

## **Barnardo's Matrix Service**

**Monitoring Officer**      Matthew Davies – Service Manager, Children & Families

### **Introduction**

The Barnardo's Matrix Service provides early support to families whose children (aged 8 – 11years) are or at risk of, developing anti social and/or offending behaviour with the aim of reducing identified risk factors and enhancing protective factors. This small, intensive service, provide places for a maximum of 6 young people from Falkirk at any given time. Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils, along with Barnardo's, contribute to the funding of Matrix.

### **Background Information**

The Matrix Service works with a range of systems which affect a child's behaviour. These include, parenting capacity, family environmental and education factors and the child's developmental needs.

A variety of methods are employed, such as family work, a parenting skills/support group, activity based programmes, direct support at home and in the classroom as well as individual or group work in relation to issues such as problem solving and building of self esteem.

There are no Elected Members on the management board of Matrix.

### **Funding**

In 2008/2009 Falkirk Council's contribution to Matrix was £93,450. Clackmannanshire Council contributed £36,553 and Stirling contributed £121,848 with Barnardos contributing £60,924. A service level agreement has not been in place for Matrix for the period 2007/2008, while a review of youth justice provision in Falkirk was ongoing. However, an interim service level agreement has been agreed for 2008/2009.

### **Key achievements**

Provided a targeted community based service for children and their families, taking into account the people, environments and circumstances affecting a child's life before identifying the need for and promoting change within those areas which would make a difference to their behaviour and life chances.

Undertook an assessment of each child's needs and of their carers' parenting capacity using an appropriate assessment framework.

Worked with the children and their families in the context of their schools and communities, providing support and doing what it takes to enhance resilience and reduce risk factors.

Monitored the progress of care plans and reviewed these agreements regularly in collaboration with all those involved. Updated assessments are completed within agreed timescales.

Established an exit strategy for when the Matrix Service to a family concludes. Where necessary, Matrix have offered aftercare without reducing the numbers on the intensive programme.

Collated service user feedback from questionnaires and reports submitted for reviews and assessed this information to identify needs.

Evaluated the service offered and assessed this information to identify areas for development.

Used the AIM under 12's Assessment and Intervention to provide assessments of risk and action plans in relation to children displaying sexualised behaviour and supported Education staff, parents and foster carers to manage children who display a range of such behaviour.

### **Future plans**

Following a review of youth justice provision in this area, it has been proposed that the Matrix Service be de-commissioned. This reflects a changing pattern of service delivery and the development of new services with overlapping aims.

Falkirk Council has entered into discussion with Barnardo's in relation to how they deliver services in the Falkirk Council area, including the potential for reconfiguration to maximise their efficiency. In the interim, the young people with whom Matrix staff are currently working will continue to be provided with appropriate services through their local Children and Families teams.

## **Children 1<sup>st</sup> – Family Group Conferencing Service**

**Monitoring Officer**      Frank Kennedy - Service Manager, Children & Families

### **Introduction**

Children 1<sup>st</sup> formerly the RSPCC is a charitable organisation delivering a range of support services to Children & Families across the whole of Scotland. The organisation's only service within the Falkirk Council area is in relation to the Family Group Conferencing Service.

### **Background Information**

Children 1<sup>st</sup> in partnership with Falkirk Council have the responsibility for delivering the Family Group Case Conferencing Service which has been operational since January 2006.

The aim of the Service is to establish a means by which a family can join with both its extended family and friends to develop a plan to protect and support the child/children of the family and to remain at home. When this Service was established, it was hoped that it would lead to a reduction in the number of children and young people who required to be accommodated through the promotion of this method of family empowerment.

### **Funding**

The Service is currently grant funded by the Council to the amount of £77,895 per annum paid quarterly. Children 1<sup>st</sup> match this funding in equal parts. This enables 2 full time coordinators to be employed to coordinate and deliver the service

### **Key achievements**

During the year 2008/09 the Service has continued to operate at full capacity with referrals coming from each of the 7 area based Children & Families Teams. Currently referrals are made by Children & Families Social Worker in cases where there is an assessment in place that a child may be at risk of being looked after and accommodated. In addition referrals can be made arising from the first looked after away from home review in support of a rehabilitation plan.

Feedback from placing Social Workers and Team Managers is broadly positive with widely held views that the Service has had a positive impact on Children & Families referred to it and that it has contributed in a relatively high proportion of cases to help keep the child at home or in the extended family.

During period 2008/09 the Service continued to work to full capacity although with a slightly reduced number of families as a consequence of a short term vacancy in respect of one of the co-ordinator posts. The most up to date figures for the last six months confirm that the service will convene approximately 10 family conferences and a range of other family supports classified as significant pieces of work. In support of this activity the service has in the last six months undertaken 238 visits/appointments of which about 200 have been direct activities with the child and/or family members.

In addition the service is now supported by three fully trained volunteer advocates, this service being offered to each child and vulnerable adult

Whilst all evidence would suggest that the model has proved to be positive it is not always possible to attribute a child remaining at home being directly and wholly and attributable to the impact of the Family Group Conferencing, to enable a clearer picture to emerge on it's impact. The emphasis of the Service has been changed whereby a Family Group conference will now be routinely considered for each child who does become looked after and accommodated as a means to support early rehabilitation. This should enable a developing picture to emerge as to the impact of the service in supporting young people being returned home.

### **Key Difficulties**

Children 1<sup>st</sup> have had some difficulties from time to time in recruiting to coordinator posts which are partly attributed to ongoing funding uncertainty. This has led to some short term reduction in service availability for the period in question.

**Future plans**

While the work undertaken by Children 1<sup>st</sup> has undoubtedly been positive and welcomed by service users and staff alike, there are opportunities to encompass this model of working as an integral part of the Intensive Family Support Service which is currently under development. It is therefore proposed that funding of this service is discontinued, following a three month notice period, during which, arrangements are made to ensure that staff who will form part of the Intensive Family Support Service are suitably trained in this model of working.

### **Time Out – Crisis Out of Hours Service**

**Operationally Managed by FDAMH (Falkirk & District Association for Mental Health)**

**Monitoring Officer –** Carole Jones, Service Manager, Community Care

### **Introduction**

The “Time Out” service commenced as a pilot project in September 2005. Initially set up as an 18 month project coinciding with the Implementation of the Health Service Intensive Home Treatment Team (IHTT) Pilot. The initial scope of the service was to –

- Provide out of hours support advice and information for individuals in a Mental Health Crisis.
- Provide a social service model to adults aged 19-64 but recognising the need to be flexible, with mental health problems. The aim of the service being to prevent an individual’s crisis turning into an emergency crisis.

### **Background Information**

Primarily a telephone service “Time Out” at it’s inception had the facility to offer the opportunity to talk face to face with the support worker and also the facility to stay at the project for a number of hours if a brief respite “Time Out” was needed, particularly a carer. In practice this facility is rarely utilised. The current staffing compliment comprises –

- 1x Co-ordinator of 21 hours per week
- 2x Project Workers of 20 hours per week
- 2x Project Workers of 10 hours per week
- 1x Project Worker of 5 hours per week

The project was externally evaluated by the Scottish Development Service between November 2005 and July 2006. Although completed in the early stages of the service the project evaluated well.

The project had been set up in recognition of the lack of social Out of Hours support for service users and their carers. In practice the majority of the calls are repeat callers. Therefore the number of calls received is not reflective of the number of people using the service. The service operates between the hours of 6pm – 11pm, 7 days a week with two members of staff working each evening. The number of calls handled by the project has generally increased year on year with the exception of 2007.

### **Total Number of Calls Receiving a response from the service has been –**

- 2,507 in 2006 (average 7 calls per night)
- 2,255 in 2007 (average 6 calls per night)
- 2,593 in 2008 (average 7 calls per night)
- 3,199 in 2009 (average 9 calls per night)

In 2009 this averages at 4 to 5 calls per evening, per worker with the majority of callers being in receipt of other support services.

By far the majority of callers are known to and supported by other services.

Performance measures show that the length of calls vary from 5 minutes or less to more than an hour. Presenting issues range from bereavement to feelings of self-harm. In 2008 stress, anxiety, loneliness and depression have been noted as the highest prevalence. The 2009 detail is currently being collated.

### **Funding**

FDAMH currently receives a grant from Falkirk Council of £90,000 per annum to run the "Time Out" service. However FDAMH has advised that the service lacks admin support and in order to provide this, funding would need to increase to £92,490.

The service benefits from being based within the main FDAMH accommodation and from the associated support framework. There is a reciprocal benefit in that "Time Out" would incur additional costs if it were a stand alone service and the FDAMH core service benefits from having additional staff present who were able to assist elsewhere if the service is needed.

### **Key Achievements**

The service has been successful in raising "Time Out's" profile which is reflected in the increase in the number of calls received and handled. Although as it is the number of calls receiving a response that is recorded, the increase could also be attributed to how staff members are managing the calls.

The service evaluation in 2006 was positive with qualitative evidence that the project was valued by those who had used it and responded to the survey. The service meets the National Crisis Service Standards and is working towards accreditation by the National Mental Health Help Line Association.

In the 2008 Inspection of Social Work Services the Social Work Inspection Agency cited the project as a good practice example.

### **Key Difficulties**

The main challenges for FDAMH similar to those of other grant funded organisations is the security of long-term funding in a financial environment of increasing costs and efficiency savings. As a service, they have identified the need to improve performance information collection and collations. Whilst the current statistics recorded are informative there are gaps which lead to further questions. This has been recognised by FDAMH who are working on improving the performance information captured. It has further been identified, both through the evaluation process and by the service itself that there is further work needed on the management of missed calls. "Time Out" has introduced a texting and e-mailing facility which does provide further means of communication with the service and goes some way towards addressing the missed calls, however this section of the service will mean that missed calls are difficult to eliminate.

### **Development of Services since "time out" pilot commenced and alternate services**

Since "Time Out" started in September 2005, Mental Health provision has progressed through a process of re-design with an emphasis on shifting the balance of care from hospital services to supporting people in the community.

- Breathing Space is a national free and confidential phone line service for any individual who is experiencing depression, who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. Initially set up to target young men, the service has now expanded to include all people in need of their service. The phone lines are staffed by trained specialist advisers with an equal ratio of female to male advisers. In essence, Breathing Space offers a similar service to "Time Out" albeit on a national level and without the locally established networks. Breathing Space operates from 6pm to 2am on week nights and 24 hours over the weekend. It is a service funded by the Scottish Governments Health Department and NHS 24. As a service it is managed by NHS 24. A further development is that NHS 24 is progressing the inclusion of mental health trained nurses within their service.
- Saneline – a national out-of-hours telephone help line offering emotional support and information for people affected by mental health problems – operationally run by the Charity SANE. Volunteers who answer the phones have completed an intensive accredited training programme endorsed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Their experience includes offering support to those people who are feeling suicidal or are in crisis. Saneline is open from 6pm-11pm daily.

- CRUSE Bereavement Care Scotland – a national phone line with a single contact number which offers bereavement support and counselling. There is a team based locally in Forth Valley.
- Samaritans – provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours per day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair including those which would lead to suicide. There is a service local to Forth Valley.
- IHTT – (Intensive Home Treatment Team) – a service provided by NHS Forth Valley Mental Health Services. The aim to provide services that offer an alternative to acute mental health inpatient care and treatment for people aged 18-64. IHTT aim to support people within the community in their own homes. The IHTT received a positive evaluation from the Scottish Development Centre for mental health. The service operates from 9-9 Monday-Friday and 10-6 at weekends.

### **Review Findings**

The “Time Out” service provides a phone line support service within a set time frame of 6pm – 11pm and as per the 2009 figures takes approximately 9 calls a night between 2 workers. This is a phone line for which there are alternative national services providing similar support. Consequently, in recognition of Best Value and also as a source to secure assistance with the ongoing funding, an approach was made, in agreement with the Manager of FDAMH, to Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council as to whether they would consider a Partnership Agreement for “Time Out” to expand the service to cover the Forth Valley area. This was unsuccessful mainly on a Best Value basis and the availability of alternative similar services.

The alternative of using volunteers to work on “Time Out’s” phone lines and/or a partnership arrangement with the Samaritans locally to establish a more robust financially feasible service was discussed with FDAMH but was not an option they wished to pursue.

### **Recommendations**

While recognising the value placed on the “Time Out” service by the people who have received the service, there are issues of duplication of provision with other service areas and consideration has to be given as to whether the grant received is Best value under Following the Public Pound.

As a phone line support, on average each worker within “Time Out” manages between 4-5 calls per night as of the year 2009 over a 5 hour period.

In discussion with the new Manager at FDAMH, it was agreed to review the impact on the core service if the funding for the “Time Out” project was not to continue. FDAMH’s operating structure, similar to other grant funded organisations do through necessity use their staff members flexibly to enable them to continue providing a service when there is sick absence and annual leave. Therefore any additionality to the core service by having the staff members of “Time Out” on site needs to be quantified and impact assessed.

However, whilst acknowledging the good work, staff commitment and the value placed on it by service users, it cannot be considered a Best Value option given that there are alternative services available.

It is therefore recommended that arrangements are made to discontinue this service and that a formal notice period of 3 months is given to FDAMH in order that they can provide notice to staff, make any necessary adjustments to their core services and can ensure that Service Users are signposted in the direction of the other services available.