

ITEM No ...5.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29 OCTOBER 2018

REPORT ON: RAISING ATTAINMENT – INLUDEM PROJECT UPDATE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 342-2018

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Dundee and Includem Raising Attainment Project operable within all 8 secondary schools of the city since January 2017.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Children and Families Services Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of this report; and
- ii instructs a further update report on the project from the Executive Director of Children and Families Service in May 2019.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Robertson Trust is funding £587,500 for the delivery of the Project by Includem over the initial duration of the project from January 2017 to June 2019. This funding is being matched by Dundee City Council via the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund. An expectation of the Robertson Trust funding is that on conclusion of the project in June 2019 and following consideration of the independent evaluation report and outcomes achieved Children and Families Service will consider the continuation of this work.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 In October 2017 the Children and Families Services Committee approved the first update report in relation to the Dundee and Includem Raising Attainment Challenge Project (Article IV of the minute of the meeting and Report No 349-2017 refers). The October 2017 report provided an overview of the project, its intended outcomes and emergent strengths/areas for development. Importantly, the report noted the consideration Dundee City Council would give to sustain the project via mainstream funding pending evaluation of the achieved outcomes and the final independent evaluation report.

4.2 This report provides an update on the project delivery to date and is informed by two internal interim evaluation reports (December 2017 and September 2018) from independent evaluators – Blake Stevenson Ltd. Performance criteria have been developed by Blake Stevenson in partnership with Dundee City Council and Includem to support the evaluation of short, medium and long term outcomes (see appendix 1) and to address the evaluation question: To what extent is embedding third sector provision (to deliver family and out of hours support) within schools' pupil support teams successful? A final report outlining the impact on pupil outcomes will be provided in March 2019 by Blake Stevenson and inform the May 2019 update to the Children and Families Service Committee.

4.3 Building on the Inclusion Plus Project (2013-2016) and jointly funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Roberson Trust, the Dundee and Includem project aims, through the provision of intensive support services by Includem workers to vulnerable young people and their families, to ultimately raise the attainment of identified young people through their improved wellbeing, attendance and engagement with school. The project commenced in January 2017 and will run initially until June 2019. Consistent with early intervention principles, the project is now intended principally for S1 to S3 pupils, having previously focussed solely on pupils within S1 and S2. This change has been made in response to school requests to address identified pupil need across the broad general education (S1-S3).

4.4 On a weekly basis Includem can successfully engage with up to 47 young people with 329 hours of intervention distributed on a weekly basis across all 8 secondary schools. On average, young people

receive up to three, one and a half hour contacts per week with their parents/carers receiving a weekly one hour contact. The support from Includem can occur during the school day or in the evening and can take place in school, in community settings or in the family home.

4.5 Led by an Includem Team manager and supported by established school pupil support mechanisms, Includem Project Workers:

- provide intensive 1:1 structured support and mentoring for vulnerable/disengaged young people with availability through an on-call telephone system 24/7;
- support pupils' attendance, participation and active engagement in school life and learning;
- develop bespoke, co-created, pupil support plans and ensure they are delivered effectively;
- liaise and build relationships with families to ensure that they are supported in parenting and supporting their child fulfil their potential;
- provide a rapid response to crisis referrals;
- build and maintain effective working relationships with school colleagues at all levels including integrated pupil referral processes;
- support referral procedures by attending Team Around The Child meetings.

4.6 In December 2017, Blake Stevenson Ltd published their first interim report. The report focused on project implementation and delivery during the first 10 months of the project. Overall the report indicated that the Includem support provided to young people and families was highly valued by all stakeholders and was making a positive difference to the lives of young people and families. Key findings outlined throughout the report included the following:

- around 50 young people referred between January 2017 and October 2017 are mainly male due to poor behavior
- as a result of interventions 50% of referred pupils have improved attendance; 38% have reduced attendance
- as a result of interventions 62% of referred pupils have improved behaviours; 35% demonstrate no change
- a planned shift in the weighting of referrals to S1/2 pupils has taken place
- a need to extend the project to S3 pupils
- between 12 and 18 pupils have exited the project
- the engagement of young people in the co-production of interventions and bespoke support has been well received
- the majority of support (83.2%) offered to young people takes place during school hours
- the majority of support time provided is in face-to-face contact with young people
- school staff have commended the immediacy and responsiveness of Includem support and the key role workers play in bridging the gap between home and school
- school staff have an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the lives of referred children and families
- the positive impact on families in relation to improved relationships with young people; improved parenting and personal support to parents.

4.7 Areas for reflection/improvement identified in the December 2017 Blake Stevenson report included:

- a need to further embed Includem into school Pupil Support Teams by both raising the awareness and profile of Includem to a broader range of school staff and strengthening relationships and partnership working arrangements between school and Includem staff
- the need to improve communication/information systems between schools and Includem in relation to respective interventions and their impact on young people
- the continued need for schools and Includem, to better support evaluation of the outcome/impact of the project through the provision of qualitative/quantitative data on pupil progress.

4.8 In September 2018, Blake Stevenson Ltd published their second interim report. The report focused on project implementation and delivery during the period January 2017- June 2018. Overall the report indicated that the Includem Service was continuing to make a positive difference to the lives of young people and families. Key findings included the following:

- 101 young people and their families have worked with Includem during the period between January 2017-June 2018

- 47 of the 101 referred young people have exited the project with improved exit procedures established
- the average length of support for young people receiving intensive support is 33 weeks
- 64% of the pupils receiving support reside in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD 1 and 2)
- 61% of pupils receiving support are male and 39% female
- the vast majority of referred pupils (75%) are in S1 or S2
- the increased prevalence of contacts with families, including joint appointments with children and their parents/carers, in both strengthening family relationships and supporting parents/carers better support their children
- continued use of the 24/7 telephone helpline which received 1,875 calls between January 2017 and June 2018; of these calls 42% were made by pupils/schools during the school day seeking support
- a shift in the timing of support provision with a greater proportion of support now being delivered outwith the school day (27%) whilst maintaining a flexible response to school/pupil needs during the school day (26%)
- school attendance data in relation to 58 of the referred pupils indicates an improvement in attendance for 23 pupils (40%) and a decrease in attendance for 31 pupils (53%) with the attendance of four pupils remaining constant (*whilst the reduction in attendance requires fuller investigation, this is believed, in part, to be affected by the 'high tariff' and complex additional support needs of referred pupils typified by established/entrenched non-attendance/engagement with school*)
- positive changes in the behaviours of pupils receiving support including – more positive interactions with peers; increased engagement with school and school-related services including Educational Psychology; engagement with school-located health and wellbeing workers; reduction in recorded violent incidents; and reduction in the number of behavioral referrals, demerits and school exclusions.

4.9 Areas for reflection/improvement identified in the September 2018 Blake Stevenson report include:

- A need to review the threshold/tariff of referred pupils – given the philosophy of early intervention and prevention, should 'lower tariff' pupils be referred so that more changes in school attendance, engagement in learning and behavior may be made?
- The need to ensure the full support of parents, prior to accepting pupils on to the project; the reinforcement of project interventions and change within the home setting is identified as being critical in helping pupils sustain their progress
- The high incidence of missed, cancelled or refused contacts (1240 hours)
- The role and effectiveness of compensatory unplanned contacts (1006) in response to missed, cancelled or refused contacts (most of these contact lasted 30 minutes or less)
- The number of pupils to date supported by the project. An initial notional aspiration to work with 200 young people over the two year period had been outlined at the inception of the project. On this basis, by June 2018 (18 month period) 150 pupils should have received project support as opposed to the outlined 101. A number of contributory factors have been identified to this reduced pupil throughput including – the continued work with legacy cases from the Inclusion Plus Project (these pupils have not been included in the project's figures/data); the longer average time on the programme (33 weeks) rather than the originally predicted (26 weeks); the complex needs of the young people being referred; and the length of time taken between initial referral and commencement of project interventions (once a pupil is referred the process of engaging a pupil and their family can take several weeks)
- The resource intensive nature of the project and high unit cost for some pupils who remain on the programme beyond a notional 6 month period
- The time lag between an exited pupil leaving the project and a new pupil being supported during the first 18 months of the project there was rarely a week when all 47 pupil places have been filled.
- The need to review school procedures for temporarily engaging vulnerable P7 pupils on to the project prior to their transition to secondary school (such temporary engagement is possible due to the short term availability of capacity during the summer holidays when a number of referred pupils temporarily disengage from the project).

4.10 Importantly the above report also highlighted improvements in a number of areas, previously identified as requiring attention (ref 4.6 above), all of which have positively impacted upon project delivery including:

- the increased awareness across school staff of Includem and their role in supporting vulnerable young people
- improved/more effective partnership working relationships between school and Includem staff resulting in a better quality and frequency of engagement leading to a deepened and shared understanding of respective roles in supporting pupils
- improved communication and information flow between school and Includem staff.

4.11 In support of improved project delivery two Reflect & Learn stakeholder discursive events have taken place in January 2018 and October 2018 immediately after the publication of the internal independent interim evaluation reports. Both events have been successful in supporting the project's Operational Group and Project Board determine changes and improvements to ongoing project delivery.

4.12 The final project evaluation public report covering the period January 2017 – June 2018 will be published in March 2019. This report will have a primary focus on the outcomes achieved for young people and will include a number of pupil/family case studies. It is envisaged that this report will be instrumental in informing the Council's deliberations in connection with sustaining the project interventions provided by Includem through mainstream funding.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainable Development, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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October 2018

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Dundee City Council, Includem & Robertson Trust Raising Attainment Project

13/04/2017



