

S59. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: SERVICES TO EARLY YEARS CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – 2013/2014

The committee considered a report by the by the Acting Joint Director of Education Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding which provided services to early years, children and young people, and which fall within the FPP reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The committee had requested on 31 October 2014 (ref SC39) that further information on four organisations: Family Support Service – Langlees; Early Years Outreach; Braes Children and Family Centre, and New Beginnings be provided to the committee.

The report provided information on factors which impact service demand including national and local policy context and demographic change. An individual report was appended for each of the fourteen organisations which received funding. Each report set out the service provided, the agreed outcomes/objectives and performance information.

The committee heard from officers in relation to the individual reports.

The Committee agreed to conjoin the following two items of business.

(a) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre – Langlees

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £255,012 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome for the service was to provide support to expectant parents and children under the age of 4 years old and children under the age of 12 years old where there was a need for additional support. The second outcome was to support parents to improve the well-being and development of their children and young people.

Members asked if the manager had been seconded to another post within Aberlour. Elaine Costello advised that this was the case.

The committee highlighted that it was difficult to quantify the impact of the work of the organisation on families and asked how the number of sessions delivered related to individuals supported. Eileen Hutton stated that two half day sessions per week were provided per child, with a third session available in exceptional circumstances. Where the report stated that 32 parents had been supported this represented 32 families and it was not known how many parents or carers this equated to in total. Elaine Costello stated that the work was intensive and that the two sessions per week were provided for the whole year in addition to learning and childcare sessions.

Members asked what was being done to identify and deal with areas where there was duplication in service delivery or surplus supply of services. Elaine Costello stated that a Public Social Partnership review of all services to children and young people was being undertaken.

The committee asked if art therapy support represented best value with only three children benefiting from the support. Eileen Hutton stated that the service was delivered at no cost as it was provided by students on placement from Queen Margaret University, although premises were provided.

Members asked for further information on the infant massage classes. Elaine Costello advised that this service was provided to families where poor attachment existed between parent and child. She also stated that the evidence showed there would be much more significant long term costs if attachment left unresolved and the individual progressed into adulthood. The committee raised that if there was evidence of a medical benefit which justified the provision of infant massage then it may be an area for the Health Board to fund. The committee also requested that members were provided with a briefing on the theory which supported this service.

The committee discussed the definitions of areas of multiple deprivation, raising that it was determined by the Scottish Government. Elaine Costello stated that considerations around deprivation would be included in the review.

Members highlighted the need for a holistic approach to dealing with families where substance abuse issues were present. Elaine Costello stated that some families were involved with other support agencies and in other cases appropriate referrals to other services were made.

The committee asked how the performance target was set. Eileen Hutton stated that performance targets were agreed between the monitoring officer and the organisation. Elaine Costello advised that the service level agreements were under review.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Aberlour Childcare Trust – Family Support Centre – Langlees in meeting Council priorities.

(b) Aberlour Childcare Trust – Early Years Outreach

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £315,162 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome for the service was to provide a service to vulnerable families and those expecting multiple stress. The second outcome was to support expectant parents and children under the age of 4 years old. The third outcome was to support parents to improve the well-being and development of their children and young people.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Aberlour Childcare Trust – Early Years Outreach in meeting Council priorities.

(c) One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £136,064 of Council funding. The first agreed outcome was to provide places for children aged 2 years who need additional support due to developmental difficulties or family problems. The second outcome was to undertake group and individual work with parents and children aged 0 to 2 to promote positive parent/child interactions and healthy development. The third outcome was to support vulnerable children on an individual and group basis in nursery and primary schools in the Upper Braes area and in the Family Centre, including work with parents.

Members discussed the difficulties of providing a sensitive service in rural areas. The committee asked if this was the right type of support in all cases or if it became long term for some families if they would benefit more from referrals to other services. Elaine Costello stated that the support provided was tailored to the needs of each family.

The committee asked for information on outside support received by the Braes Children and Family Centre. Eileen Hutton stated that external funding secured by the centre was for other projects.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by One Parent Families Scotland – Braes Children and Family Centre in meeting Council priorities.

(d) Barnado's – New Beginnings

Elaine Costello provided an overview of the report, advising that the organisation received £192,341 of Council funding. The agreed outcomes were to promote pupil well-being. Elaine Costello stated that staff shortages at Oxbang school had required the family support team to provide more support in school. This had an effect on the amount of outreach and family work which could be carried out. The service was looking at ways to protect family support resources in the future to ensure service delivery would not be impacted.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged the progress made by Barnado's – New Beginnings in meeting Council priorities.