

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 22ND NOVEMBER 2010**

**REPORT ON: AUDIT SCOTLAND: GETTING IT RIGHT FOR CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 666 - 2010**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report summarises the findings and key recommendations in the report Getting it Right for Children in Residential Care produced by Audit Scotland in September 2010. It outlines the current position within Dundee and recommends a number of actions in terms of the future commissioning of residential services for children and young people.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Instruct the Director of Social Work to discuss and agree the action necessary to meet the requirements in this report, through the Integrated Children's Services Planning framework and within the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).
3. Note that the Director will provide a report to Committee on progress in 6 months time.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The completion of the recommendations in this report within a reasonable timescale should overall improve expenditure by better planning and commissioning and establish value for money principles in terms of good outcomes for children.

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The background to the Audit Scotland's national report is set against the vision for Scotland's children that we have to improve the life chances of children and their families who are looked after as it is important that the significant investment in children's lives results in the best possible outcomes. The report in its recommendations is inclusive of the Council's statutory duties towards children and young people. The study's methodology included all 32 Local Authorities.

The overall findings for Councils were that;

- Councils cannot always demonstrate value for money or that they are achieving an appropriate quality of service for the costs involved
- Councils do not always have clear plans and strategies
- There are weaknesses in how Councils commission services from independent providers and how they monitor a child's progress
- Councils did not always have an understanding of the costs and quality of all options available when making strategic service and placement decisions
- Councils are not clear that they are achieving value for money

4.2 The key recommendations to the Council are that:

- Clear strategies and plans are needed for looking after children in residential care supported by reliable information systems and effective management processes
- Improvements in the approach to commissioning services are needed
- Care plans are in place and kept up to date for every child which contain clear actions and measurable outcomes

The report also provides a useful checklist for Councils to measure performance against these recommendations.

4.3 The wider and national messages from the study are that there is scope for a national strategic approach with Councils working together with community planning partners, the Scottish Government, COSLA and residential providers. It is also to be noted that the Scottish Government has set up a strategic implementation group to drive forward a reform programme to improve outcomes for looked after children

4.4 At the present time in Dundee there are 31 children in external residential placements at a cost of £4.714m and 20 children in Dundee City Council provision at a cost of £2.898m. In addition to this 29 children with disabilities are offered respite/short breaks at Gillburn Road. A detailed breakdown is attached as appendix 1.

4.5 Within Dundee there are formal decision making forums in place for children being placed away from home in residential accommodation. These are:

- The Admissions Panel which recognises and tries to manage need and in house provision. If there is no in-house provision the group refers to the Residential Resource Monitoring Group (RRMG) for authority to purchase external provision. The budget for RRMG is a joint budget with education (25% Education, 75% Social Work). Health does not have an input to this group but are involved out with this group's financial monitoring role in planning for external provision for children with complex needs and disabilities.
- The Placement Review Group (PRG) meets quarterly to review and project the financial commitment through the review of plans for children in external placements within external residential and external foster care.
- Within the Looked After and Accommodated Children's system (LAAC) all looked after children will have a full comprehensive assessment and their care plans should be reviewed through LAAC reviews. This year a Team Leader was appointed to oversee the work of the Review Team and hopefully improve quality standards within the team. This year has also seen considerable work around the assessment framework and the child's plan based around the Getting it Right for Every Child model which will strengthen the LAAC process.

4.6 There is an integrated Children's Services Plan in place for 2010-2012 and a Best Value Review of residential care was completed and presented to the Social Work Committee In January 2009. This forms a good basis for the recommendations in this report.

4.7 Work commenced in 2004 on contracts and reviews within a contractual framework. The contracts sent to independent residential providers are currently in the form of funding letters, setting out the type of service required and sometimes these letters are specific in terms of requirements for the individual child or young person. These are not monitored/reviewed through the formal contractual framework. The majority of these external providers have not been approved through the Approved providers' process.

4.8 A Matching Needs and Services exercise commenced two years ago across the Social Work Department. This work will be reported on in January 2011 and may impact on future planning of service provision.

4.9 Within Dundee there are good data collection systems in place for children and young people and a series of meetings have recently commenced with neighbouring authorities to look at shared resourcing, economies of scale, shared commissioning and purchasing with independent providers.

- 4.10 There has been considerable work done on the National Contract for Secure Care and this should be operational in April 2011. Dundee is a provider of secure care and has been involved in this process, which will be used as the basis for the development of national contracts for foster care and residential care.
- 4.11 Dundee's performance to date can be measured against the checklist included in the national report. All of the work already outlined provides a good basis to continue to improve strategies, commissioning and procurement. All of this work needs to be pulled together and progressed within the integrated Children's Services planning framework.
- 4.12 The following recommendations/action points when progressed will in Dundee address the key recommendations arising from the report:
- A strategic vision for children in Dundee, where the role of residential provision is defined. This should include; a review of all provision for children who are looked after away from home and a review of in-house provision. This strategy should have a financial plan with realistic costs and budgets attached to it.
  - A commissioning framework is developed that sets out the future intentions in line with the strategic vision. This commissioning framework has to define clear expectations and outcomes and should be able to deliver high quality services that meet standards. This framework should be developed from analysing the information held currently so that we are able to predict and plan better.
  - A procurement strategy which includes clear contractual, financial and monitoring arrangements. Underpinning this strategy are the child care standards contained in the principles of GIRFEC which are monitored in assessments, care planning reviewing systems and accountable decision making processes. Services that are already procured need to be reviewed within this strategy as well.
- 4.13 The completion of these recommendations will form the basis for the commissioning strategy for children in external foster care placements.

## **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. There are no major issues.
- 5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) the Director of Finance and the Director of Education have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Children's Integrated Plan 2010 - 2012  
Best Value Review of Residential schools. January 2009  
Matching Needs and Services  
Equality Impact Assessment

## APPENDIX 1

### External Placements

#### Secure Care

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
15	1	

#### External Placements Including Residential Schools

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
0		1
6	1	
9	3	
10		1
11	2	
12	3	2
13	2	1
14	3	1
15	5	
16	2	
17	2	1

The figures above include 5 children with disabilities.

#### Cost of External Provision (Excluding Cost of Emergency Placement)

The annual cost of external provision based on our current placements is £4.714m.

### **Current Profile of In House Provision**

#### Secure Care - 4 beds

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
13	1	
14		2

As part of the secure estate for Scotland, one secure bed has been purchased by another authority and has not been included in the figures above. This bed generates income of £5,250 per week.

Young Persons Units - 20 beds

<b>AGE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
12	1	1
13	3	
14	2	3
15	4	4
16		1
17	1	

Cost of Internal Provision

The annual cost of our internal provision based on our current placements is £2.898m.