



## **ORKNEY COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATE PARENTING POLICY STATEMENT**

### **The Vision for Orkney's Children and Young People**

The Orkney Community Planning Partnership vision for all children in Orkney is that they should be brought up as confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Our ultimate aim is that the outcomes for children and young people who have been Looked After are as good, or better than, those of their peers who have not. The Partnership has the same vision and the same high aspirations for the children and young people and young adults it looks after, and those who have left care, as it does for all children in Orkney. To achieve this, they need to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible, and included - at home, at school, and in the community.

The responsibility for achieving this vision rests firstly with parents, supported by family, friends and neighbours, and then with Corporate Parent for providing its statutory duty (Orkney Islands Council) and the Corporate Family (the Partnership).

### **Looked After Children and Young People**

Particular support, supervision or care is needed for children who are looked after. These children's parents may have asked the Council to provide a home for them, or they may be subject to a supervision requirement from a Children's Hearing or other legal order. Whether they are living with parents or relatives, or in family or residential care, the Council shares the role and responsibility of a parent. For a very small number of children, the Council may have sole parental responsibility, becoming the Corporate Parent.

Across Scotland, looked after children are at much greater risk than their peers of school exclusion, under achievement in and out of school, unemployment, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, and offending behaviour. Services have failed to take account of their particular needs, and outcomes for looked after children have in the past been much poorer than they should be. The aim of this policy is to ensure that our services and our young people do better.

### **Corporate Parenting**

Orkney Islands Council does not work in isolation to improve outcomes for Looked After children, young people and care leavers. The responsibility is shared across the whole community planning partnership as the wider corporate family.

The Partnership has the same vision and the same high aspirations for the children and young people and young adults it looks after, and those who have left care, as it does for all children in Orkney. In addition to its usual role in providing services, the Council must try to do all the things that every good parent does for their sons and daughters - and must also work to overcome the disadvantages these children experience. Council Members and Chief Officials have a particular duty to provide leadership in this area, and to ensure that Council staff provide looked after children and young people with the best possible opportunities in life.

Orkney Islands Council have lead roles and statutory responsibilities, but all the agencies in the Partnership must contribute to ensuring looked after children and young people, and young adult care leavers, reach their full potential. Partner agencies are expected to act as their extended family; and the special support of the whole community is needed. This is what is meant by corporate parenting.

### **Overcoming the Challenges**

Based on the knowledge we have about the difficulties looked after children and young people, and young adults who are leaving care experience, and the work already in progress to sustain and improve partnership support, the Partnership will pay particular attention to:

- Providing as much stability and continuity as possible
- Finding adults who can offer loving relationships, and act as role models
- Listening to children and young people and helping them develop self confidence and resilience and a sense of being able to influence their lives and the services they receive
- Ensuring achievement and success and the chance to make the most of a child's interests and talents through ensuring a wide range of choices and opportunities available to them and holding the same expectations good parents would have for their own children
- Making sure that medical and dental care are provided and that any health concerns are followed up
- Helping prepare and plan for the future, ensuring a permanent home is available, and support for further education or training, work and careers
- Continuing to ensure support is available into adulthood and that a continuous helpful relationship is maintained
- Standing by young people and young adults who get into difficulties and acting as a good parent would towards those who offend, misuse substances or upset others
- Standing up for our looked after children and young people and young adults, celebrating their successes and challenging the stigma they can feel
- Making sure that the needs of Looked After children and young people and care leavers are articulated within the Community Plan, associated Action Plans, Integrated Children's Services Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.

- Making sure that independent sector partners and their staff are actively engaged in the community planning partnership and ensuring there is a joint focus of activity. This should be articulated through the Community Plan, Children's Services Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.
- Making sure that Looked After children and young people and care leavers are able to play a positive part in the life of their community.
- Making sure a robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of activity to support looked after children and young people and care leavers, thereby enabling Partnership members to report on and account for their progress.

It is the responsibility of the Partnership **as a whole** to work in this way, and to identify and co-ordinate the help needed from individuals and other agencies.

### **Demonstrating Commitment**

In support of this policy, the Partnership will:

- Provide induction information to all new members and chief officials about their corporate parenting responsibilities
- Ensure that, where appropriate, reports to the Partnership that relate to services used by children and young people and young adults include an explanation of how the recommendations will support corporate parenting
- Receive and scrutinise an Annual Report and Work plan on corporate parenting performance to include the key performance indicators set out in COSLA guidance (2007), the audit results, and progress with the commitments
- Undertake an audit of services' progress against *These are our bairns*
- Provide a training programme for relevant Community Planning partners to support improvement actions identified in *These are our bairns*