

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 January 2024

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Whole Family Wellbeing Update

1. Summary

- 1.1. This board paper is to update members of the progress of an area of Renfrewshire's Children's Service Partnership (RCSP) work to improve whole family wellbeing access for families and support.
- 1.2. The Scottish Government has provided Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to the RCSP to build local capacity for transformational system change and to scale up and drive the delivery of holistic whole family support services.
- 1.3. We know from local data that 18% of Renfrewshire's children live in families affected by poverty. Our communities face further challenge through a cost-of-living crisis, with the cost of heating our homes and buying food and basic provisions increasing. Some parents can feel isolated without a strong network of family support, not knowing who to turn to for help.
- 1.4. More and more of Renfrewshire's children and young people are seeking support with their mental health and wellbeing. We understand the link between adverse childhood experiences and the risk this presents to mental health and wellbeing. We also appreciate that the impacts of these events can sometimes carry through to adulthood, and that parents and carers might struggle to cope and respond positively to certain situations or challenges. This reinforces our approach to early intervention, and developing ways to work with children, young people, and their families to help them cope before reaching a crisis.
- 1.5. Through a series of workshops and data analysis the RCSP identified gaps in services for the following:

- families of children with a neurodevelopmental disorder for example Autistic Spectrum disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) either pre or post diagnosis
- families of children (0-8) requiring parenting support and/or support for distressed behaviours
- families of children 11-16 displaying distressed and/ or risk-taking behaviour
- families of children with disabilities

1.6 The desired outcomes of this work include:

- improved family wellbeing outcomes;
- reduced inequalities in family wellbeing;
- reduction in families requiring crisis intervention;
- reduction in the number of children and young people living away from home and
- increase in families taking up support.

1.7 Local third sector and community organisations can play a vital role in supporting families within their local communities and are able to use local knowledge and connections to build a network of support around vulnerable families.

1.8 There are three main aspects of delivery for the plan agreed by the RCSP for the Renfrewshire Whole Family Wellbeing:

Service Redesign; Request a Service Approach; Building Capacity in Third Sector Organisations

2. Progress

2.1 The Whole Family Wellbeing Manager took up post full time in July, supported by a project manager. Networking and engagement with key partners were undertaken during the first few weeks in post as well as engagement with staff in scope for redesign.

2.2 **Service Redesign** – work has been underway with staff from the Home Link Service; Families First Service and the Care Experienced Home Link Team to create a whole wellbeing service with various access points for families from community to school based on the staged intervention approach and building on existing good practice. The service will aim to provide streamlined and consistent delivery of evidence-based approaches including parenting approaches. Capacity will be enhanced for the delivery of more early intervention and preventative family support through the commissioning of third sector organisations. A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed with an agreed dataset and quality improvement process built on Supporting Families: A National Self-Assessment Toolkit for Change (Scottish Government).

- 2.3 The new structure for the new Family Wellbeing Service will be ready for January 2024. Staff induction, training and development will take place alongside the work to deliver on the new request for assistance system. During this time staff in the Community Family Wellbeing Team will be establishing themselves across Renfrewshire localities, linking with 3rd sector organisations, families, and the community to develop an identity and a presence locally. The corporate communication team will work with the service during this time to ensure that all stakeholders both internal and external are alerted to the development and focus for the new service, which will be launched by March 2024.
- 2.4 **Request a Service approach:** Building on the work that was started through REN 10 this cross-directorate workstream is sourcing a digital solution to enable families and practitioners to access a simple online platform which will guide them to support.
- 2.5 **Building capacity in third sector organisations:** in line with the fund criteria a proportion of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has been ringfenced for direct access by third sector organisations (TSO) on a commissioning basis. The application process went live early August 2023 via Engage Renfrewshire’s Funding E-alert and communication was also sent to all members of the “Our Children Forum as well as being posted on the Renfrewshire Council website. A guidance document was developed with support from Engage Renfrewshire and was made available with the online application form.

Two funds have been made available:

Fund 1: “Community Grassroots” - maximum of £50k with bids being accepted between £500 - £5,000k.

Fund 2: “Community Step-Change” - maximum of £200k with bids being accepted up to £50k.

The TSO was asked to align their bid to one or more of the five priority areas stated in section 1.5 of this document.

- 2.6 There were 17 applications for funding and the selection panel used a pre-agreed scoring matrix to assign the over 200K worth of grants. The delivery of these interventions will begin in the new year and the referral process will be shared. The next round of funding will be announced in early January 2024. All unsuccessful bids received feedback to support reapplying if they so wish.
- 2.7 **Other Progress** - In order to measure the success of interventions we are piloting a Whole Family Wellbeing Scale that has been developed by East Renfrewshire’s Educational Psychologists. It is designed to assist families and professionals to measure and reflect on family levels of wellbeing, and support self-reliance, build resilience and thereby preventing negative outcomes.

The scale is evidence based and measures:

- Family bonding
- Affection
- Togetherness
- Respect
- Communication
- Openness

2.8 **Under pinned by robust quality assurance** – it is important that we ensure that all services working with our children and young people improve outcomes and so we are developing a robust quality assurance programme. This will

- encourage services to scrutinise and reflect on practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement;
- enable recognition of the work of partners which are having a positive impact and where there might be gaps;
- identify where quality needs to be maintained; where improvement is needed and where services should be working towards achievement excellence in service delivery and
- help all services to focus on the individual and collective areas of expertise and good practice and use this learning to further develop services and celebrate success.

2.9 **Potential** – there are a number of areas of work within other directorates that support children and families, and work will be undertaken to map all interventions and services to ensure there is an effective supporting families strategy.

3. Recommendations

3.1 This work is part of Renfrewshire Children’s Services Partnership and is for noting by members of the Education and Children’s Services Policy Board. If members would like more information about any aspect of the report or the work of the Whole Family Wellbeing team, then please contact the Whole Family Wellbeing Lead Education Manager Susan Bell susan.bell-hq@renfrewshire.gov.uk

4. Background

4.1 Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership (RCSP) is responsible for ensuring that services delivered to children, young people and their families in Renfrewshire are the best they can be. Membership of the RCSP include the council, other public sector organisations, and the third sector. Together, we identify local priorities and plan how we can join up to add value and deliver services to children, young people and their families that make a real difference to their lives.

4.2 One of the aims of the RCSP is for family support to be readily available to families that need it. We want to make sure that families are able to

access the help they need, where and when they need it. We want parents to be able to access holistic support which addresses the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need rather than at crisis point. This will help families to flourish and reduce the chances of family breakdown, and of children entering the care system.

- 4.3 The national vision is for family support to be readily available to families that need it. This is echoed by Renfrewshire and through this work we want to make sure that families are able to access the help they need, where and when they need it. This is in line with our ambitions to #keepthepromise as it will enable us to work better together, to keep families together through providing unstigmatized access to early and effective universal support along with intensive family support.
- 4.4 Throughout the work to implement the whole family wellbeing approach the term holistic support is used. Holistic support should address the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need rather than at crisis point. This will help families to flourish and reduce the chances of family breakdown, and of children entering the care system. The same preventive interventions should also support parents' ability to engage with the labour market. These interventions could help parents/carers to pursue qualifications or progress in employment, thereby enabling them to improve their financial situation.
- 4.5 The Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) is a £500 million investment over the life of this Parliament (2022 to 2026) to:
 - support the whole system transformational change required to reduce the need for crisis intervention.
 - shift investment towards prevention and early intervention.

Renfrewshire's share of this is around 900K and this was provided to the Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership to scale up and drive the delivery of whole family support and build capacity for change.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – engaging with, and learning from external inspection, ensures that our Renfrewshire is thriving. High standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society. It also ensures our Renfrewshire is well – by providing an environment which encourages care, welfare and development, establishments play a crucial role in developing children and young people so that they become responsible citizens.

The inspection process also supports delivery of the Council Plan cross-cutting theme of improving outcomes for children and families as well as other Council Plan key strategic outcomes, for example:

Economy

Equipping all children and young people to achieve success in life

Fair

- Creating inclusive and supportive learning environments for children and young people.
- Embedding children's rights in our decision-making processes

4. **Legal** – None

5. **Property/Assets** - None

6. **Information Technology** - None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - None

9. **Procurement** – None

10. **Risk** - None

11. **Privacy Impact** - None

12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A

13. **Climate Risk** – None.

List of Background Papers - None.

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05/12/23

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