

EX85. Scrutiny Committee - 17 November 2016: Scrutiny Panel Conclusions and Recommendations – Outcomes for Looked After Children

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee in regard to a Scrutiny Panel review of outcomes for looked after children.

The Scrutiny Committee had established a scrutiny panel in 2015 to look at outcomes for looked after children and whether these could be improved.

The panel's findings were reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2016 (ref SC21). The Committee agreed the panel's recommendations and submitted them to the Executive for consideration. The panel's final report was appended for information.

Councillor Meiklejohn, as convener of the scrutiny panel, summarised the work of the panel and commended its recommendations to the Executive.

Decision

The Executive agreed as follows:-

Early Intervention

- 1) that the Children's Commission recognise and ensure that:**
 - i. relationships between young people and those involved in their care are key to developing positive outcomes. The principles of relationship based practice therefore need to be developed and embedded by all relevant professionals;**
 - ii. the named persons in all services are appropriately trained and supported to recognise the specific needs of looked after children and young people in order to lift their aspirations and improve outcomes especially in education;**
 - iii. mental health services are aligned to meeting the needs of looked after children and that these are provided appropriately; and**
 - iv. attainment is a priority, particularly for looked after children including those looked after at home, through promoting attendance and engagement in learning. To achieve this:**
 - (a) a practice model is developed to assess the improvement in learning that has been achieved during the period of being looked after; and**
 - (b) an educationally rich care environment is put in place for all children looked after away from home.**

Balance of Care

2) that Children's Services:

- (i) undertake a review of Falkirk Council foster carer provision with a view to increasing the number of care placements available. This review would include the following:**
 - o consideration of the outcome from work streams from the National Review of Foster Care which are expected to report in the near future;**
 - o review fees and allowances for foster carers, noting that the outcome of the National Review of Allowances may impact on this;**
 - o how to use creative and innovative ways to engage with prospective foster carers; and**
 - o support for foster carers.**
- (ii) this review to be reported back to Scrutiny Committee by March 2017; and**
- (iii) investigate and report back to Members on the potential for spend to save proposals in regards to providing more local provision for those children currently looked after outwith the Falkirk Council area.**

Corporate Parenting

- 3) the proposals for the Champions Board and that the Executive Group of the Community Planning Partnership agree a reporting framework for taking forward actions within individual organisations.**

Transitions

- 4) Children's Services and Corporate and Housing Services report back before the end of March 2017 on the provision of housing and support for children leaving care. This report will include how to overcome the challenges of providing accommodation, the potential for a protocol for housing options, the need to continue support and how this is provided, the role and remit of the leaving care service and how we provide support to older young people in line with our new obligations;**
- 5) a proposal for a 'family firm' is brought forward by the end of March 2017 for the Council in the first instance but with a view to extending this to other public sector agencies if appropriate. This proposal will be presented by the Children's Commission; and**
- 6) a scoping exercise is undertaken and the results reported to the Children's Commission Leadership Group to identify the issues**

and challenges in relation to the level and range of support available to young people who have left care and are at risk of entering the criminal justice system.