

**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** 23 May 2019

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**Report by:** Director of Children's Services

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**Heading:** Progress Report on introduction of Place2Be counselling services

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 In line with the Children's Services priority to reduce inequalities and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people, funding from the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was secured to part-fund school-based counselling services within 5 Renfrewshire primary schools and 2 secondary schools from August 2018.
  - 1.2 Place2Be counselling services, procured in line with Renfrewshire Council procedures, have been up and running in 7 schools. Recruitment is now underway to replace a school project manager (SPM) in one school.
  - 1.3 The schools involved are St. Catherine's PS, Glencoats PS, Woodlands PS, Heriot PS, St. Paul's PS, Johnstone High and Paisley Grammar.
  - 1.4 This report provides an update on progress to date.
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## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
  - note the progress to date in implementing Place2Be counselling services in 7 Renfrewshire schools.

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### 3. **Background**

- 3.1 There are nine Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) authorities including Renfrewshire. The main aims of the Attainment Challenge are to; improve literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 3.2 As part of the grant requirements, the council is required to submit an annual strategy, with associated funding requirements, to Scottish Government for approval. Part of Renfrewshire's 2018/19 bid included a request for additional funding, related to health and wellbeing, to enable a stronger focus on supporting the mental and emotional health of children and young people.
- 3.3 Renfrewshire's SAC plan consists of five main workstreams; learning and teaching, data analysis, families and communities, leadership and care experienced children and young people. The plan has been developed through consultation with a range of key stakeholders and through drawing upon the growing positive evidence base that is being collated nationally and locally. The plan has been approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board.
- 3.4 The health and wellbeing strands sit within the families and communities workstream. Activities include implementation of Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) and use of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills.
- 3.5 The Scottish Government and COSLA have demonstrated their shared commitment to improving the mental health of children, young people and their families by working with delivery partners to invest in preventative and supportive services.
- 3.6 The recommendations and actions from publications such as the Better Mental Health in Scotland (2018), Audit Scotland Report (2018) and Mental Health Strategy 2017-27, highlight the significant need to provide opportunities for early intervention, prevention measures and equal access to the most effective care and treatment. The Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 also highlights that poverty is the single biggest driver of poor mental health.
- 3.7 By promoting positive mental health in children and young people from an early age, the range of positive school outcomes such as attitudes to learning, better attendance, lower exclusion rates, etc. will greatly increase. This leads to improved attainment and achievement.

- 3.8 Through consultation with stakeholders, it was evident that there was a need to do more to promote positive mental health in children and young people across Renfrewshire schools. One aspect of this improved offer is a school-based counselling service, for selected schools, in areas of high deprivation. Having explored options, and learning lessons from other Attainment Challenge authorities, it was decided to introduce Place2Be counselling services in targeted Renfrewshire schools.
- 3.9 Place2Be have supported over 300 schools across the UK and have been used successfully in other Attainment Challenge authorities in Scotland.

#### 4. **Progress**

- 4.1 Since August 2018, the Place2Be counselling service has been introduced in 5 of Renfrewshire's most deprived primary schools and 2 secondary schools. It is funded through SAC funding and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).
- 4.2 Two schools introduced the service in August 2018, another three in October 2018 and the final two in December/January 2019.
- 4.3 A fully qualified School Project Manager (SPM) oversees the service in each school and is based within the school for 2.5 days each week. The typical model is based on a team of Place2Be personnel (both clinical staff and highly skilled volunteer counsellors on placement) delivering a range of services in a school. To take up a clinical placement, volunteer counsellors need to be studying towards a Diploma, Degree, Masters or Doctorate in Counselling/Clinical Psychology. They are also required to undertake mandatory training through Place2Be and are supervised by the SPM.
- 4.4 The service takes a whole school approach to improve the emotional wellbeing of children & young people, families and staff. This includes:
- 1-1 therapeutic counselling;
  - drop-in sessions;
  - school staff training and consultancy;
  - parent/carer sessions;
  - whole class work;
  - group sessions for children & young people;
  - participation in school events;
  - responding to critical incidents; and
  - engagement with external agencies and partners.

- 4.5 Across the Renfrewshire schools to date, the latest Place2Be termly reports show that:
- 648 sessions have been held for individuals and groups of children & young people;
  - 281 children & young people have been supported in drop-in sessions;
  - 38 children & young people are receiving weekly 1-1 therapeutic counselling;
  - 42 whole class sessions have been delivered;
  - 70 school staff members have received consultancy support;
  - 33 parents are currently being supported; and
  - 43 parent partnership events have been supported.
- 4.6 Other activities delivered by Place2Be include workshops and assembly presentations on promoting positive mental health, strategies to reduce anxiety, bereavement and loss support, friendship support, developing positive sleep routines and transition work from primary into secondary.
- 4.7 The service is still relatively new in schools, however the interventions are already beginning to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of targeted children & young people and their families. This is evidenced through feedback from Head Teachers and Place2Be termly activity reports which include counselling participation statistics, case studies and details of emerging whole-school health and wellbeing themes. We will continue to monitor the impact of the service in this way and provide regular opportunities for Head Teachers to come together to share good practice.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Place2Be counselling services are funded through SAC and PEF funding.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning**

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.

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.

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, as it is for noting only.
8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** –The Governance Board and Families and Communities Project Board oversees risks related to this.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none

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### **List of Background Papers**

None

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**Author:** Mairi Thomas, Education Manager, Tel 0141 618 3994,  
email [mairi.thomas@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:mairi.thomas@renfrewshire.gov.uk)