

SE17. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND: SERVICES TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (FPP) – 2014/2015 MONITORING REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the work of external organisations in receipt of funding to provide services to children and young people and who fall within the Following the Public Pound (FPP) reporting and monitoring arrangements. Robert Naylor provided an overview of the report.

Members asked for information on the funding provided to supporting children with additional support needs. Robert Naylor stated that this was a difficult figure to quantify and included the provision of learning assistants and peripatetic teachers. Funding was provided to each school and members were advised that information on the amount of funding allocated centrally would be provided after the meeting.

The committee sought information on the average waiting time for an appointment with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Robert Naylor advised that he would get the information and provide it to members after the meeting. He stated that there was a significant challenge in this area nationally.

The committee asked how often monitoring officers met with officers from CAMHS. Robert Naylor advised that in general monitoring officers for organisations monitored through the FPP regime would meet with officers of an organisation on a three, six or nine monthly basis depending on the level of risk associated with the organisation. Fiona Campbell advised that monitoring officers were given guidance on how to assess risk and assign the most appropriate rating. Matthew Davies advised that monitoring officers were also in direct contact with organisations outwith their regular monitoring meetings.

Members sought further information on the process of evaluating the progress of an organisation. Matthew Davies stated that an outcome focussed approach was taken and that monitoring officers ensured that progress was being made against individual outcomes. He advised that third sector organisations were often already outcome focussed as they needed to be able to demonstrate the impact of their work to funders.

The committee asked why some of the organisations had been rated as carrying medium risk. Matthew Davies stated that the medium risk rating had been assigned due to the threat of funding reductions which would put pressure on service delivery. He advised that there were no specific concerns in relation to any of the organisations covered in the report. If funding was reduced then the Service would need to review what the organisations could deliver for that level of funding.

Members asked what impact universal credit was likely to have on the use of foodbanks. Robert Naylor stated that there was a possibility that the use of foodbanks would increase. He advised that the report provided statistics on the use of foodbanks nationally and that work was required to drill down and identify the situation locally. He highlighted the challenging circumstances that many families were in.

A question was asked in relation to the proportion of children looked after away from home who were cared for outwith Falkirk Council resources. Matthew Davies stated that there were 80 children being looked after by external service providers and that in addition to those looked after away from home there were approximately 150 children looked after at home.

In response to a question on preparedness for an increase to the school age population, Robert Naylor stated that the Service had planned well in advance for the population increase and had planned for school roll changes through a programme of upgrading the school estate. He highlighted that there was a complex picture in Falkirk as the population was increasing in some areas while declining in others.

The committee asked for information on the work carried out with schools regarding employability. Robert Naylor stated that for children who were under pressure to leave education due to financial pressures at home external organisations provided services to give support and allow continued access to education. There was a well developed programme of work carried out by schools in relation to employability and the success of the SCOTS programme with Forth Valley College was highlighted. The school curriculum had been adapted to meet the needs of every young person and provided access to vocational qualifications. He advised that the number of positive destinations achieved was increasing.

Members asked if the organisations in receipt of funding mainly worked in areas of deprivation or if they were available across the district. Matthew Davies stated that the referral mechanisms allowed any child or young person to access services. Fiona Campbell stated that the Community Planning Partnership was focussed on the impact of poverty on children.

Decision

The committee approved the reports for:

- i) Barnardo's Axis Service;**
- ii) Barnardo's Cluaran Service;**
- iii) NHS Forth Valley CAMHS Clinical Psychologist for Looked after Children;**
- iv) Quarriers Scotland Falkirk Children's Rights Service;**
- v) Signpost Recovery Time 4 Us, and**
- vi) "Who Cares?" Scotland Children's Rights Service**

and acknowledged progress by the organisations in meeting Council priorities.