

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

Organisation Name	<b>Quarriers Scotland</b>
Project	<b>Quarriers Falkirk Children's Rights</b>
Agreement Dates	<b>2014 - 2015</b>
Name of Lead Officer	<b>Vivien Thomson</b>

**A OVERALL ORGANISATION AIMS**

Summary of Key Aims & Objectives

- To develop and deliver a comprehensive Children's Rights Service in the Falkirk area.
- To promote, protect and uphold the rights of children and young people from birth to 19 years within the Falkirk area as stated within the UNCRC and Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and associated guidance.
- To collate client feedback and questionnaires and assess this information to identify needs.
- To develop a pool of volunteers to provide information / advocacy services to children and young people.
- To develop and maintain a service profile and target marginalised children and young people.
- To facilitate the "Have your say forum" for children and young people Looked After & Accommodated in line with Falkirk Councils Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Children's Rights Service is accessible to all children and young people normally resident within the Falkirk Council area.

List of Agreed Outcomes

Provision of a service to children from Falkirk to ensure that their rights are upheld both individually and within policy developments.

Evidence of addressing themes from across services which require attention in relation to children's rights.

Close work with Who Cares? to ensure that the rights of children who are looked after are maintained and upheld.

Evidence of challenge to the Council and its partners where appropriate, where children's issues are not being properly upheld or developed.

Evidence of involvement in and initiation of developments within Children's Services.

Ensuring that key priorities in the ICSP are being taken forward and involve young people.

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

Quarriers is a voluntary organisation who have provided a service to adults and young people across Scotland with a particular emphasis and track record of involving service users in their work. The organisation also works at national level to influence policy. 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.

## **B ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs. OBJECTIVES / AGREED OUTCOMES**

### Summary of Key Achievements

- Year on year increase in referrals to Falkirk Children's Rights Service.
- Employment of a care leaver as a graduate trainee and subsequent employment of the young person.
- The Children's Rights Service has been successful in highlighting children's rights to the services and agencies working within the Falkirk area and is enabling all children and young people to have their voices heard e.g. via corporate parenting events, individual advocacy and proactive advertising.
- Quarriers Falkirk Children's Rights Service has successfully recruited volunteers to provide Information/Advocacy to children and young people.
- The Children's Rights Officer is co-facilitating the "Have your say" work, a key aspect of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- After successfully piloting drop-in surgeries within two High Schools, the Children's Rights Service has now successfully rolled this out to other schools.
- The Children's Rights Officer regularly liaises with young people in Falkirk Council residential units and foster placements.
- The Children's Rights Officer actively contributes to a number of strategic groups including the Corporate Parenting Action Group and the Children and Families Continuous Improvement Group, and reports, in conjunction with Who Cares? to the Children's Commission.
- The CRO is involved in developing the response to the new legislation alongside Who Cares? and the council. The service will form the core approach to how the council meets our new duties.
- The service, alongside Who Cares? and the council has reviewed the working protocol and will focus on the most vulnerable groups of young people.

### Summary of Key Issues/ Challenges Facing Organisation

The Falkirk Children's rights Service combines the Quarriers Children's Rights Service and the Who Cares Service for children who are looked after by the council. The challenges of establishing a consistent approach to this joint work have been significantly overcome, with current monitoring arrangement and greater cohesion within the services. Roles are clearly outlined, and priorities jointly agreed to focus on the most vulnerable. The service has a more established approach to recruiting volunteers, but numbers remain low. The focus on particular groups is hoped to give impetus to this, a key aspect of the contract to provide a wide and flexible service.

The service is also vital in assisting the Council to develop our response to the Children and Young people (Scot) Act 2014. This includes undertaking important scoping work with young people and provision of exit interviews for families removed from the child protection register and children leaving foster care. The service is also assisting in looking at how the council can best and most flexibly respond to the new legislation allowing young people to remain in care until the age of 21 years; developing work on advocacy with Who Cares, and contributing to identifying gaps in services.

### How has Organisation Contributed to Council/ Service Priorities

The service continues to work in partnership with the Who Cares? Service 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.

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### List any Areas where there has been Shortfall in Performance

There continue to be challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers. The service and council are actively working together in this area.

### 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.

C FINANCIAL / RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW	
<u>Total Support Provided (Financial &amp; In- Kind Contributions)</u>	
£86,200	
<u>Last Period of Submitted Audited Accounts</u>	
September 2014 due September 2015	
<u>Future Risks (Financial, Operational or Structural) Faced by Organisation</u>	
None	
<u>Overall Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High)</u>	
Low	
D CONCLUSIONS	
<u>Summary/ Opinion of Organisations Overall Progress During Year</u>	
<p>The service continues to meet a key priority in the Council's Corporate Parenting Action Plan. Feedback from services and young people and other groups is that the Children's Right Service is valued and assists young people to express their views. The CRO additionally is key to ensuring that service developments across the council, and particularly those related to the new legislations, take account of the rights and needs of children in Falkirk.</p>	
E COMPLETED BY	
<u>Name</u>	Vivien Thomson
<u>Designation</u>	Service Manager
<u>Date</u>	10th October 2015