

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4 MARCH 2021

REPORT ON: SUPPORT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES

REPORT NO: 109-2021

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report outlines measures designed to continue to improve support to care experienced children and young people and families with children with disabilities. These measures will build upon progress achieved over the last 3 years in reducing the number of children and young people entering care; ensuring that they can remain in local family-based placements when they unavoidably enter care; providing accessible and reliable support which flexibly meets individual needs; and improving outcomes across a range of measures. In doing so, they will also make significant contributions towards reducing costs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Elected Members:

- i. Approve the proposal to implement Functional Family Therapy (FFT) for care experienced teenagers whose living arrangements are at risk of breaking down
- ii. Approve proposals to implement changes to assessment, decision-making and support arrangements for families with children with disabilities, including in relation to Gillburn Road

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The anticipated savings generated from Functional Family Therapy and improvements to support provided to families with children with disabilities are potentially significant but are likely to take time to achieve. The net savings attached to these two measures are therefore prudent in nature and are rising from £295k in 2021/22 to £375k in 2022/23 and £419k in 2023/24.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 In Dundee, the costs associated with care experienced children and young people have been very high when compared with other local authorities. This has been primarily due to fewer living with their birth family, kinship carers and internal foster carers as opposed to external foster care or in external residential placements. Over the last 3 years, as a result of a range of measures, the profile has been changing positively, with the proportion living with local kinship carers or internal foster carers rising from 36% to 59.3%. Conversely, the proportions living with external foster carers has reduced from 31.5% to 13.2% and in external residential care from 12% to 10.2%.

4.2 These trends are consistent with the findings of the Independent Care Review published in February 2020, which emphasise the importance of improving early support to families to prevent children and young people entering care and of local family-based living where they unavoidably do enter care. As suggested in the findings outlined in its associated report on Follow the Money, local costs have reduced markedly as a result. At the same time and in accordance with its report The Promise, living arrangements have also become more stable; exclusions from school have reduced; attainment levels have increased; and more have entered positive destinations.

5.0 Introduction of Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

- 5.1 Whilst overall trends have been very positive, it still remains very difficult to recruit internal foster carers able to care for teenagers; living arrangements for teenagers are more prone to breakdown; and when arrangements do breakdown, young people can escalate to external settings. Securing and stabilising family-based placements for teenagers and avoiding them either entering or escalating upwards into care is therefore also a key priority. It will maintain nurturing attachments, retain them in local schools and allow local support to be seamlessly sustained as they move into adulthood, including in Continuing Care. In this context, models of targeted intervention such as FFT have been shown to be effective.
- 5.2 FFT is a recognised family-based treatment programme delivered by specialist staff where there are substantial unresolved tensions between teenagers and their parents/carers. It consists of 3 phases of engagement and motivation; behaviour change; and generalisation carried out over 12-14 intensive home-based sessions. There is an emphasis on identifying and building assets within and between family members; avoiding blame and negativity; setting positive goals associated with communication and conflict resolution; and developing and practicing new skills. Independent evaluations have shown the approach to be effective in preventing family breakdown whilst addressing other concerns, such as anti-social behaviour, parenting and general health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 If the implementation of FFT can prevent the living arrangements of care experienced young people from breaking down, then depending on the subsequent typically more expensive placement type savings will be achieved. There would be an annual outlay for the licensing, management, training and transport cost of approximately £82k. The effectiveness of the intervention would increase over time as practitioners gained experience and shared practice. The effectiveness of the intervention will be monitored closely in the first year of implementation to gauge the effectiveness of the programme and the effect on outcomes for children and families as well as spending patterns in residential care costs.

6.0 Families with Children and Young People with a Disability

- 6.1 In order to similarly explore how support can be enhanced, Internal Audit has also carried out a review of services to families with children with a disability (Article II of the Minute of the Scrutiny Committee of 9 December 2020 (report number 318-2020 refers). This review concluded that the Children and Families Service should explore the use of a new assessment framework as a tool to consistently inform the delivery of equitable and proportionate support to families; the terms of reference of a Resource Management Group to make decisions on the allocation of resources; the reliability of Gillburn House as a dedicated facility for overnight support; and the capacity of the Third Sector to provide individualised, flexible support.
- 6.2 The costs of providing Self Directed Support (SDS) Options 1-4 to families with children with disabilities have been around £3.6m per year for 140 families. This involves Council payments, services provided directly, commissioning services on behalf of families or a combination of these options. When possible, around 17 families have accessed Gillburn Road for overnight support, which as a result of the emergency accommodation of high-risk children who cannot at the time be cared for elsewhere, has often become unavailable for lengthy periods. During these periods, families have typically been unable to access alternative support. As it is likely that this scenario will not change, we need to develop more reliable options.
- 6.3 In response, a new assessment tool is being introduced; decisions on respite are being referred to a multi-agency panel to utilise shared expertise; Gillburn Road is being converted to reflect its frequent use as a home to accommodate children with disabilities instead of placing them in more expensive external residential care; and funded Third Sector support has been meeting individual family needs. During the pandemic, all support to families with children with a disability has been adapted to conform with public health requirements and there has been an increase in the use of direct payments to self-coordinate home-based

support and purchase equipment such as garden furniture and play facilities. Going forwards, this flexible support will remain available to families either instead of or as part of a wider package of support.

- 6.4 It is important to note that Gillburn House is specially equipped to support young people with disabilities; that the staff team has particular expertise in this area; that the house enjoys a close working relationship with the NHS Tayside Glenlaw Unit for young people with more acute medical needs; that families will be able to visit their children more easily; and that when living there, young people will attend the local Kingspark School. The families previously accessing Gillburn Road, most of whose children were approaching adulthood, have also commented favourably on new arrangements and will continue to receive support through pending transitions to adult services.
- 6.5 The projected reduction in residential placement costs obtained from converting Gilburn road from overnight stays to a full time residential house have savings potential but will be offset by an increase in costs for alternative provision for the families who could no longer access Gilburn. This will take time to fully implement therefore the saving level projected has been set at a prudent level.

7.0 SUMMARY

- 7.1 Collectively, these measures are designed to improve the range and quality of local support to vulnerable children, young people and families, whilst also being delivered within a reduced Council budget. They build on developments over the last 3 years to re-profile the balance of local family based and external placements which, in addition to accompanying increases in targeted support, have contributed towards significant improvements in outcomes. They involve a particular focus on care experienced teenagers and care experienced young people with disabilities. They will continue to be progressed alongside other supports as part of the Council response to the Independent Care Review.
- 7.2 The implementation and realisation of the full financial savings of these new arrangements might be impacted by recovery from the pandemic including a potential increase in demand for these services, for this reason the savings calculations are very prudent in nature.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness, poverty, environment and corporate risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is attached to this report.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.

Paul Clancy
Executive Director

February 2021

Glyn Lloyd
Head of Service
Children's and Community Justice Services

Committee Report No: 109-2021

Document Title: Support to Children and Young People

Document Type: Service

New/Existing: New

Period Covered: 15/02/2021 - 15/02/2024

Document Description:

The report outlines proposals to introduce Functional Family Therapy for families with teenagers; to improve assessment and decision-making processes for families with children with disabilities; to change Gillburn Road into a full-time residential home for children with a disability; and to maintain individualised and flexible support to families within the framework of Self Directed Support Options 1-4.

Intended Outcome:

The intended outcome is to stabilise and prevent the breakdown of living arrangements for care experienced teenagers so they can continue to live locally, attend local secondary schools and enjoy improved transitions to adulthood. It is also to ensure that support provided to families with children with disabilities is suitably individualised, meets needs and is reliable. Changing Gillburn Road to a full-time residential home will allow more disabled children to remain in their local community, closer to their families and attending local schools.

How will the proposal be monitored?:

The proposals will be monitored by the Children and Families Service management team via data on disruptions to the living arrangements of care experienced young people and on other outcomes for them such as school engagement, attainment and positive destinations. The proposals relating to families with children with disabilities will be monitored via feedback from families and outcomes for disabled children.

Author Responsible:

Name: glyn lloyd

Title: Head of Children's and Community Justice Service

Department: Children and Families Service

E-Mail: glyn.lloyd@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 07546 454376

Address: Dundee House

Director Responsible:

Name: Paul Clancy

Title: Executive Director of Children and Families Service

Department: Children and Families Service

E-Mail: paul.clancy@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 01382 436000

Address: Dundee House

A. Equality and Diversity Impacts:

Age:	Positive
Disability:	Positive
Gender Reassignment:	No Impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership:	No Impact
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No Impact
Race/Ethnicity:	No Impact
Religion or Belief:	No Impact
Sex:	No Impact
Sexual Orientation:	No Impact

Equality and diversity Implications:

The proposals have positive implications for teenagers and for families with disabled children because they will ensure that families remain living together and/or in the same community as far as possible and that support is suitably individualised to meet their needs.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

Not applicable.

Is the proposal subject to a full EQIA? : No

The proposals have positive implications for teenagers and for families with disabled children because they will ensure that families remain living together and/or in the same community as far as possible and that support is suitably individualised to meet their needs.

B. Fairness and Poverty Impacts:

Geography

Strathmartine (Ardler, St Mary's and Kirkton):	No Impact
Lochee(Lochee/Beechwood, Charleston and Menzieshill):	No Impact
Coldside(Hilltown, Fairmuir and Coldside):	No Impact
Maryfield(Stobswell and City Centre):	No Impact
North East(Whitfield, Fintry and Mill O' Mains):	No Impact
East End(Mid Craigie, Linlathen and Douglas):	No Impact
The Ferry:	No Impact
West End:	No Impact

Household Group

Lone Parent Families:	Positive
Greater Number of children and/or Young Children:	Not Known
Pensioners - Single/Couple:	Not Known
Single female households with children:	Positive
Unskilled workers or unemployed:	No Impact
Serious and enduring mental health problems:	No Impact
Homeless:	No Impact
Drug and/or alcohol problems:	Positive
Offenders and Ex-offenders:	Positive
Looked after children and care leavers:	Positive
Carers:	Positive

Significant Impact

Employment:	Positive
Education and Skills:	Positive
Benefit Advice/Income Maximisation:	Not Known
Childcare:	Positive
Affordability and Accessibility of services:	Positive

Fairness and Poverty Implications:

The proposals have positive implications for fairness and poverty because they ensure that vulnerable care experienced young people receive appropriate support which stabilises family settings and serves as a foundation for educational attainment and positive destinations. The FFT model has also been shown to reduce anti-social behaviour and offending. The proposals have positive implications for families with children with disabilities because they will ensure that they receive suitable and reliable support which meets their needs with choice also available under SDS Options 1-4.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

Not applicable.

C. Environmental Impacts

Climate Change

Mitigating greenhouse gases:	No Impact
Adapting to the effects of climate change:	No Impact

Resource Use

Energy efficiency and consumption:	No Impact
Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling waste:	No Impact
Sustainable Procurement:	No Impact

Transport

Accessible transport provision:	No Impact
Sustainable modes of transport:	No Impact

Natural Environment

Air, land and water quality:	No Impact
Biodiversity:	No Impact
Open and green spaces:	No Impact

Built Environment

Built Heritage:	No Impact
Housing:	No Impact

Is the proposal subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

N/A

Environmental Implications:

N/A

D. Corporate Risk Impacts

Corporate Risk Implications:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are 'business as normal' risks. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant loss. There is comfort that the risks inherent within the activity are either transferred to another party, shared equally and fairly between the Council and another party or are negligible.

Corporate Risk Mitigating Actions: