

S17. Progress on Scrutiny Panel Recommendations for Looked After Children

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing a summary overview of the work resulting from the recommendations of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel which concluded in November 2016.

The Committee had, on 13 December 2018 (ref S24) requested an update on the progress made in implementing the findings of a scrutiny panel review of Looked After Children. The panel's recommendations had been accepted by the Scrutiny committee on 17 November 2016 (ref S21) and agreed by the Executive on 29 November 2016 (ref EX85). The report provided an update in regard to the panel's 7 recommendations. These were:-

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Mental health services are aligned to meeting the needs of Looked After children and that these are provided appropriately.
- 4) 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 practice model is developed to assess the improvement in learning that has been achieved during the period of being Looked After;
 - an educationally rich care environment is put in place for all children Looked After Away From Home.
- 5) 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:-
 - Consideration of the outcome from work streams from the National Review of Foster Care, which are expected to report in the near future.
 - Review fees and allowances for foster carers, noting that the outcome of the National Review of Allowances may impact on this.
 - How to use creative and innovative ways to engage with prospective foster carers.

- Support for foster carers.
- 6) 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 out with of the Falkirk Council area.
 - 7) It is recommended that the proposals for the Champions Board are approved and that the Executive Group of the Community Planning Partnership agree a reporting framework for taking forward actions within individual organisations.

The recommendations now fell within a larger 5 year strategic plan, Closer to Home. The key principle of the Closer to Home Strategy was that children and young people, wherever possible should be brought up within the environment of their own family. The aim of the strategy was to reduce reliance on external foster and residential care. The progress made on the panel's recommendations reflected their place within the Closer to Home Strategy. This had been explained to the committee earlier in the meeting during consideration of Children's Services Performance report (item S15).

Decision

The Scrutiny Committee noted the progress made across all of the Scrutiny Panel recommendations as detailed in appendix 1 of the report.