

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 19 MAY 2015

CHILDREN'S WELLBEING RESEARCH PROJECT

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

This report advises elected members of the initial outcomes of the Children's Wellbeing Research undertaken in September 2014.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) note the outcomes of the Children's Wellbeing Research;
- (ii) agree the 3 key developmental outcomes identified in section 5 as priorities for the revised Children's Services Plan; and
- (iii) requests that the Strategic Director report back to committee on progress in addressing the three key developmental outcomes.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- Individuals are involved in their communities

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to report number 499/13 to Strategic Policy Committee in September 2013 that sought agreement to Angus Council participating in the Scottish Government's Children's Wellbeing Research project. The aim of the research project was to enhance the safety and development of children and young people through the gathering and analysis of comprehensive child wellbeing data. By using the data as a critical tool for change the project aims to support local planning partners to identify and quantify key developmental outcomes, risks and protective factors and to prioritise areas for improvement.

3.2 The Children's Wellbeing Research Project comprised gathering detailed information about the needs of our children and young people drawn from a community survey of a statistically valid sample of local families across the authority for children aged 0–8 years and from a comprehensive wellbeing survey of children and young people aged 9–11 years and 12 -16 years.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Wellbeing Research was undertaken in Angus in September 2014. The response rate to the survey of children and young people aged 9 – 16 years was over 94%.

4.2 The wellbeing research identifies 9 Key developmental outcomes which are indicators of children's subsequent health and development.

- Poor Engagement with School (age 9-16)

This covers young people's reporting of their interest in school work; the value they indicated they place on learning, and the effort they consider they put into their school work and truancy.

- Early Initiation of Substance use (age 12-16)

This includes young people reporting to have used drugs, tobacco or alcohol between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

- Poor Early Social & Emotional Development (Parents of children aged 0-5)

This covers parents reporting of their difficulties in managing an infant or child's ability to calm down; their perception of their child's ability to follow the rules, respond to or initiate interaction, cope with sleeping and eating, develop independence, communicate own feelings and demonstrate empathy.

- Offending Behaviour (14-16)

Young people reporting to have been involved in offending behaviour in past 12 months includes theft, vandalism, assault, carrying a weapon, dealing in drugs, or arrest.

- Unhealthy Gestation & Birth

If a child is born prematurely, has low birth weight or if the child's mother reports to having used substances during the pregnancy.

- Obesity (P1)

Children with a Body Mass Index (BMI) above 91st percentile.

- Poor Behavioural Development (4-8)

Parents reporting that their child exhibits aggressive or non-compliant behaviours.

- Anxiety & Depression (11-15)

Young people who report to have feelings of worry, unhappiness or other psychosomatic complaints likely to reach the threshold for an emotional disorder if seen by a clinician.

- Poor Language Development (0-5)

Delays in reaching key language development milestones.

The research findings show the proportions of children in Angus estimated to have difficulties in relation to the key development outcomes is comparable with other local authorities who took part in the Children's Wellbeing Research Project. Angus is comparable in 6 of the key developmental outcomes and better in 3. In none of the key developmental outcomes was Angus recorded as 'worse' than the other local authorities.

While the high level findings of the research is providing important information on key developmental outcomes which can assist in targeting services to areas of need, further work is underway to analyse the information on a locality basis so we can get a clear picture of children's needs in specific areas of Angus.

- 4.3 In addition to the above the survey provides important information about children's wellbeing at different ages and stages of development which is currently being analysed. The information will help us to plan services that can provide earlier support for children and their families, with a view to preventing future issues such as poor achievement at school and anti-social / offending behaviour.
- 4.4 The outcomes for the research will allow Angus to:
- Consider how children's wellbeing varies across different communities within Angus;
 - Quantify the needs of children and young people in Angus;
 - Identify priority outcomes for improvements;
 - Develop and implement interventions targeted to those who need them most;
 - Help inform resource allocation decisions
 - Development a clear service re-design plan that effectively targets need and delivers best quality interventions; and
 - Help Angus to achieve maximum return on investments in services.
- 4.5 Repeating the research in future years will allow Angus to:
- Report on outcomes and improvements in outcomes for children and young people;
 - Identify the impact of service improvements on outcomes; and
 - Realign resources to reflect changing need and the effectiveness of services provided.
- 4.6 The next steps that require to be undertaken include:
- Feedback and consultation with children and young people on proposed priorities based on the outcomes of the research;
 - Feedback and consultation with parents and carers on proposed priorities based on the outcomes of the research;
 - Meetings with school clusters to identify the implications of the research for individual schools and school clusters;
 - Feedback and consultation with the Angus Community Planning Partnership on proposed priorities;
 - Consultation with local communities on outcomes of research and identification of local community planning priorities in light of research;
 - Mapping current resource spend and identifying plans to shift resources to reflect identified priorities; and
 - Identification of priority improvement actions focusing on addressing the three identified priority development outcomes.
- 4.7 Section 3 of the Children and Young Persons Scotland Act 2014 requires public services to work together to design, plan and deliver services for children and families and to produce Children's Service Plans. National guidance has been received that indicates this part of the Act will be implemented in April 2017. It is proposed that the information from the research will be used as the basis on which to develop a draft revised Children's Services Plan for Angus that will be used for consultation before an interim Plan is produced in April 2016 in advance of the national requirements to produce such a plan.

5. PROPOSALS

On the basis of the initial outcomes from the research it is proposed that three key development outcomes are identified as priorities for the Angus Community Planning partnership, namely:

- Poor Early Social & Emotional Development (0-5 years)
- Poor Engagement with School (9-16)
- Early Initiation of Substance Use (12-16)

Addressing these issues at an early stage will help promote better outcomes for all children and young people in Angus. It is proposed that these three key developmental outcomes are set as priorities for the revised Children's Service Plan for Angus. The revised Children's Services Plan will clearly identify the specific actions required and service developments,

including shifts in resources, necessary to improve outcomes for children and young people in these area.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly out of this report. Proposals to realign resources to reflect the agreed proposed key developmental priorities will be brought to elected members in due course.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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