

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 OCTOBER 2013

REPORT ON: CHILDREN'S WELLBEING RESEARCH PROJECT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 440-2013

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report advises elected members that Dundee City Council has been invited by the Scottish Government to be part of a research project to enhance the safety and development of children and young people by gathering and analysing comprehensive child wellbeing data. The aims of the project are to use data as a critical tool for change, support the identification of key developmental outcomes, reshape service delivery and identify essential improvement priorities.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the commitment and on-going work to integrate the 'GIRFEC' and 'Early and Effective Intervention' principles into all aspects of children's services delivery;
- (ii) accept the offer from the Scottish Government for Dundee City Council to be part of the Children's Wellbeing Research Project;
- (iii) note the funded element of £90 000 from Scottish Government; and
- (iv) approve a contribution of £46 000 from the council towards the research project.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The funding implications arising from this report fall into two categories. Scottish Government will provide direct funding of £90 000 and we will contribute £46,000 to meet the costs of the community survey work in respect of the 0-8 years population. This will be met from existing revenue resources through the Early Years Change Fund.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 Dundee has embraced and implemented a range of national policy agendas around supporting children and young people to develop to their full potential. In so doing we have sought to develop innovative and best practice approaches to getting it right for every child through improvements in services and in interagency working.
- 4.2 The new Child and Young People Bill will introduce new duties on local authorities around joint working and reporting on outcomes. The Bill seeks to clarify and embed existing arrangements to ensure that public bodies work jointly to improve the wellbeing of the children and young people in their area. In terms of outcomes reporting local partners will be required to report on a common set of high level outcomes based around national wellbeing indicators. Given our local commitment to earlier and more effective intervention it is important that we are able to track the impact of our services upon children, young people and their families.
- 4.3 To support and improve strategic commissioning activity across children's services the Scottish Government has made funding available to a small number of local authorities to participate in a project to collect data about the needs and wellbeing of children and young people. By using data as a critical tool for change the project aims to support local planning partners to identify and quantify key developmental outcomes, risks and protective factors and to prioritise outcomes for improvement. The project includes the services of a highly respected children's research charity, the Dartington Social Research Unit (SRU). In addition, project management support will be provided by practitioners experienced in implementing

epidemiological processes and supporting change initiatives. Dundee has been invited to participate in this project at this time.

5.0 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Dundee Single Outcomes Agreement gives a commitment to giving every child and young person the best possible start in life and to providing the support needed to enable them to realise their potential and provide a sound basis for achieving our aspirations for local children, families and communities.
- 5.2 Our aspiration is to significantly improve outcomes for local children, families and communities by identifying needs and then building services around those needs. Central to developing services is the recognition that service planning must include children and young people and the Council has made a commitment to engage and consult children and young people in the planning and development of services. To date a variety of consultation and qualitative survey methods have been used to ascertain the views and experiences of children and young people and their carers into their perceptions and satisfaction with services. However we have less well developed information in respect of the needs of children and young people and on the direct impact of services on individuals. Robust outcomes information would enable us to effectively target future activities towards those families and communities most in need. The capacity to measure the impact of our services upon children, young people, their families and communities would be of tremendous benefit both in terms of driving on-going improvements and facilitating the more efficient application of resources.
- 5.3 The Children's Wellbeing Research Project will deliver for Dundee detailed information about the needs of our children and young people drawn from a community survey of a statistically valid sample of local families across the authority for children aged 0–8 years and from comprehensive well being surveys of children and young people aged 9–11 years and 12 -17 years. The survey questions will differ for the 9-11 and 12-17 age groups to reflect the age and stage of the children and young people involved. The survey questions for use in Dundee have been carefully selected to ensure that they are fully relevant and appropriate. Participating in research will provide very detailed and reliable information in respect of children and young people's health, social behaviour, emotional wellbeing, engagement with school and perceptions of local communities. It will also provide information about a range of developmental outcomes, risk and protective factors.
- 5.4 The outcomes of the research will allow Dundee staff to:
- Consider how children's well being varies across different communities within Dundee;
 - Consider how children's well being varies within and across the different agencies in contact with children and young people;
 - Quantify the needs of children and young people in Dundee;
 - Identify priority outcomes for improvements;
 - Develop and implement interventions targeted to those who need them most;
 - Help support development of a service re-design plan to effectively target need and deliver best quality interventions;
 - Involve leaders of service provision in joint decision making processes about services for children and families;
 - Assist Dundee City Council to achieve maximum return on investments in services; and
 - Compare and benchmark outcomes in Dundee with other authorities across Scotland.
- 5.5 Scottish Government funding for the project covers the tools and expertise of the Dartington Social Research Unit (SRU), wellbeing surveys of all children aged 9 – 11 years and 12 -17 years and the practical project implementation support in the form of two experienced professionals seconded from a local authority. The value of the Scottish Government funding for the work in Dundee is in the region of £90,000. The national budget for the project is such that local authorities who wish to participate will need to fund the cost of the community survey work for the 0-8 years population. Although Dundee could choose to proceed only with the fully funded elements of the project, we would be left with a significant gap in our

knowledge about the wellbeing of young children and this would have obvious implications for our capacity to effectively plan for the future.

- 5.6 It is important to note that the data collection will be useful to Dundee as a means of informing service re-design and revising existing investment strategies for children's services. The gathered survey information will enable Dundee to achieve the over-arching objective of improving outcomes and getting it right for all children. Participation in the research project will reflect Dundee's commitment to improving service delivery by using the survey data to inform a joint community planning approach and to develop a new strategic vision for children's services. The expectations of Dundee and its partners along with those of the Scottish Government and Dartington Social Research Unit will be set out as part of a memorandum of understanding.
- 5.7 The proposal will provide quality research data about the needs of our children aged 0 – 8 years drawn from a statistically valid sample of local families across the authority. The research will be conducted via specially trained staff going door-to-door to personally interview a group of parents and carers. The survey being used is a scientifically validated tool which effectively measures key developmental outcomes, risk and protective factors for young children.
- 5.8 The Dartington Social Research Unit (SRU) will also provide use of their on-line survey tool for children aged 9 – 11 years and 12 -17 years. These short surveys will be offered to all school children on an opt-out basis and based on work already completed in Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross, it is realistic to expect uptake to exceed 80 per cent. The surveys provide reliable information about young people's health, social behaviour, emotional wellbeing, engagement to school and perceptions of local communities, as well as signalling a range of developmental outcomes, risk and protective factors. The SRU will provide bespoke analysis of these results which will include results for each individual school. The surveys are confidential and results are anonymised so that no information can be linked to individuals. Parents will receive letters advising them of the surveys and have an opportunity to prevent their child's participation if they so choose.
- 5.9 The survey tools developed by Dartington are properly validated using scientific means and have been successfully implemented in Scotland (Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross), England and the United States of America. As such, local Dundee results can be compared with Scottish, UK and international benchmarks providing valuable context around our information.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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 Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached to this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

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

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

MICHAEL WOOD
Director of Education

17 October 2013

Appendix 1
DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Rapid Impact Assessment Tool

Part 1

Date of assessment	Title of document being assessed
6 October 2013	Report 440 – 2013 Children’s Wellbeing Research Project
1) This is a new policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed (If yes please tick box) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This is an existing policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed? (If yes please tick box) <input type="checkbox"/>
2) Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy or practice being assessed.	The purpose of the report is to seek permission to carry out a full scale survey of children and young people aged 0-17 and their families to gain a range of data on wellbeing.
3) What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy or practice?	To provide a range of data that will support the identification of key development outcomes and reshape service delivery.
4) Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.	Education Service Plan 2012-2017 Dundee Single Outcome Agreement Dundee ICS Plan
5) Has any consultation or involvement with protected communities informed this assessment? If yes please give details.	No
6) Please give details of council officer involvement in this assessment. (E.g. names of officers consulted, dates of meetings etc)	Director of Corporate Services, Director of Education, Director of Social Work, Head Teachers.
7) Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult protected communities? (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

	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"/>
Transgender	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

<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>If yes please give further details</p> <p>The findings of the research will help reshape services that will have benefits for a range of families.</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 departments Equality Champion.)</p>	<p>If yes please give further details</p> <p>None</p>
<p>3) What action is proposed to overcome any negative impacts? 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>Please give further details</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?(If the policy that shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination you must seek legal advice)</p>	<p>If yes please give further details</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>e) Has a Full Equality Impact Assessment been recommended? (If the policy is a major one or is likely to have a major impact on protected communities a Full Equality Impact Assessment may be required) Seek advice from your departmental Equality Champion.</p>	<p>If yes please give further details</p> <p>No</p>
<p>6) How will the policy be monitored? (How will you know it is doing what it is intended to do? e.g. data collection, customer survey etc.</p>	<p>The data will be shared with Council departments and agencies and will form an important part of the data set for the ICS SPGs that have been recently formed.</p>



Part 4

Name of Department or Partnership: Education**Type of Document**

Human Resource Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy/Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change Papers/Local Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidelines and Protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Contact Information

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Signature of author of the policy:		Date 10 October 2013
Signature of Director/Head of Service area:		Date 10 October 2013
Name of Director / Head of Service:	Michael Wood	
Date of next policy review:	N/A	