

FALKIRK COUNCIL

SUBJECT: FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: SERVICES TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (FPP) - 2014/2015 MONITORING REPORT

MEETING: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 12 NOVEMBER 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work of the external organisations that receive funding, provide services to children and young people, and fall within the Following the Public Pound reporting and monitoring arrangements. The reporting period is April 2014 to March 2015. It should be noted that organisations were previously reported by service, however, in order to provide Members with strategic context, organisations will now be reported by category as outlined to Members during the April 2014 Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2. External organisations are often voluntary or charitable organisations that have been provided with funding on the basis that they are able to provide services which could not readily be provided within the Council. Services are, however, provided in a way that compliments those provided by the Council and other statutory partners.
- 1.3. Whilst the long term value of input from the voluntary sector is acknowledged, challenging fiscal restraints may require organisations to operate with reduced funding in future years.

2. SERVICES TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 2.1. In Falkirk there are a number of factors which impact on the demand for services to children and young people and their families.

2.2. Rising Population

Falkirk has a growing population which, according of the preliminary results of the 2011 census, is now 156,000, making Falkirk the 11th largest Council in Scotland. The population has grown by over 10,000 since the last census in 2001, or 7.4% compared to the national increase across Scotland of 4.6%. The annual birth rate in Falkirk between 2002 and 2012 was, on average, 7.1% above the national rate. While the overall under 18 population has been pretty static over this period, we are now seeing rising numbers of under 11s as the increasing birth rate throughout the 2000s begins to impact. The growth of this infant population, when combined with other pressures within communities, is likely to impact directly on demand for services for the most vulnerable children.

In 2012/2013, relative child poverty in Scotland increased by 4 percentage points compared with 2011/2012 (poverty and income equality in Scotland 2012/2013). For households and employment, reduced entitlement to tax credits has contributed to a fall in household incomes for those with lower earning who are unable to increase the number of hours worked. At April 2013 there was a 26% decrease in the number of children in households in Scotland in receipt of

work tax credits compared with April 2012. This will have broadened vulnerability to the stresses that poverty brings to family life beyond the more traditional deprived areas and groups. In Falkirk, the Scottish Welfare Fund spending increased from £6,144 in April 2013 to £109,991 in March 2014. Referrals to Falkirk foodbanks have increased year on year since their inception in 2011. In 2011/2012, 1,861 young people aged 18 and under accessed the foodbank. This rose to 4,572 young people in 2012/2013 and a staggering 22,387 in 2013/2014, Of the above, 321 young people were referred by Social Work in 2014.

Of the 24,000 children in schools and nurseries in Falkirk, 13% have additional support needs which require to be provided for and managed through specialist staff from a variety of agencies.

2.3. Increase in Vulnerability

The factors outlined above, when considered alongside other factors such as substance use and mental health difficulties amongst the adult population, result in higher levels of vulnerability within the population of children and young people. The Council's approach to preventative services has been strong and this has mitigated against the increases in numbers of children looked after and accommodated and children on the Child Protection Register being as high as has been experienced in other parts of Scotland. However, in the last year there has been a significant increase in the numbers of children who require to be accommodated by the Council for their own care and protection, and trends are now closer to the national average.

At the end of March 2015, 252 children were looked after away from home, 114 children were looked after at home and 71 children were on the Child Protection Register.

In light of the above, it is all the more important that the Council is able to maintain a focus on prevention, much of which is achieved through partnerships with the third sector, as outlined later in this report.

2.4. National Policy Context

2.4.1 GIRFEC

National policy is delivered in the context of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). The GIRFEC approach requires every child and young person to have a named person who will be the first point of contact if a child or young person's wellbeing is of concern. The requirement of a named person is now enshrined in law under the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The GIRFEC approach is intended to ensure that children get the right help at the right time in their lives.

2.4.2 Early Years Framework

In addition, for children aged 0-8 years the Early Years Framework, published in 2008, set out the elements that need to come together to improve outcomes for early years, emphasising a cohesive approach and using the strength of universal services to deliver preventative and early intervention services.

2.4.3 The objective of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is to accelerate the high level principles set out in GIRFEC and the Early Years Framework into practical action. It is designed to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

2.5 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Act received its Royal Assent in March 2014 and covers a variety of areas relating to the wellbeing of children and young people. The legislation comes into force incrementally over the next two years. Some of the key areas covered are:-

- Increasing the amount and flexibility of free Early Learning and Childcare from 475 to a minimum of 600 hours per year for 3 and 4 year olds, and 15% of Scotland's most vulnerable 2 year olds. From August 2015, this was extended to 27% of the most vulnerable 2 year olds.
- Free School Lunches were provided to all children in Primary 1–3 by January 2015.
- Ensure better permanence planning for looked after children by giving all 16 year olds in care the right to continuing care until the age of 21; extend the support available to young people leaving care for longer (up to the age of 26); and support the parenting role of kinship carers.
- Enshrine elements of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach in law, ensuring there is a single planning approach for children who need additional support from services, providing a single point of contact for every child and providing a holistic understanding of wellbeing.
- Create new duties in relation to the UNCRC children's rights and strengthen the Children's Commissioner role.
- Strengthen existing legislation that affects children, including a number of amendments to the process for school closure proposals under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.6 Local Policy Context

At a local level, our Single Outcome Agreement has as one of its aims supporting children in early years so that they become young people who are confident and successful. Falkirk's Children's Commission oversees the planning and delivery of children's services and, in doing so, reports directly to the Community Planning Leadership Group. The Integrated Children's Service Plan sets out the collective ambition of the Community Planning Partnership to achieve the vision that every child and young person should have an enjoyable, fulfilling life in a nurturing healthy and safe environment. The Integrated Children's Service Plan sets out ways in which services will work together in order to achieve this vision for Falkirk's children. Services provided by the third sector are key partners in the delivery of these services.

3. OVERVIEW OF FUNDED ORGANISATIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICE PLAN

- 3.1. The table below shows the external organisations that received Council funding during 2014/2015, either in kind or by direct financial support, in order to enable them to contribute to the Council's goal of increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination.

Name of Organisation	Funding
Barnardo's Axis Service	£110,952
Barnardo's Cluaran Service	£327,329 Grant Funding £34,290 Direct Funding £330,010 In Kind staff support £691,629 Total
NHS Forth Valley CAMHS Clinical Psychologist for Looked After Children	£64,904
Quarriers Scotland Falkirk Children's Rights Service	£86,200
Signpost Recovery Time 4 Us	£30,000
"Who Cares?" Scotland Children's Rights Service	£27,970
TOTAL	£1,011,655

4. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANISATIONS' PERFORMANCE

- 4.1. An individual report is attached for all of the external organisations shown above. Each report provides an overview of the service provided, the agreed objectives or outcomes, performance information during the reporting period and a financial overview. It should be noted that not all of the audited accounts for 2014/2015 are available as yet. This is largely due to the timing of the Annual General Meetings of each organisation.
- 4.2. As part of the assessment process, external organisations are allocated a risk rating based on governance arrangements, financial management and past performance. The ratings are low, medium or high and provide monitoring officers with an indication of the minimum level of monitoring and support which should be established. External organisations deemed as low risk are monitored at least annually, medium risk or external organisations should be monitored at least quarterly, and high risk at least monthly. Monitoring is recommended to take the form of regular reports which measure performance against outcomes and/or objectives and provide financial monitoring information. Monitoring officers are also required to hold meetings with the external organisation throughout the year.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Members are asked to consider each organisation's report and select from the following options for each external organisation:-

- a) Approve report and acknowledged progress by the external organisation in meeting Council priorities.
- b) Request further information on specific aspects of the service provided.
- c) Request action with follow-up for subsequent Scrutiny Committee consideration.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to

- 6.1 consider individual reports for external organisations and select an option from those presented at 5.1.**

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