

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 18 MAY 2021

GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Scottish Government has made grants available to support children, young people and families with the impact of Covid-19. Monies have also been allocated to plan and deliver a mental health and wellbeing programme for children and young people over the next 3 years. These short-term monies have been allocated to different departments of the council and to ensure integrated planning and best use of the available resources, the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Education Officer have collaborated to deliver spending plans that meet a range of needs. The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of spending of the 2 one-off grants (Winter Plan for Social Protection and Mental Health and Wellbeing Covid-19 impact) and seek Committee approval of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Initial Plan.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the spending plan for Winter Plan for Social Protection – Funding for Vulnerable Children and approve the carry forward;
- (ii) Note the spending plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing impacts of Covid-19;
- (iii) Approve the Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Initial Plan.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes from the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030:

- Children are given the best start in life
- Physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing is improved
- There are more opportunities for people to achieve success

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 It is inescapable that the Covid-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on our children and families, in terms of their financial situations as well as the impact on mental health and wellbeing and other aspects of everyday life. Over the last 12 months, Angus Chief Officers have received weekly reports on social impacts including Police concern reports, incidences of reported domestic abuse, numbers of children on the Angus Child Protection Register, Adult Concern reports and homeless and housing data. Alongside this we have reported on the numbers of children with a child's plan who are being contacted by a professional regularly, those who are absent from school and increasing referrals to social work. Close observation and scrutiny of this data has enabled a better understanding of some of the issues faced by children and their families. This together with wider contextual information on financial hardship, unemployment, food poverty and child health impacts provide a greater understanding of where some of the immediate pressures have been for families in Angus.

3.2 Mental health impacts of covid-19 have been researched and reported nationally and this is a growing area of research to enable a deeper understanding of longer-term impacts and new and emerging risks for children and families.

- 3.3 As children and young people have returned to school following lockdown, the need for a wider range of supports for emotional health and wellbeing have been highlighted by school staff.
- 3.4 Angus Integrated Children's Services Group held a multi-agency consultation event in January 2021 where we explored priorities and issues for children and young people as part of our Tayside Collaborative work.
- 3.5 We want to make sure that we are able to support all of our children and young people as we move into a possible recovery phase. Our planning, partnerships and service delivery require to adapt as we learn more about the longer-term impact of the pandemic.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Social Protection – Funding for Vulnerable Children

4.1.1 In December 2020, Scottish Government Ministers wrote to Chief Social Work Officers with an offer of short-term grant funding to support vulnerable children and their families with the impacts of Covid-19. The Angus allocation is £336,633.00 for the period 2020/2021. The main objectives of the grant are:

- to address staffing issues in local authority residential children's homes and to work with third sector providers in the local area to ensure adequate staffing arrangements which will mitigate the spread of the virus and ensure continuity of care. Funding can also be used if required to enable some flexibility to support fostering services affected by Covid-19 pressures.
- to support the additional social work workload involved in additional Children's Hearings activity as part of the Children's Hearings Recovery Plan adopted in November 2020. Including staff costs if required to cover the extra workload.
- to address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged children and young people, including disruptions to transitions out of care for care leavers and disruptions to transition planning for children with complex needs. Funding can support a variety of interventions made under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended).

4.1.2 Based on evaluation of service volume demand, feedback from staff, children and families and liaison with partners across Angus, a plan has been prepared to apportion the grant across relevant areas (see table 1). The plan is in line with the specified criteria.

4.1.3 Furthermore, in February 2021, it was confirmed that local authorities are permitted to carry forward up to 25% of the total grant allocation into financial year 2021/22. In this regard, £84,000 of the grant allocation will be carried forward as part of the 2020/21 year-end accounts processes. The remaining 75% of the grant in table 1 below is already spent.

4.1.4 Table 1

Including headers, the following table has 9 rows and 2 columns, reading left to right. It lists the areas of spend then the amount of grant allocation.

Item	Amount (£)
Winter Discretionary fund for Vulnerable Children and Families – fund to support hardship applications managed via Welfare Rights Service (50% of overall total of fund – see Mental Health plan below)	£25,000
Extension of Young Carers Support – provision of additional activities, contacts during winter months and extending reach of current project	£6,000
Aberlour Sustain Programme – increased hours and provision for vulnerable families – increased reach of project	£60,000
Purchase of digital equipment, data and other essential household goods including bedding, linen, beds, coats etc to support families and to increase participation in Child's Planning Meetings and reduce digital exclusion	£9,165
Increased residential costs including hire of a cottage, enhanced support to children out of school, enhanced provision of residential respite and services for children with disabilities and Out of Hours Services	£169,600

Volunteer Mileage for foster carers and schooling payments to ensure contacts, blended learning etc was promoted for looked after children	£30,974
Additional staffing capacity in residential services	£35,894
TOTAL	£336,633

4.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing impacts of Covid-19 (2020/2021)

4.2.1 In October 2020, Scottish Government made an offer of grant funding for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Services for children, young people and their families impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The grant offer to Angus Council was £244,500.00 payable in the financial year 2020/21. It has been clarified that unspent grant can be carried forward in full to enable the delivery of services into 2021/22. To date, the £80,000 Third Sector Support Fund has been paid out. The remaining £164,500 will be carried forward as part of the 2020/21 year-end accounts processes. The main objectives of the grant are:

- The funding is to be utilised to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families where issues have arisen as a result of the pandemic.
- Services should be delivered according to local need.
- Services should be for those aged 5 to 24 yrs (26 if care experienced), their families and carers.

4.2.2 The following plan (table 2) has been drawn from information and intelligence from a range of partners including reports from Community Planning partners on unmet need. Information submitted in December 2020 by a range of agencies including third sector partners, NHS and Angus Council has informed the proposals here.

4.2.3 Table 2

Including headers, the following table has 8 rows and 2 columns, reading left to right. It lists the areas of spend then the amount of grant allocation.

Item	Amount (£)
Discretionary fund for Vulnerable Children and Families – fund to support hardship applications managed via Welfare Rights Service (50% of overall total of fund – see Social Protection plan above)	£25,000
Third Sector Support Fund – Support to meet MH needs in families – this fund is managed via Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) to welcome bids from third sector providers to meet the needs of children, young people and families where there are identified impacts related to covid-19	£80,000
Domestic Abuse Support – to enhance supports and provisions provided by Women’s Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre linked to increased demand during the pandemic with particular reference to young people	£25,000
Angus Alive support to young people aged 12-18 - Cluster model of outdoor activity and learning delivered by Angus Alive, inclusive of children, young people and families where there are identified support needs with isolation, transition, children looked after at home and/or at risk of exclusion	£76,500
Extend the pilot ‘Sport for All’ for children looked after at home and young people leaving care to extend opportunities for improved physical, emotional and mental health	£8,000
Provide specialist therapeutic support and interventions including psychotherapy, specialist consultation and trauma therapy for young people who have experienced significant separation, isolation and trauma and need help to recover. This fund will support the purchase of specialist support services for young people who do not receive CAMHS services but for whom school counselling and other interventions are not sufficient	£30,000
TOTAL	£244,500

- 4.2.4 The above proposals are at different stages of implementation with all proposals actively being scoped and outcomes agreements being developed.

4.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme 2021-2024

4.3.1 In March 2020, Scottish Government launched funding to support locally developed Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes to ensure local areas have services that are responsive to people in distress and promote positive emotional and mental health. Grant monies were allocated to each local authority with commitment for recurring funding for a 3-year period from 2021/22 onwards. The Angus allocation of the funding was £325,000 per annum, with an additional one-off payment of £62,000 offered to support planning and/or procurement capacity. Due to the pandemic, work was not progressed on the national programme until October 2020 when local authority areas were asked to develop a 3 year plan.

4.3.2 Guidance for local authorities has been issued and used to develop the Angus plan. Supports available to children and young people aged 5-26yrs should be highly flexible, personalised and adaptive to need and the changing circumstances of the child, young person or family/carer. Support should be compassionate, empathetic and kind, and take account of the evidence from stakeholders of what works. The grant allows for the following:

- Continuity in provision – wherever appropriate, getting support from people that young people know and trust, who should be enabled to be confident in addressing mental wellbeing. This may include continued contact with practitioners from CAMHS within community-based services
- Confidential services for those who choose them, for example not within their school or immediate community
- Relation-based practice, which enables support to be provided and change achieved through one-to-one professional relationships
- Self-referral services that are as accessible as possible. Consideration should be given to age and stage appropriate language, neurodevelopmental conditions and learning disabilities. Self-referral must remain accessible by other means e.g. through an advocate
- Peer support networks, including support groups, peer led programmes and facilitated peer to peer support
- Support for advocates or supports to attend with a child or young person.

4.4 Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan

4.4.1 There are 4 key areas that are being explored to deliver improvements in emotional and mental health and wellbeing in Angus:

Extension of digital counselling service - A leading digital mental health service, 'Togetherall' has been available since December 2020 to support all 16-24 year olds in Angus. This service was originally commissioned for 16-19yr olds using the Counselling in Schools monies from Scottish Government and was extended to 24yr olds using the Mental Health grant. The service has been well received and other local authorities have contacted Angus as an early provider of this online support during lockdown due to the pandemic.

Introduction of Peer Mentoring Service linked to GP Surgeries – This service is currently on offer to adults in Angus and is well evaluated. This model can be extended to offer this support to young people aged 12-16 years with a bespoke offer for this age range. We will work with Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and the current Angus providers, Hillcrest Futures and Penumbra to develop access to young people's peer support workers across the region. Care experienced advisors have been able to contribute to the developing proposals.

Services to help children recover – we will introduce programmes to help children recover from trauma. CEDAR is an evidenced based programme which has been trialled in Angus by Woman's Aid. We are working on developing an extended Angus programme including bringing in additional funding from external sources to ensure that children from aged from 5-16, together with their mothers, are supported through an evidence-based group work programme. We will further scope services to help children recover from abuse and neglect including therapeutic interventions. This service will be commissioned, and work is taking place to explore local need and intended outcomes.

Support for children on the neurodevelopmental waiting list – joint work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Tayside has identified a need for children aged 5-12

years who are awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment. We are currently in discussion with CAMHS and Tayside partners to explore options, one of which is a “CAMHS Connect-ed” - digital pre-pathway / virtual waiting room /early intervention and training platform for children young people and their carers, inclusive of mental health and neurodevelopmental streams. A family support type model for children and families who require advice, guidance and support will also be part of the scoping to deliver a whole system model of support. This service will be considered for delivery across Tayside.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The plans for each of each of the 3 grants (Winter Plan for Social Protection, Funding for Vulnerable Children (Mental Health and Wellbeing impacts of Covid-19) and Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme are contained in section 4 of this report.
- 5.2 Committee is asked to note the retrospective plans for one off monies received by Angus Council to support children and their families with the impact of Covid-19 and to approve the initial plan to enhance services to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Angus.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of implementing the above proposed plans can be met from the ringfenced grant allocations. There are no other costs arising from these proposals.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried and is attached.

8. CONSULTATION

Consultation on the proposals has taken place with a range of stakeholders as part of the Community Planning Partnership’s Integrated Children’s Services arrangements. The Directors of Angus Council have also been consulted as part of the preparation of this report.

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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List of Appendices:

None



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

Funding to support children, young people and families

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment

No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| (i) It does not impact on people | Yes/No |
| (ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics | Yes/No |
| (iii) It is for information only | Yes/No |
| (iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year | Yes/No |
| (v) It is technical | Yes/No |

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment	No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i)Lead Directorate/Service:

Children, Families and Justice/ Education and Lifelong Learning

(ii)Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020

(iii)What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

To provide plans for spend of Scottish Government grants for the following;

Winter Plan for Social Protection – Funding for Vulnerable Children(£336,633)

Winter Discretionary fund for vulnerable children and families to support hardship applications

Extension of young carers support

Aberlour Sustain Programme

Digital equipment and resources to increase family participation

Enhanced provision of residential respite and services for children with disabilities

Additional staffing in residential services

Volunteer Mileage for foster carers

Plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing impact of Covid-19 (£244,500)

Discretionary fund for vulnerable children and families

Third Sector Support Fund to meet mental health needs in families

Domestic Abuse Support

Outdoor learning and activity for identified groups of children/ young people delivered by Angus Alive

Extension of 'Sport for All' for children looked after at home and young people leaving care to increase opportunities for improved physical, emotional and mental health

Specialist therapeutic support for young people who have experienced significant separation, isolation and trauma

Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme (£325K)

A digital mental health service 'Togetherall' to support 16-24yr olds

Peer Mentoring Service linked to GP Surgeries (12-16yr olds)

Services to help children (5-16yr olds) recover from trauma

Support for children (5-12yr olds) on the neurodevelopmental waiting list

(iv)Is it a new proposal? **Yes** Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? No Please indicate

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees No

Job Applicants No

Service users **Yes**

Members of the public **No**

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Chief Officers Data Set has been collected since 15th March 2020 which reports weekly to Chief Officers on the following:

- Child protection activity
- Adult protection activity and vulnerable adults
- Looked after children
- Multi-agency child's plans and contact with children subject to a plan
- Domestic abuse reports
- Missing children
- Housing and homeless data

Social Work referral data and named person data analysis

Consultation with Welfare Rights regarding unmet need for families in poverty

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

- Angus Head Teachers
- Community Planning Partners
- Staff survey including service specific staff surveys (Children, Families and Justice and impact of pandemic)

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

Child Health Data Analysis Report (NHS Tayside)

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

- Integrated Children's Services Group
- Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Network
- Tayside Collaborative
- Tayside Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Other (general information as appropriate).

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? **No**

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age

Impact Positive

The extension of a range of mental health supports and services for 5-26yr olds (including care experienced) will enable the right support, at the right time for those who have been most impacted by the pandemic.

Disability

Impact Positive

The provision of early intervention and support for children awaiting assessment in relation to neurodevelopmental issues.
Access to digital support for young people experiencing emotional and wellbeing difficulties during lockdown.

Gender reassignment

Impact Potentially Positive

Extending the range of local emotional and wellbeing supports and services will enable young people to access, if required.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact Neutral

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact Neutral

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact Neutral

Religion or Belief

Impact Neutral

Sex

Impact Neutral

Sexual orientation

Impact Neutral

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

Consultation with Care Experienced Young People (Mental Health and Wellbeing Support)

Consultation with Young People via Tayside Collaborative

Angus Results of Young Scot Covid Survey 2020 (300 young people from Angus)

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

N/A

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

By ensuring that young people who require early help and support with emotional health and wellbeing are able to access this from a variety of different fora and are not further disadvantaged by rurality or service criteria, thus ensuring the right help is available at the right time.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

No

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?

Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.

Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.

Low and/or No Wealth (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

Impact

Material Deprivation (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

Impact

Area Deprivation (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport)).

Impact

Socio-economic Background i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

Impact

Other – please indicate

Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Grant expenditure is reviewed if necessary; regular reporting to Scottish Government on grant expenditure and outcomes in relation to the plan.

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

It will be published alongside the committee report

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Kirsty Lee & Audrey Osborne, Service Leaders 14/04/21

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips, Snr Practitioner (Equalities) 15/04/21

Approved by: Kathryn Lindsay, Director Children, Families and Justice 19/04/21
