's guaranteed interview scheme to provide the option of guaranteed employment will be explored;
- the model will have core support for young people and providers;
- all areas of the Council should be assisted to provide opportunities;
- priority will be given to those for whom Falkirk Council are corporate parent;
- the model is being developed in partnership with key agencies/services.

4.5.7 The model, outlined in Appendix 1, enhances existing support to young people and allows provision to be developed to provide priority access in favour of care leavers. The Champions Board Participation Group will further develop the map and pathway.

4.5.8 The proposal is in line with the recommendations of the Care Leavers Covenant and "These Are Our Bairns" and is currently being tested with a small number of young people.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The proposals have been discussed with the Children's Commission Leadership Group, Corporate Parenting Steering Group and with the young people of the Champions Board, who have identified employment and training support and awareness of corporate parenting as areas for improvement.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 No finance was provided for Corporate Parenting as part of the implementation of the Act. Proposals for developing and implementing a local response are being considered within existing resources or by redesigning current provision.

Funding of £201,160 over three years was successfully sourced from Life Changes Trust to develop the Champions Board. Consideration is being given to re-design of the Children's Rights Service to ensure the Champion's Board continues beyond the funding period.

We are alert to any opportunity to access local or national funding streams to support the Council's Corporate Parenting work and particularly the Family Firm approach. Any extension of existing provision has the potential to incur additional costs.

Resources

- 6.2 To develop the Council's three Corporate Parenting priorities, a range of resources is required; including support from Third Sector, all Council services, and other Corporate Parents. The funding from Life Changes Trust is dedicated to progressing one of the priorities.

Legal

- 6.3 Implementation of the Council's Corporate Parenting duties is a legal requirement and subject to reporting to the Scottish Government. The first report is due in April 2018.

Risk

- 6.4 Implementing effective Corporate Parenting strategies reduces financial risk for the Council.

Equalities

- 6.5 Aspects of the implementation of corporate parenting duties may require an EPIA, though underpinned by a legal requirement in favour of care experienced children and young people.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 No sustainability/environmental; impact assessment is required.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate Parenting duties have increased significantly since 2014, and aim to improving outcomes for care experienced young people which remain significantly poorer than the rest of the population. A clear plan for how these duties are implemented will improve outcomes for care experienced young people and have a proportionate impact on costs.

For Director of Children's Services

Author: Vivien Thomson, Service Manager, 01324 508704, vivien.thomson@falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 27 February 2018

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Family Firm Map

List of Background Papers:

None

FALKIRK FAMILY FIRM “MAP”

