



# Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum

## HOW GOOD IS YOUR THROUGH-CARE & AFTERCARE SERVICE?

'How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?' is the result of a year's work to establish a tool to promote and develop best practice when supporting young people who have been looked after. The publication stemmed from the outcomes of nine Work Groups at the Forum's Annual Conference in December 2005 and from feedback during widespread consultation.

'How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?' promotes best practice when supporting young people who are looked after and leaving care. It is aimed at service providers, practitioners, carers and policy makers across the range of relevant services and agencies. Young adults who have been looked after should also know about this publication, so that they are aware of the levels of support they should receive.

Diversity of practice across Scotland often means young people receive varying levels of support, depending where they live. By implementing best practice across Scotland, there should be **improved consistency and quality of throughcare & aftercare support.**

### CORE PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Looked after young people are fully **supported into adulthood** and not worse off than their peers.
- All agencies recognise and address their **corporate parenting responsibilities** for young people who are or have been looked after.
- Young people's **active participation** and their views are central to all aspects of the throughcare & aftercare process.
- A young person's **needs and welfare** are at the heart of all decision-making and planning processes.
- All information is presented in **clear and young person friendly** language, which is age and culturally appropriate.

'How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?' has received support from the following key agencies:

- The Scottish Executive
- The Care Commission
- Social Work Inspection Agency

*"Improving support for young people leaving care depends on co-operation and ownership from all departments and agencies."*

*"This best practice is not just for Social Work. Everyone has to get on board and be involved if we're really going to help these young people."*

The Forum is now urging all local authorities, voluntary organisations, independent services and national bodies to implement and promote this best practice across all services.

*"Shifting the culture is about thinking what can I do with other departments and agencies to make this person's life better. It's about moving from 'we can't do this' to 'how can we do it?'"*

The key message is to promote good corporate parenting where all services, departments and teams recognise their responsibilities towards supporting looked after young people into adulthood.

Young people have faced the most challenging childhoods. They should receive on-going support to lead successful adult lives.

***“We need to know what it means to be a good corporate parent. Would the services you provide be good enough for your own children?”***

## **Creating a Corporate Parenting Culture:**

- Local authorities and key agencies provide young people who have been looked after with on-going support into adulthood, as any other **responsible parent** would for their children.
- **All** local authority departments recognise that they have responsibilities to ensure the **welfare** of looked after and formerly looked after children and young people.
- All agencies work together to play their part in meeting the **wide range** of young people’s needs.
- Local authorities have a corporate parenting group or committee and a named senior person in each department to be **accountable** for ensuring that corporate parenting responsibilities are fulfilled.
- Every local authority has a **statement of intent** on how they will fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities for all looked after and formerly looked after children and young people.
- Striving to ensure that looked after young people can achieve the best possible **positive outcomes** in life.

## **Quality Indicators for Best Practice**

- These indicators should be applied to **the range of practice and support services** for looked after young people, across the whole of your organisation.
- It is a **self-assessment tool** to measure the extent and quality of your services.
- It can be used to establish a **benchmark** from which the development of services can be measured against in the future.
- From this self-assessment, you should identify opportunities to **improve and develop services** for looked after young people.
- You can establish **action plans** for each area which set out **targets and priority areas** to be addressed.
- This publication can be used to **raise awareness** of the needs of young people leaving care and to widely promote **corporate parenting responsibilities**.
- You should read this publication in conjunction with the Regulations & Guidance for throughcare & aftercare services.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

- **Promote** ‘How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?’ across all local authorities, voluntary organisations and other key agencies.
- Actively encourage organisations to use ‘How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?’ as a **self-assessment tool**.
- Identify ‘How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?’ as a **best practice guide** and a means of **measuring and evidencing** service development.
- Organise **information sharing** and **training opportunities** based on the quality indicators and best practice outcomes.
- **Review the progress** of how organisations are using ‘How Good is Your Throughcare & Aftercare Service?’ in practice.