



South Lanarkshire  
**Partnership**  
Stronger together

# Healthy Achieving Nurtured Active Safes Respected Responsible Included



getting  
**it right**  
*for every child*  
in South Lanarkshire

South Lanarkshire **Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan** 2016 – 2018

# Annual Report July 2018

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# 1. Introduction

## Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2018 Second Annual Report

Partners have again worked hard, both individually and collectively, to bring about positive change for care experienced children and young people. A number of multi-disciplinary Task and Finish Groups were established to achieve the high aspirations detailed within the six Core Commitments highlighted in the Strategy and Action Plan. Further good progress has been made in this second year and an update of the last year's activity is captured within this report.

The Corporate Parenting Sub Group is one of the key sub groups within the Children's Service Planning structure and its remit was established within the groups Terms of Reference to:

- Produce and launch a Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan
- Oversee the implementation and regular review of the Action Plan
- Monitor and report on progress against the action plan to relevant bodies/groups as required
- Highlight any good practice/business/obstacles to implementation either in single agencies or across agency boundaries
- Ensure the views of service users and other stakeholders are included in planning
- Link with other relevant activities and processes across Children's Services as relevant and required
- Ensure required reports on Corporate Parenting are provided to the Scottish Government accurately and timeously
- Contribute to workforce development and awareness raising in relation to Corporate Parenting duties and responsibilities

The Corporate Parenting Group includes partners from Social Work, Education, Housing (SLC), Who Cares? Scotland, NHS Lanarkshire, New College Lanarkshire, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Skills Development Scotland. The group meets five times a year and reports regularly to the Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire Children's Strategy Group, Partnership Board and the Community Planning Partnership Board.

## 2. Core Commitment Updates

<p><b>Core Commitment 1:</b>  <b>Corporate Parents will fulfill their responsibilities, listen and respond to the voices of children and families/carers:</b></p>	
<p><b>Outcome:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and their families participate in decisions which affect them</li> <li>• Increased understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities</li> </ul>	
What we said we would do	What we have done
<p>Champion the Corporate Parenting Strategy through the Getting It Right for South Lanarkshire Children's Partnership Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided regular reports and updates to the Partnership Board so that they are kept fully informed on the needs and rights of care experienced children and young people, keeping their needs at the forefront of our governance structures</li> <li>• A Task and Finish Group is working on establishing a South Lanarkshire Champions Board</li> </ul>
<p>Enhance structures and systems to gather, record and report on views of all looked after children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people accessed independent advocacy 281 times in the last year to support them to have their views and wishes heard</li> <li>• Liaison Meetings with Who Cares? Scotland are held quarterly, with quantitative and qualitative reporting and quality assurance. There is an increase of care leavers accessing advocacy</li> <li>• Children, young people and care leavers have shared their views via monthly Participation Groups<sup>1</sup> and have contributed to various strategic forums, eg South Lanarkshire Council corporate parenting website for care experienced children and young people, child friendly version of the South Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan and the Children's Hearing National Advocacy Model. They also contribute to the 1000 Voices project/the National Care Review</li> <li>• A range of questionnaires which capture children in foster care needs and views, eg within carers' annual reviews</li> <li>• Specific groups of adopted young people and those in foster care meet regularly with a range of activities and themed consultations. In recognition of the impact of fostering on the carers' own children, similar groups are held for their sons and daughters</li> <li>• During recruitment, prospective carers' own children are now invited to be briefed and for their questions/views to be sought</li> <li>• Children's views and personal journeys featured at conferences/learning events with written, verbal and filmed presentations. One participant said "the young adult experiences provided food for thought and were particularly powerful"</li> </ul>



<p>Enhance structures and systems to gather, record and report on views of all looked after children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children in SLC houses invited to comment on all aspects of their care and support through in/formal meetings and questionnaires which are reflected in house development plans. Coordinators and children co-produce monthly progress reports on their care journey</li><li>• Young people's views were sought and reflected in the creation of the Child Sexual Exploitation protocols. Eg a section on all ages of children and young people's views being taken into account at every meeting and every opportunity is taken to seek their views in a number of creative ways using non/verbal evidence as appropriate</li><li>• Improved engagement with birth parents and a 33% rise in the number attending Adoption panels in the last three years (16 this year). Tailored panels to suit birth parents' preferences, eg reduction of panel members where there are concerns about them attending a large meeting. Feedback is sought from all attendees following the panels</li><li>• Fostering and Adoption Panel members' attendance at the Business Meeting where the annual report is discussed and recommendations on performance and any areas for service development are made</li><li>• Documents adapted to ensure children are consulted and involved in discussions, eg Safer Caring Policy and Plans</li><li>• Viewpoint has been used by children and young people who are looked after 78 times in 2016 and 78 times in 2017. A new contract with MOMO – A Mind Of My Own will replace Viewpoint later this year and will further enhance opportunities to gather and record children and young people's views</li><li>• Established a Participation and Involvement Strategy Task and Finish Group chaired by Who Cares? Group undertook process mapping within South Lanarkshire and consulted with care experienced children and young people to support the overarching South Lanarkshire Participation and Involvement Strategy – Children and Family Service 2017 - 2020</li><li>• A range of looked after young people are involved with Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), with bespoke, individual, group and family interventions including Happy Families, Teen Talk and Time To Grow, which provide opportunities for views to be sought</li><li>• A dedicated counsellor for the Family Placement Team has been appointed and is involved in direct, therapeutic work with children, birth parents, carers and families and adds value to the assessment, planning and review processes</li><li>• A working group which held workshops to examine the reasons for placement disruptions identified the importance of listening to children and taking time to understand their behaviour. The Family Placement Team counsellor is undertaking focused work with young people which has undoubtedly played a significant role in helping to sustain placements and reduce the number of moves</li><li>• The 0.5 counsellor within the PACT team continues to provide direct, therapeutic work with birth parents, potential carers and families for the very young children. The PACT team has been co-located within the Family Placement team which has enhanced partnership working</li></ul>
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<p>Provide meaningful and regular engagement with parents, foster and kinship carers using existing forums or, where necessary developing new ones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The South Lanarkshire Kinship Care Group meets monthly and provides support, information and training. The group received support from the STV Appeal Fund which provided a six week activity for 14 children and a respite weekend for 10 carers</li> <li>• Education Resources Inclusion Team briefed foster carers in terms of an ASN policy and procedures workshop</li> <li>• Further carer support groups meet regularly and 3 permanent carer support groups and 3 general carers support groups, all of which are successful. A maximum of forty carers have attended each meeting, with positive feedback, eg “best meeting I’ve experienced” and “we feel able to express our views and be listened to”</li> <li>• The Family Placement Team training programme for 2017 included 49 courses and provided 1053 places, which included an 18 week Nurturing Attachment course. A programme of Promoting Positive Behaviour training was introduced in January 2018 to include 18 carers, with the learning being shared with the Council’s residential workforce</li> <li>• All children in foster care have placement agreements and their carers are clear about children’s needs</li> <li>• Carers are now involved in carer recruitment activity and attend regular events to share their lived experience of the rewards and challenges of the tasks involved</li> <li>• External foster care providers have given positive feedback, describing the Council’s timeous placement agreements as exemplary</li> </ul>
<p>Deliver a rolling programme of training and communication activity to raise awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities for all partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular briefs and presentations to the GIRFSL Strategy Group and Partnership Board</li> <li>• Continuing Care and Aftercare briefings to operational staff and associated webinar site developed</li> <li>• Shared corporate parenting strategies and plans with Skills Development Scotland, NHS State Hospital and New College Lanarkshire</li> <li>• Consultation and briefings on review of South Lanarkshire Kinship Care Policy</li> <li>• Corporate Parent visit to, then briefing for State Hospital social work team, with discussion on best practice for the care experienced patients</li> <li>• The Education Resources Framework for Inclusion and Equality includes information on the Designated Manager role</li> </ul>



**Core Commitment 2:**

**Every child will have a Child’s Plan which will be regularly reviewed within agreed timescales:**

**Outcome:**

- Individualised plans are in place that safeguard each child’s wellbeing needs

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p>Streamline existing LAC and Education review processes into a single system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful pilot was completed in Hamilton in partnership with Education and Social Work, with positive feedback. Guidance has been drawn up to roll this out in the new term</li> <li>• The guidance introduces clearer structure and time frames to ensure that the children and young people’s wellbeing needs are regularly review at 15 days, three months and nine months, which aligns with compliance with the SCRA Time Intervals</li> <li>• Children are involved in fewer meetings and child’s plans are clearer, with a reduction in disruptions and bureaucracy in terms of duplication</li> </ul>
<p>All children looked after at home and within kinship care will have an active Child’s Plan (C60) which is regularly reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children and young people looked after at home and within kinship care have an active Child’s Plan</li> <li>• The Performance and Continuous Improvement Group undertook an audit which focused on the quality of planning and review activity of 61 cases and learning activity has improved the quality of the child’s plans</li> <li>• Following the findings of the Realigning Children’s Services programme, two key themes are being taken forward through multi-agency Task and Finish Groups, one of which has been established to improve the outcomes for children looked after at home. The planned consultation with parents of those looked after at home will help broaden our understanding of the needs, risks and aspirations of families, which will help support individual Child Plans</li> <li>• A working group met to review and update the Council’s Kinship Care Policy, which involved consultation with kinship carers, children and young people, Citizen’s Advice Bureau</li> <li>• Briefings have been undertaken in all localities to update on legislation, advise that kinship carer assessments will now be approved within localities and chaired by senior managers who have local knowledge. Also, to ensure that kinship carers and children and young people within their care are reviewed on an annual basis</li> <li>• Care and Risk Management (CARM) policy, procedures have been introduced and support the assessment, planning and review processes for Child Plans, particularly for those at high risk to themselves and/or others</li> </ul>

### Core Commitment 3:

#### Clear pathways and support will be provided at all key transition stages:

##### Outcome:

- Planning processes for key transitions are more streamlined and effective

What we said we would do	What we have done
Map the key transition stages from birth to young adulthood, identifying areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The transition for care leavers was given priority. A report, options analysis and action plan was presented to the Heads of Service and a Throughcare and Aftercare Implementation Group has been established</li><li>• A multi-agency Throughcare and Aftercare Team is being established in two phases, initially to provide individualised pathways assessment, planning and review, with a specific focus on those with high levels of needs and risks, with the second phase to include core and cluster accommodation</li><li>• The governance arrangements for Continuing and Aftercare have been reviewed to improve the quality assurance of both strategic and operational activity, and the interface between the two</li></ul>
Reduce the number of placement moves within foster and residential care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 2016 – 2017 figures show an overall reduction of 31% in children experiencing moves during their care journey than in the previous year</li><li>• The figures also show a reduction of 36% in children experiencing up to three placements throughout their care journey than in the previous year</li><li>• The figure for children experiencing more than three moves remains the same, with seven children in this category. These are children with a complex range of needs and risks.</li><li>• There are three areas of development which will help to reduce this number over time:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A new service will commence in October 2018 to provide Intensive Family Services for children aged 5 -12, which is similar to the Intensive Family Support Services for young people aged 12+ and will help to reduce children becoming looked after and enable us to comply with Part 12 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The service will also reduce the need to source higher level resources</li></ul></li><li>• Care and Risk Management (CARM) procedures and training were introduced in 2018 to embed CARM practice for managing children and young people to present a risk of serious harm within each locality. The aim is to ensure that presenting risks are managed effectively and minimized through effective communication, information sharing, assessment, multi-agency decision making and the implementation of effective risk management plans</li><li>• The working group which was established to reduce the number of placement disruptions within foster care led focus groups, developed a report and made a number of recommendations, some of which have been effective. For example the more effective carers' support groups and enhanced children's arrangements</li></ul>





Improve timescales for securing permanence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2016 significant work was undertaken to address the issue of drift and delay in children's plans. This featured effective joint working with Family Placement Team and locality staff. 33 children were registered for permanence with a plan for adoption and 19 with a plan for permanent fostering</li> <li>• In 2017 there was an anticipated reduction in numbers, however timescales had significantly improved following the outcomes of the previous year. Of the 25 children registered with a plan for adoption, 60% had a timescale of less than 12 months from decision taken to registration. The figure for the previous year was 39%. Similarly, of the 7 children registered with a plan for permanent fostering in 2017, 58% had a timescale of less than 12 months, with the previous year's figure being 26%</li> </ul>
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<b>Core Commitment 4:</b> <b>Children and young people will be supported to improve their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing:</b>	
<b>Outcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Health inequalities gap is reduced</li> </ul>	
<b>What we said we would do</b>	<b>What we have done</b>
All looked after children will be offered a comprehensive Health Needs Assessment (HNA) of their physical, developmental, emotional and mental health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to Lanarkshire School Nursing review both North and South Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Looked After Children's Nursing team resource merged with the school nursing teams</li> <li>• The new school nurse service has 9 priority groups, one of which is looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• The robust quality assurance monitoring and reporting on Cel16 established by the Looked After Children's Nursing team has now been embedded within clinical practice for our South School Nursing team and Health Visiting teams</li> <li>• Looked After children and young people have priority access to NHS Sexual Health Services</li> <li>• Stress and Distress 18+ in place. 16 and 17 year olds to be captured within the evaluation in terms of further developing the service</li> <li>• All young people who have been accommodated are housed via a housing application and not through the homelessness route. The average age of young people accessing housing is 19 years, with an average of 80 days between activation and housing.</li> </ul>
Establish database to support monitoring and reporting requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database established and regular reports are submitted to the Corporate Parenting Sub Group and the Social Work Performance and Continuous Improvement Group</li> </ul>

Increase partnership working to remove barriers and promote and sustain access to sport, leisure and cultural activities for all children

- As part of the Task and Finish Group action plan, the group developed systems to signpost and communicate to all professionals with information on leisure opportunities available using for example, email communication and VASLan Locator Tool. This also includes a range of activities which are free including outdoor leisure pursuits.
- South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Health Development Officers attending and presenting to a variety of Social Work Teams to increase awareness of leisure opportunities including ACE programme/Active Schools programmes and build relationships with Social Work staff
- Children and young people encouraged to attend their own individual and group activities with their non looked after peers, eg in one of South Lanarkshire children's houses children and young people are keenly involved in Sea Cadets, Air Force Cadets, Boxing, Army Cadets, Mai Thai and Scouts, with inclusion in camps with other young people from the UK
- Work is ongoing with Education Resources Inclusion Team and Active Schools to enable better identification of LAC through SEEMIS and positively discriminate LAC to ensure programmes are accessible
- Education Resources – as part of the Designated Manager training the VASLAN Locator toolkit is highlighted to ensure families, children and young people know what is available to access in their own localities
- For the last five years a quarterly newsletter Get Out There is written with and for care experienced children and young people is circulated to promote and share experiences on individual and group leisure, sport and cultural activities, celebrate achievements and provide details of forthcoming opportunities and activities
- Eight young people were recently involved in the Who Cares? Scotland summer camp



**Core Commitment 5:**

**All children will be treated fairly, have equality of opportunity and have a sense of belonging in their learning environment**

**Outcome:**

**Education establishments work proactively to close the attainment gap**

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p>Education establishments continue to improve attendance and reduce exclusions for looked after pupils in order to increase levels of participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Resources Inclusion Team have ensured Headteachers are aware of the Government publications Included Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools, Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions and Respect for All: anti bullying guidance</li> <li>• Headteachers are aware of the drive to reduce exclusions and increase attendance rates</li> <li>• The Education Resources Operating Procedures A8 Exclusions are under review and will be published and implemented in August 2018. This includes a focus on LAC and other vulnerable groups of children and young people</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendance-Looked After at Home-School population in brackets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2016-2017 this decreased to 79.8% (93.4%). The attendance of children looked after at home is 13.6% lower than the school population and is 5.5% lower than last year</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendance Looked After Away from Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2016-2017 this increased to 94.6% (93.4%). Children looked after away from home attendance is 1.2% higher than the school population. This is a consistently improving attendance pattern</li> </ul> <p><b>Exclusion-Looked After at Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2016-2017 this decreased to 0.38% (0.04%). This shows a reduction from the previous year of 0.09% and is 0.34% higher than the school population. This is a consistently improving pattern of reduced exclusions</li> </ul> <p><b>Exclusion looked After Away from Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2016-2017 this decreased to 0.22% (0.04%). This shows a reduction of 0.10% and is 0.18% higher than the school population. This is a consistently improving pattern of reduction</li> </ul>
<p>Provide further guidance to every school's Designated Manager in line with legislation to ensure the needs of looked after pupils are identified and supported in order to improve achievement and attainment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to the SEEMiS information, most education establishments have at least one manager trained on the SEEMiS processes in the Wellbeing Assessment Toolkit</li> <li>• The Wellbeing Assessment will replace the Single Agency Form by August 2018 and further SEEMiS training on Wellbeing Assessment specifically relating to LAC will take place by September 2018</li> <li>• Head Teachers use the Insight toolkit to monitor attainment; this can be filtered to show LAC attainment data. This data should align with the ASP targets set</li> <li>• An Audit of 50 Additional Support Plans is currently underway and areas for improvement will be provided after this process concludes</li> </ul>

Provide learning opportunities to enhance skills, confidence and wider achievement

- 26 young people have accessed a range of opportunities such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards/Links-2-Life/H2O+/ASDAN PSD/Grass Routes. Outcomes achieved include training as youth workers, volunteering in communities and sustained participation in centre based activities
- 47 different accredited and non-accredited awards have been accessed through Youth Learning Services
- One young person attending university was recognised by The Fostering Network at their awards ceremony
- South Lanarkshire's strong commitment to the Children Missing from Residential and Foster Care Partnership Protocol pilot has enabled young people to keep themselves safe by developing confidence and skills. This has been built on sound working relationships to encourage young people to be aware of and manage any risks, without being criminalised for similar behaviour to their non-looked after peers
- COVEY befriending services, which is commissioned from the third sector, have worked with 30 looked after children in the last year and three young people were supported through their Pathways to Confidence project with YMCA in North Lanarkshire. These parents/carers have received support and one parent attends our Parent and Carers Together group



**Core Commitment 6:**

**Young people moving into adulthood will be supported to achieve their full potential in life:**

**Outcome:**

- More young people will access and maintain positive post school destinations
- More young people will access and sustain accommodation that meets their needs when they move on from being looked after
- More young people will choose continuing care as an option

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p>Increase access to dedicated support pre and post school transition in relation to education, employment and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-agency care experienced tracking group has met regularly and all care experienced young people are tracked and offered bespoke employability packages to meet their individual needs. This group focuses on looked after away from home and now fully tracks looked after at home and young people involved in youth justice services</li> <li>• The School Leaver Initial Destination report was issued in March 2018 and gives a snapshot in time of the destinations recorded for young people approximately six months after they left school</li> <li>• Positive action was taken to review the existing identification, tracking and support process in place for young people looked after away from home. As a result a more robust 16+ LAAC tracking process is now in place supported by a group of managers across agencies. The remit of the group was extended in 2017 to include young people looked after at home who require support to achieve and sustain a positive destination</li> <li>• In 2018 tracking now includes 29 young people age 15 and over who are currently accommodated by another host local authority and attending South Lanarkshire High Schools. This work is delivering outcomes in terms of % increase in positive school leaver destinations for all school leavers, as well as increased access to and coordination of support / resources to those most at risk. The reported figures for 2017 shows 89% of South Lanarkshire care leavers in a positive destination with a national average of 76.4%</li> <li>• Collaborative working with New College Lanarkshire has ensured that the needs of care-experienced learners are taken account of in planning and prioritising at post school transition stage. This has resulted in the following progress:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information leaflets for accessing dedicated support team throughout the college journey given to all care experienced learners at application stage</li> <li>- Care-experienced learners are invited to be part of NCL's Corporate Parenting Team and provide feedback with regard to post school support.</li> <li>- There is now a named Student Adviser as the main contact for Care Experienced Learners</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

All corporate parents will provide work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities

- Work continues to try and identify Modern Apprenticeships and full time employment within the Council when this meets the needs of the young person
- A South Lanarkshire care experienced young person is employed by Who Cares? and the post is partially funded by SLC to support this service
- Work experience continues to be sourced to meet young people's individual needs and we will work towards improving the recording of this activity and the breadth of opportunities offered by partners

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## 3. Next Steps

The passion, commitment and partnership working across all agencies and resources will continue with clear leadership, challenge and support from the Corporate Parenting Sub Group.

Focus areas for the next year:

- Complete stakeholder consultation and prepare, publish and promote the 2018 – 2020 Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan
- Implement the Champions Board
- Sign up to the Care Leavers Covenant and align this with the next Strategy and Action Plan
- Host a further Corporate Parenting Conference – the theme is What Matters To Me
- Continue to support the Realigning Children's Service Programme to support closing the gaps in service and meet the needs of children and families living in our communities

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