

Angus Corporate Parenting Plan 2017 – 2020

Getting It Right For Looked After and Care Experienced Children and Young People in Angus

Progress Report April 2017 – March 2019

Foreword

I am pleased to highlight in this report, some of the excellent partnership work that is delivering real improvements for our looked after children and young people. The commitment of the Corporate Parenting Board and the Lead Officers Group provides a strong base to deliver our vision for looked after young people as is laid out in our six pledges.

As a corporate parent I continue to take this responsibility very seriously and have been working with some of our young people to ensure we continue to build on the connections and communication which have been established through our very enjoyable engagement events. Some of the things I have heard from young people is the desire to feel 'normal'; to feel 'cared for', 'valued' and 'included'. I am committed to keeping my pledge to be available to hear what young people have to say and importantly using my position, knowledge and understanding of the issues to advocate and support positive change.

Tackling child poverty is one of the Community Planning Partnership's priorities as we go forward I believe firmly that, working with all our partners in Angus, we can tackle Child Poverty locally. In 2018, we trialled an approach in Brechin to provide meals for children who normally receive free school meals over the October holiday period. We are now extending this 'Fun and Food' initiative as one of the ways of reducing holiday hunger in 2019/20 and supporting families.

This report is a summary of the work we have undertaken and plan to deliver over the next year. At the end of our 3 year plan in 2020 we will deliver a full report on our progress and performance and deliver our revised plan for the future. This will put our care experienced young people firmly at the centre of everything we do. I am excited to see what the future holds for our young people and for us as corporate parents as we work together to make continued improvements.

One of our young people who has been a tremendous support in raising awareness of corporate parenting duties summaries what we need to do really well:

It has been good coming to the events and meeting some of the people in a more relaxed place. I spoke at an event a while ago and the advice I gave from my own experience was to build relationships with young people, meet us in places that suit us and do what you say you will do;

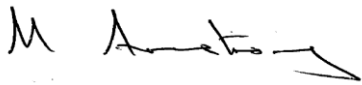
Relationships - Opportunity and Environment – Action

It's pretty simple but makes a big difference. I am looking forward to next year and getting more involved because it's really is important.

'K' - Young Person and Advisor to Chair of CPLO Group

I take this opportunity to thank all of the young people for the work they put into our participation strategy and our Corporate Parenting Board for the value they place on our children and young people having a voice and influencing change.

I look forward to bringing you our 3 year report and plan for the future next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Armstrong', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Armstrong, Chair, Angus Corporate Parenting Board

Background

Angus Integrated Children's Service Corporate Parenting Plan 2017 – 2020 https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_13_report_no_35917_angus_integrated_childrens_services_corporate_parenting_plan_0 was launched in 2017. In order to ensure collaborative work towards reaching the ambition of the plan, a Corporate Parenting Lead Officer Group (CPLO Group) was established and is chaired by a Service Leader from Angus Council. The CPLO Group has wide representation from Angus Council, SCRA, Police, NHS Tayside, Angus Alive, Skills Development Scotland and Third Sector. CPLO Group report on a quarterly basis to the Angus Corporate Parenting Board.

This report provides a summary of progress towards improved outcomes for young people against the 6 commitments we have made in our plan:

- 1. We will listen to what you have to say and ensure you are involved in the decisions that affect your life.**
- 2. We will find the best possible place for you to live that matches what you need and help you to stay in touch with people who are important to you.**
- 3. We will help you to achieve your best at school and in all places where you learn.**
- 4. We will take care of your wellbeing and encourage you to be healthy and active.**
- 5. We will ensure you have a lead professional who visits you regularly and works with you and others to provide you with an assessment of your needs and a clear, up to date plan.**
- 6. We will support you to have a positive transition into adulthood.**

What Difference Are We Making?

The actions laid out in the Plan are related to each of our 6 Corporate Parenting Pledges and progress is reviewed through our CPLO Group and reported below. At the end of year 3, we will report on trends in number and profile of our children and young people in line with our partnership data set (appendix 1). We have access to data which, together with feedback from our young people, will help us see the impact of the activities we are working on together.

- 1. We will listen to what you have to say and ensure you are involved in the decisions that affect your life.**

Angus previously operated a young person led 'corporate parenting board'. This was disbanded in 2016 as the model was not effective for young people who felt that one approach was not working well for them and limited the numbers of young people participating. Since 2017 we have carried out the following work to improve our engagement with children and young people:

Group Advocacy and Consultation

Who Cares Scotland have supported a group advocacy model in Angus called the TOOT (Ten out of Ten) Group. Since 2017 the Chair of the CPLO Group has maintained close contact with the 8 young people in the group to hear about matters that affect them, report back to the young people on our work and progress improvements.

Supported by the TOOT group, a wide scale consultation with young people took place in 2018 seeking views about best methods of engagement. This survey had a positive response with 38 young people telling us about what would work for them. Engagement was encouraged with rewards for example 2 young people selected to experience 'a day with a corporate parent'. The feedback from the survey told us group participation only suited a very small number of young people; the preference is to offer a range of opportunities where support is offered to facilitate participation, as well as 1-1 sessions with fun as the focus! Based on the views of the young people our consultation work has included activity based events to meet, engage and have fun with corporate parents; examples are a sports event at a local rugby club and a pizza making event at Arbroath College as well as individual meetings with the Chair of the Board and Chair of the CPLO Group. Key themes from these events have heavily shaped our priorities and are routinely reported to the CPLO Group to influence their agenda.

Our engagement work is influenced by the Angus Youth Engagement Strategy and our looked after young people have helped in shaping and reviewing the strategy.

Our next steps are to develop a thematic group engagement model where we will deliver a programme young people can engage in that is time limited, based on a common theme and supported by corporate parents and Who Cares? Scotland.

Individual Advocacy

We have worked with Who Cares to promote advocacy for young people living at home and in kinship care. There are now increased numbers of young people accessing support when needed assisting them to become more informed and involved in decision making, giving them greater involvement and control over decisions that have an impact on them. However we recognise that advocacy, availability and choice remains an area for future development.

Being Heard

Young people want more choice and control in their child's plan meetings. We currently encourage young people to share their views about this however recognise that sending letters and written feedback sheets is neither accessible nor in line with young people's norms and methods of communication. We have worked with young people and Angus Council digital enablement team to design a digital feedback tool

called 'My Views'. Questions about choice and control are built into the application based on the input from young people. We have taken time to co-produce this application with young people so that it has the best chance of success.

We have worked in partnership with SCRA to develop the Better Hearings Agenda to improve participation in children's hearings. Dundee and Angus have a shared protocol that launched in 2018 to enable hearings to be more child friendly by reducing the number of adults in attendance, promoting choice for the child and supporting pre-hearing visits.

We have also started work on reviewing our language and terminology. Our young people have told us the language we use sets them apart from their peers. To be 'LAC' instead of a 'young person', to be a 'sibling' instead of a 'brother or sister' and to have 'contact' where we would describe it as 'family time'. Part of the work across our services has been to challenge this language and terminology we have developed over time to ensure we best describe the particular needs of individual young people.

We have some emerging practice examples of young people writing their own child's plan and being given choice over terms used to describe activity to support them. We will continue to embed this into our practice truly putting the child at the centre of their child's plan.

Next Steps

'My Views'

We will launch our newly developed digital tool 'My Views' to enable looked after children and young people to engage openly with their social worker and review officers to share their views, report good news and raise issues. Young people have been key to the development and design of the tool with two young people joining the project board. The tool will promote choice and control for young people including how and where their child's planning meetings take place as well as ensuring their voice is heard at meetings. The tool is flexible and can be used at any time by the child to share their news or views. During Aug – Dec 2019 we will test the application with young people in the Forfar/Kirriemuir locality taking on board comments for improvements before a full roll out.

Independent Advocacy

We are engaged in a Tayside Review of advocacy provision, actively seeking opportunities to collaborate and work together across services to enhance advocacy support across Tayside. This will include links to the national contract for advocacy in Children's Hearings with a view to offering seamless and coordinated advocacy services in Angus.

- 2. We will always try to find the best possible place for you to live that gives you what you need and help you stay in touch with people who are important to you.**

Family Placement

Keeping children at home or with family continues to be a high priority. Angus are fully engaged in the development and resourcing of a Tayside Parenting Strategy including the launch of the Solihull approach and Parenting Programmes including Incredible Years and Five to Thrive in order that families can access early intervention and support to prevent escalation into the looked after system.

Our work with looked after children continues to focus on maintaining stability for children either at home, within their extended family or within their care placement with a range of supports targeted towards our young people whose placement is unstable minimising the risk of breakdown and importantly disruption for young people.

During 2018/19 the monthly average number of looked after children was 256 a slight rise of 1% on last year. As of 31 March 2019, 89% of young people being cared for were within a family settings reflecting our commitment to support our looked after children to be cared for in a family setting where possible. We will report our 3 year trend information in the full 2020 report.

When children require to be cared for in a foster care placement young people told us the move into a respite placement was sometimes difficult especially when the respite care was new to them. To enable young people to remain within the extended family of foster carers we have developed the use of 'support carers' and reviewed our system to minimise the number of respite placements children experience.

Pocket money

A review of all the allowances for children and young people who are accommodated by Angus Council has been undertaken to ensure that allowances including pocket money is consistent regardless of whether the child is in foster care or residential care. This means that children receive the same clothing allowances, money for toiletries and pocket money appropriate for their age.

Next Steps

Improving children's experience of respite care will be a focus for the partnership in 2019. It has already been agreed with foster carers that all babies under 12 weeks old will not experience a respite placement in order to promote consistent care and attachment. Family Carers recruitment continue to be a priority to allow children to remain within the fostering family. We recognise that further work is required to fully improve our service research has started to explore the experiences children in Angus have and will report to the CPLO Group at the end of 2019.

Maintaining and promoting family connections through positive family time is another area we are exploring with our young people to ensure we have access to good quality space and support to promote this. One of the young people's engagement groups in our programme for 2019 specifically focusses on facilitating high quality family time.

3. We will help you to achieve your best at school and all the places you learn

Significant work is taking place to improve young people's inclusion in education and raise attainment. Children and young people who are looked after and especially those looked after at home continue to have poorer educational attainment relative to their peers. Locally we have prioritised the experiences our young people have in school particularly experiences of exclusion. Research conducted on behalf of the CPLO Group has highlighted an upward trend in periods of exclusions for looked after children. We have used this insight to shape our investment in inclusion work and have used funding from the Scottish Government for raising attainment for looked after children to support local developments we believe will have considerable impact on our young people.

Angus Inclusion Project

We are preparing to deliver a 'test of change' model focussing on enhanced support to children living in residential houses in Angus. Additional hours have been secured from an Education Psychologist who will work with a small team of dedicated Inclusion Support Workers. The workers will support staff in our 3 residential houses, the young people and their families to focus on improving educational outcomes. The staff will support young people both in the home and school environment building on some of the success of work tested in 2017.

The 'virtual team' will link closely with key partners; Skills Development Scotland, Angus Works, 16Plus and Voluntary Action Angus to create a network of opportunities to enhance inclusion. Work will initially commence with the children in our residential houses then expand, in particular targeting support to young people looked after at home and in kinship care.

A full outcomes framework has been developed to support the 2 year project with regular reports to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Mentoring Support

A partnership between Angus Schools and Angus Corporate Parenting Board will deliver a peer mentoring project based in both Arbroath Secondary Schools. 'Peer Mentoring' has been tested in other areas in Scotland with positive outcomes. We will build on the work of colleagues in Dundee who have implemented a similar programme via 'Breakthrough'. We are currently at the stage of procuring an appropriate provider to deliver this between 2020 and 2022.

Mini Angus Works

Mini Angus Works is a supported work experience opportunity within Angus Council for local young people. The scheme has prioritised placement and support for young people who are looked after and those who have additional learning or support needs. Placements have been supported across 14 different professions. In 2018, of the 43 young people referred, 56% went on to take up placements and over 64% of the young people were either looked after or had additional needs. The scheme is being evaluated but the high number of looked after young people supported to achieve a positive workplace experience is excellent progress and highlights a strong commitment to supporting our young people to achieve.

4. We will take care of your wellbeing and encourage you to be healthy and active.

LAC Nursing Pathway

School Nurses are responsible for supporting the health and wellbeing needs of looked after children and this is clearly defined in the newly developed LAC Nursing Pathway. The School Nurse will undertake a Mental Health and Wellbeing Assessment using Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) National Practice model as well as being the nominated professional to attend all child planning meetings. Having an identified key health professional for a looked after child will ensure in partnership with named person's and lead professionals they will be able to deliver appropriate interventions to meet needs/concerns or refer to other services for additional/ongoing support where appropriate. Significant work has taken place across Angus to ensure this role is understood across the partnership and School Nursing expertise is used to enhance support.

Active Schools have proactively engaged in positive 'targeting of support' to young people; All active schools coordinators:

- know who is looked after in each of the schools;
- work with young people, parents, carers and key staff to identify needs and interests and work with partners to match children with appropriate organisations, clubs and facilities;
- monitor and evaluate the participation levels and outcomes for young people;
- work with schools to build partnerships with agencies, clubs and local community groups to support the use of pupil equity funding to increase participation

Active Schools staff are key partners in the CPLO Group and working in partnership with the group has increased staff awareness of the needs of looked after children and consequently support to looked after children from the service has increased. During 2018/19 Active Schools supported 5 children looked after at home, 40 looked

after away from the home and 13 previously looked after young people. They have provided opportunities for families to gain free entry to sports events and champion the needs of our young people. We are now shifting the focus to offer increased support to those looked after at home.

Angus Alive have worked as partners on the Corporate Parenting Board to develop criteria and a process for free family access for looked after children. We have a pathway ready to trial in the Arbroath locality to allow families of children looked after at home and care experienced young people living independently to access free membership. An easy application process is in place to ensure families are not stigmatised in the application process.

Children and Families Tuition Fund criteria has been revised to focus and prioritise the needs of children looked after at home, at risk of becoming looked after and those in kinship care. Six young people have been supported to attend school trips and 1 child to attend a local community group. This fund is currently underused and social workers are being reminded to access this to reduce the impact of child poverty.

Next Steps

Our pilot for free leisure and culture access will run for children in the Arbroath locality from June 2019. This is a significant development for our families and we will measure the impact through the pilot period.

School nursing and health visitors who work with looked after children and young people will support looked after children and young people in line with the NHS Tayside pathways. The school nursing role is more clearly defined, incorporating looked after children at home or in Kinship care. Work is progressing across NHS Tayside in determining the future vision for nursing and care of looked after children & young people. A refreshed looked after and accommodated nursing model, focussed on looked after children and care experienced young people who are particularly vulnerable and with complex health needs is being developed and implemented. The nursing team will continue to work closely with looked after young people, their parents and carers, colleagues in Health and partner agencies.

5. We will ensure you have a lead professional (who is a dedicated person) who visits you regularly and works with you and other to provide you with an assessment of your needs and a personal, up to date plan.

Angus policy is that the lead professional for all looked after children and young people is a qualified social worker.

Social work services have completed a service re-design in order to deliver the following improvements from 1st April 2019;

- Young people and families told us about the importance of consistency with workers and highlighted the negative impact of case responsibility moving between teams and workers. The new structure in children's services ensures the locality team receives all new referrals and are able to continue to work with the child and family where ongoing support is required, promoting relationship based practice and ensuring changes of workers are minimised;
- A dedicated kinship support team will ensure that kinship carers are assessed, approved and supported to offer good quality care and support to children when they can no longer live at home;
- The Permanence Team has expanded to focus on progressing care plans for children under 5 where rehabilitation to family has been unsuccessful. This will ensure that plans are progressed timeously to enable children to be with their forever families in a reasonable timescale.

The quality and accessibility of our assessments and child plans is an area we have identified for improvement they have been very adult focussed and not easily accessible due to the printed format. All children have a completed assessment that informs a child's planning meeting which summarises their history, takes into account strengths and concerns of their situation as identified from the multi-agency team supporting the child and family. Our new information management system in social work, Eclipse, will ensure that our reports are more user friendly and easy to understand. We are continuing a program of quality improvement on chronologies, assessment and plans taking into account feedback from the families and partners we work with.

Next Steps

We will ensure that changes to locality working are delivering the impact we intend by assessing the impact of relationship based working on families.

We will continue our improvement work to ensure our assessments and plans have the child at the centre and are accessible for families. This will include building on the 'My Views' digital tool and testing new ways to promote participation including a pilot taking place in child protection, *PREPare* where families are supported to understand and participate and lead a child's planning meetings.

6. We will support you to have a successful transition into adulthood.

Through Care and After Care Services

Following the change in legalisation there has been a gradual uptake of 'continuing care', an arrangement where a young person can remain in their placement. We have taken steps to ensure that all young people are aware of their right to be assessed for continuing care and promote choice through our child's planning process. As at 31 March 2018 we had 7 young people remaining in their previous

foster placements under continuing care legislation. This is an area of the service which is expected to grow over the next few years. Ensuring we have high quality placements to support our young people is critical and last year we had 14 providers/carers offering 16 adult and supported lodgings placements and one specialist humanitarian placement was also approved.

Housing Protocol The Housing Options protocol for young people leaving care was agreed between the Children and Families and Housing services in 2013. This partnership has continued to mature and develop and we now see positive results for our young people;

- There were 2 homeless applications made in 2017/18 where the young person's previous accommodation was children's residential accommodation (0.3% of all applications). This compares to 6% of applications nationally in Scotland.
- 4% of homeless applications in Angus in 2017/18 were made by people who were looked after as a child by the local authority, compared to 6% of applications across Scotland.

The number of homeless applications made by people who were looked after by the local authority less than 5 years ago has reduced by 42% from 2012/13 to 2017/18 demonstrating the success of the protocol. However in the same period there has been an increase in homeless applications made by people who were looked after as a child by the local authority 5 or more years ago. Further work is required to monitor and address longer term housing outcomes for care leavers in Angus.

Council Tax Regulations 2018 came into force on 1st April 2018 and delegated powers to local authorities to administer an exemption in their area allowing care leavers (up to the age of 26) to be exempt from paying Council Tax.

The council tax exemption was applied for all existing care leavers in Angus from 1 April 2018.

The exemption has a positive impact on care experienced young people as it is one measure that helps to prevent young people from experiencing significant poverty. There are currently 48 young people in Angus in receipt of the council tax exemption.

Transition from children into adult services has been identified as an area for improvement. We have worked in partnership with Angus Health and Social Care Partnership on developing a Complex and Co-existing Conditions Panel in order that vulnerable people who do not meet existing adult service criteria, are considered for flexible support to meet individual needs. The protocol launched in April 2019 and care experienced young people are highlighted in the criteria for referral.

Next Steps

We will work with colleagues in AHSCP on transition work including the impact of the newly developed Complex and Co-existing Conditions Panel.

Angus Council will complete consultation on guaranteed job interview's for care experienced young people.

We will continue the positive work on accessing and sustain tenancies and focus on improving longer term outcomes for adults with care experience based on the data described above.

Conclusion

Delivering on our corporate parenting pledge to children, young people and care experienced young people has required us to build strong and resilient partnerships which have enabled us to make some of the considerable developments reported here. This has challenged our thinking at times but supported our engagement with partners both locally and Tayside wide. Our most important partnership is with those people who use our services, who are looked after, have care experience or have a family member using our services. We have a role to play supporting our citizens and local businesses to better understand our looked after children, young people and support their integration into all aspects of our community as well as helping them recognise their potential and encourage them to come forward as foster carers.

Being a corporate parent means doing everything we can for every child in our care. We all have an important role to play in improving the wellbeing of care experienced young people. We need to be ambitious for the children in our care, encouraging them to dream big and take chances particularly if they don't feel like that's been an option in the past.

Corporate Parenting Data Set – DRAFT

Social Work Measures

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
Total No of Looked After Children
No and % at Home
No and % away from home
Of those away from home number and % in family placement
Of total number, number and % within Angus
Of total number, number and % outwith Angus
No of unplanned moves in year
No and % in Placement Types - at home; friends/relatives; with foster carers provided by LA; with foster carers purchased by LA; in other community; local authority home/voluntary home; other residential (these could be accumulated to show the total number of LAC)
Number of looked after children missing from placement over a 12 month period
Number, and rate per 1,000 children under 18 years old, of looked after children
For those children Looked After Away from Home (LAAC) length of time LAAC
No of moves in placement for children who are LAAC
Length of time in current placement for LAAC
No and % of LAC with more than 1 placement within reporting year
Looked after children benefit from stability of care placement with limited moves: 3+ moves within a year - not a measurement a statement
No and % of Reception into Accommodation Meeting taking place within 72 hours of commencement of placement
No and % of first review taking place within 21 days of RIA
No and % of second review taking place within 3 months of 1st Review
No and % of all other reviews taking place within 6 month periods
% of LAC reviews with parental attendance or views submitted
No and % of LAC reviews for children age 11+ where child has attended or submitted views
No of and % of supervision requirements implemented within 7 days
No of staff allocated to one child in a 12 month period - include transfer of teams
No of open cases eligible for Aftercare
No of open cases receiving Aftercare
No of cases moving to continuing care
% care leavers still in care placement post 16 years

Education

% Attendance – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; Previously Looked After
Exclusion Rate – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; Previously Looked After
INSIGHT: % Achieving Level 4 Literacy – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After

INSIGHT: % Achieving Level 5 Literacy – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
INSIGHT: % Achieving Level 4 Numeracy – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
INSIGHT: % Achieving Level 5 Numeracy – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
INSIGHT: Leaver initial destinations – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
INSIGHT: Improving Attainment for All (Complementary tariff points gained) – Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
INSIGHT: Attainment vs Deprivation (SIMD)– Looked After at Home; Looked After Away; All Looked After
% looked after children sustaining positive destination (confirmed at 3 and 9 month follow up stage)
% care leavers in sustained employment (over 6 months)
% care leavers in further education
% care leavers in higher education
% care leavers participating in an Activity Agreement
% of care leavers with each of the NEET categories of Economic Activity

Housing

Number of Homeless Applications where the person was previously looked after by local authority
Number of People in Temporary Accommodation – previously looked after by local authority
Number of un-sustained tenancies - where the person was previously looked after by local authority

Angus Alive

Number of looked after children and families accessing free Leisure Membership (via pilot)
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Angus Active Schools

Number of LAC participating in extracurricular sport and physical activity sessions.
Number of LAAC participating in extracurricular sport and physical activity sessions.
% of Total LAC (LAAC + LAC) participating in extracurricular sport and physical activity sessions.

NHS Tayside – in development

<p>GIRFEC Health Assessments for LAC within 28 days of becoming LAC NB this information will be collated in 2 ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preschool LAC Data • School age and up to age 18 yrs • Still to be determined re assessment for young people up to age 26 yrs (beyond 18 yrs)
LACYP mental health screening (for age 4 +) - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)- screening tool to be used within 12 weeks of becoming LAC
Substance Misuse (to commence collating information from Autumn 2019)
Last contact between Nurse and LACYP- (excluding pre-school) to include face to face contact