

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 28 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT ON: INCLUSION PLUS UPDATE AND INITIAL EVALUATION

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 349-2015

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Inclusion Plus Project working in four secondary schools of the city

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Education Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of this report; and
- ii request a final update report on the final outcome of the project from the Executive Director of Children and Families Service in June 2016.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications arising for Dundee City Council over and above the £162k of funding agreed by Education Committee in November 2013 (report 486-2013 refers) (Article III of the minute of meeting of the Education Committee of 25 November 2013). The remainder of the funding (£910k) is being funded by Robertson Trust and the Big Lottery.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Inclusion Plus is a consortium approach between Apex Scotland, Skillforce and Includem.

The three services work to very similar aims by supporting young people who experience difficulties in connecting positively with mainstream education. Inclusion Plus combines the work of the three services and aims to:

- provide an alternative to exclusion from mainstream education;
- work in a proactive manner to reduce the likelihood of future exclusions;
- support young people on curricular activities;
- address young people's behaviour and reasons for their non-compliance with mainstream education;
- incorporate rehabilitation, helping young people to see why their behaviour is unacceptable and the consequences of their behaviour on their futures;
- provide opportunities to gain qualifications, awards and life skills;
- working with young people and their families to build confidence, self-esteem and help them to move forward in a positive way.

4.2 The consortium has been operating in Baldragon Academy, Braeview Academy, Craigie High School and St Paul's RC Academy.

4.3 The project aims to improve outcomes for those children and young people at risk of exclusion, based upon a shared approach of agencies working together, and responding to the needs of children and young people early and effectively, in line with the Scottish Government Guidance on Managing School Exclusions (March 2011).

5.0 Early Evaluation (Year 1)

5.1 As part of the agreed programme Glasgow University were commissioned to carry out research to evaluate the project. The Inclusion Plus programme team have met on a regular basis with the researchers at Glasgow University to determine the scope and methodology of the research.

5.2 Shortly after the inception of the programme the researchers at Glasgow University worked with schools and the Inclusion plus programme team and provided an early set of findings and recommendations based on interviews and data collection to guide the early stages of implementation. The main findings were:

- **Role of the schools:** It was clear that the four schools were key factors in the success or otherwise of Inclusion Plus, and that the partnership between them and the three agencies were arguably just as important as the PSP partnership itself.
- **Exclusion rates:** Since the inception of Inclusion Plus, there has been a significant drop in the numbers of pupils who have been excluded from the four schools.
- **Impact of agencies:** There is strong evidence to suggest that each agency is having a positive effect on the school settings.
- **Inception issues:** The introduction of Inclusion Plus to schools presented a set of challenges, with the sense of imposition from outside having an effect in some of the school settings.
- **Partnership working in Inclusion Plus:** One of the key objectives of the Inclusion Plus project is to deliver, via a public social partnership model, an integrated and partnership-based service. So far the evidence of cross-agency partnership working is minimal. What does exist is piecemeal and ad-hoc. This finding, however, should be placed in the context of a busy and complex school environment, which leaves less time for inter-agency working.

The early recommendations were as follows:

- **Role duplication:** The Inclusion Plus team should consider exploring further the ways in which workers engage and work together. The sense of duplication of services is an area of contention and should be addressed possibly through a more formal set of training events.
- **Programme flexibility:** Inclusion Plus should endeavour to record and manage the ways in which the different schools utilise the services of Inclusion Plus.
- **Communication:** More consideration should be given to how Inclusion Plus manages communications between Inclusion Plus staff and school staff, in particular, members of school senior management. More effort should be placed on illustrating the positive impact Inclusion Plus staff have on the pupils and the school – for example, through information leaflets and other forms of marketing material.
- **Partnership working:** a greater focus should be placed at both a strategic and operational level on bringing together the three agencies more effectively.

5.3 Interim Report (Year 2)

5.3.1 An interim report on how these early recommendations had been taken forward was provided by Glasgow University in May of this year. Their conclusions were as follows:

- **The continuing significance of the schools.** The four schools involved have managed to tailor the resources on offer to suit their own needs and those of their pupils. The process of adapting to the needs of individual schools has developed into the second year, with the partner agencies on something of a learning curve in the first year.
- **Forms of communication:** The level of understanding of the project continued to vary considerably, with principal guidance teachers having much more understanding of the rationale and working practices of Inclusion Plus, compared to other front-line staff. School staff suggested that communication between Inclusion Plus and school staff could still be improved, so that staff could be made more aware of the Initiative, as well as the kinds of support on offer.

- **Impact on pupils:** Inclusion Plus continues to have a highly positive impact on the pupils, both in terms of lowering exclusion rates as well as encouraging positive changes in their behaviour. Interviews were carried out with both previous and current Inclusion Plus participants, in order to gauge progress levels and to identify any changes in the delivery of the initiative. In general, Pupils who were previously on Inclusion Plus in some form reported behaviour change as a result of Inclusion Plus.
- **Inclusion Plus and reducing exclusion:** School exclusion, although lower than when the project commenced had begun to rise in some schools
- **The benefits of Inclusion Plus to schools:** There continues to be somewhat mixed or even contradictory opinions regarding the benefit of Inclusion Plus among school staff. Individual agencies are consistently praised by staff, from class teachers to members of senior management. Opinions are more mixed when it comes to the value of the Initiative as a whole to the school experience, with some staff suggesting that the schools themselves could and/or should manage the resource in-house. This is a theme that has stayed with Inclusion Plus into its second year, suggesting that issues exist regarding both the visibility of the initiative in school environments as well as its perceived value as a mechanism of delivery.
- **Parent views of Inclusion Plus:** In general, parental interviews across the schools report a high level of satisfaction with Apex, Skillforce and Includem, believing that their child's involvement in the initiative was beneficial to their progress in school. They reported some changes to their behaviour, although they found it a challenge to cite with any certainty a correlation between these changes and elements of Inclusion Plus. Parents were generally unaware of the existence of Inclusion Plus, viewing the initiative purely through the experiences of their children on specific initiatives.
- **Partnership working:** The early evaluation found that partnership working between the three agencies was somewhat piecemeal and ad hoc, with much of the effort and emphasis being placed on their relationship with individual schools. The evidence suggests that there has been some progress in this area, for example as agencies start to work with the same pupils. There is also movement at the macro level, with more regular meetings between agencies taking place, as well as the establishment of joint training sessions for agency staff. At the same time, little evidence exists to suggest that Inclusion Plus in its current form is more than the sum of its parts, at least when it comes to the experience of school staff.

5.4 Next Steps

- 5.4.1 The Inclusion Plus project is funded until June 2016. Glasgow University will produce a final report towards the end of this year with final conclusions. Tackling exclusion remains central to the work of the Children and Families Service and work is continuing with all schools to continue to find ways of reducing exclusion.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. An EQIA is attached to this report.
- 5.2 The Equality Outcomes will have a positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Dundee and will support staff and families to promote inclusive communities.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Michael Wood
Executive Director of Children and Families Service
September 2015

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Part 1: Description/Consultation

Is this a Rapid Equality Impact Assessment (RIAT)?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is this a Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of Assessment: 05/09/15	Committee Report Number: 349-2015	
Title of document being assessed: Inclusion Plus Update		
1. This is a new policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed (If yes please check box) <input type="checkbox"/>	This is an existing policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed? (If yes please check box) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed.	This report provides an update on Inclusion Plus a partnership approach to exclusion reduction in 4 schools in the city.	
3. What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy or practice?	The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the recommendations and review of the Glasgow University Research Team in relation to the project.	
4. Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sets e.g. SIMD, exam results, attendance, exclusion, LAC • Scottish Government Guidance on Managing Exclusions • Scottish Government document- 'Count us In' 	
5. Has any consultation, involvement or research with protected characteristic communities informed this assessment? If yes please give details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Head Teachers • HMI • Glasgow University 	
6. Please give details of council officer involvement in this assessment. (e.g. names of officers consulted, dates of meetings etc)	Paul Clancy, Head of Service	
7. Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult protected characteristics communities on the impact of the proposed policy? (Example: if the impact on a community is not known what will you do to gather the information needed and when will you do this?)	No.	

Part 2: Protected Characteristics

Which protected characteristics communities will be positively or negatively affected by this policy, procedure or strategy?

NB Please place an X in the box which best describes the "overall" impact. It is possible for an assessment to identify that a positive policy can have some negative impacts and visa versa. When this is the case please identify both positive and negative impacts in Part 3 of this form.

If the impact on a protected characteristic communities are not known please state how you will gather evidence of any potential negative impacts in box Part 1 section 7 above.

	Positively	Negatively	No Impact	Not Known
Ethnic Minority Communities including Gypsies and Travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with a disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Impacts/Monitoring

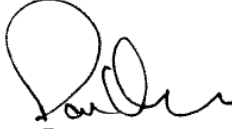
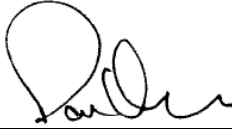
<p>1. Have any positive impacts been identified?</p> <p>(We must ensure at this stage that we are not achieving equality for one strand of equality at the expense of another)</p>	<p>This programme continues to operate within the 4 secondary schools with the greatest deprivation in the city</p>
<p>2. Have any negative impacts been identified?</p> <p>(Based on direct knowledge, published research, community involvement, customer feedback etc. If unsure seek advice from your departmental Equality Champion.)</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>3. What action is proposed to overcome any negative impacts?</p> <p>(e.g. involving community groups in the development or delivery of the policy or practice, providing information in community languages etc. See Good Practice on DCC equalities web page)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4. Is there a justification for continuing with this policy even if it cannot be amended or changed to end or reduce inequality without compromising its intended outcome?</p> <p>(If the policy that shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination you must stop and seek legal advice)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>5. Has a 'Full' Equality Impact Assessment been recommended?</p> <p>(If the policy is a major one or is likely to have a major impact on protected characteristics communities a Full Equality Impact Assessment may be required. Seek advice from your departmental Equality lead.)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>6. How will the policy be monitored?</p> <p>(How will you know it is doing what it is intended to do? e.g. data collection, customer survey etc.)</p>	<p>The Executive Director of the Children and Families Service is a member of the overarching strategic group. An operational group has also been established at Council level with membership from all partners and schools to take forward the project. As part of the funding conditions regular reports are required by Robertson Trust and the Big Lottery.</p>

Part 4: Contact Information

Name of Department or Partnership	Children and Families Service
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Type of Document	
Human Resource Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy/Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Change Papers/Local Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidelines and Protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Manager Responsible	Author Responsible
Name: Paul Clancy	Name: Paul Clancy
Designation: Head of Service	Designation: Head of Service
Base: Dundee House	Base: Dundee House
Telephone: 01382 433088	Telephone: 01382 433088
Email: paul.clancy@dundeecity.gov.uk	Email: michael.wood@dundeecity.gov.uk

Signature of author of the policy:		Date: 9/9/15
Signature of Director/Head of Service:		Date: 9/9/15
Name of Director/Head of Service:	Paul Clancy	
Date of Next Policy Review:	June 2016	