

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 28TH MARCH 2011

REPORT ON: INITIAL REVIEW OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE - FAMILY SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT WORKER POSTS AND PROPOSALS FOR NEW INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 163 - 2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a review of the priorities and targeting of Family Support Team (FST) services in Dundee, this report details proposals to create a new Intensive Family Support Team through the re-focussing of the resources invested in the Family Support Development Worker (FSDW) posts currently on the FST staffing establishment.
- 1.2 These proposals have arisen from the initial review of FST services, and further proposals will be brought forward regarding the future shape of FST services in Dundee when work on the wider review is concluded.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

- 2.1 Agrees the contents and recommendations contained within this report.
- 2.2 Remits the Director of Social Work to bring forward further proposals regarding the future targeting of the resources invested in Dundee's FSTs, proposed staffing model and re-configuration of family support services.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of creating the Intensive Family Support Team will be met from within the existing Social Work Department's Revenue Budget. The financial details are noted in appendix 1.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Social Work Department's 7 Family Support Teams (FSTs) provide family support services to children in need under the age of 12 and their families, who live in the many local neighbourhoods served by each Team across the city.
- 4.2 Since 2000 a total of 6 Family Support Development Workers (FSDWs) have been appointed to support the work of Family Support Teams. The role of the FSDWs is to work with statutory and voluntary sector partners in targeted communities to identify unmet need, to promote access to existing services and to develop new services to support children and their families.
- 4.3 The Community Family Support Project (CFSP) was established in 2003 as a service development initiative funded through Changing Children's Services Fund. This Project brings together 4 of the city's FSDWs and One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) to develop and promote access to community based services for families in need in the communities of St Mary's, Fintry, Mill O' Mains, Charleston and Lochee. (Committee Report No: 290/02).

- 4.4 The roles of the FSDWs and CFSP have been preventative in that they have targeted children and families who present with a low to medium level of need or risk.
- 4.5 However the level of need and risks has been rising steadily over the past few years, and Social Work Teams have had to cope with increasing numbers of children and young people with complex needs, who are adversely affected by severely compromised parenting. Consequently Social Work Services have had to increasingly target children in greatest need and at greatest risk. This has in turn required FSTs to respond by re-prioritising and becoming more targeted in the use of the staffing and other resources available to them.
- 4.6 FST priorities have been reviewed and it is now proposed that the resources currently invested in Children's Services 7 FSTs be used in a more targeted way. It is therefore suggested that it is no longer the most appropriate or cost effective use of resources to undertake outreach work when the capacity to provide services for children in greatest need and at greatest risk is under such pressure.
- 4.7 An options appraisal has been carried out to consider the alternative use of the resources and it is suggested that the deletion of the 6 FSDW posts would have the potential to release the financial resources required for re-investment within a re-focussed and re-modelled FSS.
- 4.8 The proposed re-modelling affords an opportunity to develop new, more flexible family support services and discussions have already begun with key voluntary sector partners on possible future options. In addition discussions have also taken place with Community Nursing Services regarding the alignment of the Early Years Workers from Health with the current Locality FSTs within Children's Services and the potential for links with the new Family Nurse Partnership services.
- 4.9 Full proposals for the future shape of FSTs and the more effective use of all the resources currently invested in this service will be brought forward for Committee consideration later in 2011. In the interim it is suggested that the financial resources arising from the proposed deletion of the FSDW posts should be re-invested in the development of a new Intensive Family Support Team to address an area of current unmet need for children at greatest risk of accommodation, or who are already accommodated and require additional services to support their rehabilitation.
- 4.10 **PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM**
- 4.10.1 From the review of FST services the following has been identified as the area of unmet need that requires to be addressed:
- The level of effectiveness of centre-based parenting programmes delivered by the FSTs is directly related to the ability of parents to learn from these experiences and to translate that learning into positive changes in the way they care for their children at home.
 - Many parents, for example those with learning disabilities, can have difficulties in understanding the changes that are required of them, or struggle to put them into practice in their home. These parents need to be shown in detail what is required of them and then need the support to practise and embed these changes into their routines, and interactions with their children at home.
 - FSTs currently provide services which are largely centre-based and there is currently insufficient capacity to provide intensive services and support within the home environment. It is recognised that steps need to be taken to ensure that such services can be delivered to parents in ways that maximise the opportunities for them to effect positive change.
 - Some parents are able to make changes but can find it difficult to sustain these because of a range of lifestyle factors, such as drugs or alcohol dependence which can significantly dilute the effectiveness of centre based parenting programmes.

- These parents would benefit from additional home-based support and interventions to help them address the difficulties they face and help them to maintain their focus on the changes required.
 - FSTs services are currently provided between 9.00am and 5.00pm, with some flexibility outwith these times. However it is recognised that for many parents the greatest challenges arise at key pressure points such as breakfast, tea and bed times. There is therefore a need for flexible services to provide support at these key points in their daily lives.
 - Plans for the rehabilitation of accommodated children to their parents' care are dependent on the quality of assessments undertaken and these are informed largely by the observations of parents' care and interactions with their children in formal contact sessions that take place mostly in Family Support Centres. Whilst providing a safe environment for contact such settings are artificial, do not offer an opportunity for the parent to be observed undertaking a full range of care tasks and therefore do not provide a realistic test of parents' capacity to provide safe and appropriate care for their children at home.
 - More home based rehabilitation work would support both children and parents' preparation for full rehabilitation and improve the transition experience for all.
 - For these reasons it is important that resources are invested in the delivery of more in-home supervision and intensive support for children who are accommodated and the subject of rehabilitation plans.
- 4.10.2 It is proposed that a new Intensive Family Support Team (IFST) be set up to provide a dedicated resource to address these identified unmet needs and gaps in service.
- 4.11 **KEY ELEMENTS OF PROPOSED INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE**
- 4.11.1 The aim of the service will be to improve outcomes for children pre-birth to age 12 through the provision of an intensive level of family support, delivered in children's own homes, at key times of the day to improve parents' ability to provide safe and appropriate care for their children.
- 4.11.2 The specific aims of such an IFST will be to:
- Work intensively to support children remaining in the care of their parents, where there is a risk of children becoming looked after and accommodated
 - Facilitate rehabilitation for children who are accommodated, and prevent readmission
 - Contribute to care planning and decision-making, including decisions to return children to their parent's care, or alternatively to identify a need for alternative permanent care
 - Identify the long-term support needs of children and families
- 4.11.3 The service will be city-wide with planned work undertaken within defined timescales and with clearly specified goals aimed at promoting change. Contact levels will be agreed as part of the child's plan but typically will involve a number of home-based sessions per week delivered for an agreed maximum number of weeks. Typically staff will deliver services in the mornings, evenings and at weekends. However there will be flexibility to provide services at other times in accordance with identified needs.
- 4.11.4 Staff will support the establishment of good child care routines, positive behaviour management and effective coping strategies. The Team will use evidence and skills based accredited parenting and family support programmes, including behaviour modelling and Video Interaction Guidance to help build self-esteem and strengthen parent/child relationships.
- 4.11.5 Services will be delivered as part of supervised contact in the home environment for those children who are the subject of rehabilitation plans to allow the opportunity to test out

parents' ability to meet their children's needs and keep them safe in a more realistic environment.

- 4.11.6 In addition there are 3 specialist workers attached to the Family Support Service who provide city wide services, specifically a Resource Worker for young parents, a Senior Family Support Worker who is a trained Play Therapist, and a Healthy Eating Worker. It is proposed that these workers would more appropriately be attached to the new intensive service to act as a resource for Children's Services, with a wide range of specialist knowledge and skills, and with a role to deliver intensive family support services as part of integrated packages of support and intervention.

4.12 **STAFFING REQUIREMENTS OF PROPOSED INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM**

- 4.12.1 It is proposed that the IFST be staffed by a Team of 2 FTE Senior Family Support Workers and 4 FTE Family Support Workers recruited from within the Family Support Service, who will work a combination of day/evening/weekend hours. These posts will be financed through the re-investment of the monies generated from the deletion of the 6 FTE FSDW posts of the same grade. 0.5 FTE clerical assistant hours will also be funded from these monies.
- 4.12.2 A Team Manager from within the existing group of Family Support Team Manager group will be redeployed to manage this group of staff as part of the wider re-configuration of FSTs. The three existing specialist workers within the Family Support Service will also be managed within the IFST.
- 4.12.3 An establishment change note will be brought forward to have these proposed changes in the Children's Services staffing establishment formally noted.

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.
- 5.2 The main issue identified relates to the impact on children and families with lower levels of need who live in the communities targeted by the FSDWs. These children and families may have reduced access to preventative, community based family support services, and steps have been taken to identify alternative sources of such support at a community level.
- 5.3 At present, 2.5 FTE FSDW posts are vacant, and only 1.5 FTE FSDWs are actively involved in the delivery of community based services. Therefore the immediate impact of the proposed re-focussing of resources is mainly limited to two communities in Dundee.
- 5.4 It is further noted that in one of these areas the recent addition of new children's worker resources will help offset the impact of the proposed withdrawal of FSDW input; and that the proposed alignment of Early Years Health Workers from Health with the current Locality FSTs within Children's Services is to be used to ensure that priority family support needs are met within the targeted areas.
- 5.5 Discussions have also taken place with One Parent Families Scotland, from whom the Social Work Department commissions the CFSP, to identify alternative sources of service provision for these communities. A commitment has been given by One Parent Families Scotland that where and when possible within the city-wide remit of the 101 Project (also commissioned from, and managed by One Parent Families Scotland) the project worker capacity recently added to the 101 Project will be prioritised for use in those communities most affected by the re-focussing of FSDW resources.
- 5.6 FSTs have strong links with other agencies and organisations in the localities across Dundee that they serve. It is the intention that through these local networks FSTs will continue to maximise the contribution they make to identifying needs and using their resources to the benefit of the children in need and their families living in each of the targeted communities.

5.7 There are staffing implications arising from these proposals and it is proposed that options be identified for the redeployment of the 3.5 FTE FSDWs currently in post within the FST staffing establishment.

5.8 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

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

6.2 Consultation has taken place with staff, CFSP, colleagues in Health and Trade Unions regarding these proposals.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Equality Impact Assessment.

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DATE: 4th March 2011

Appendix 1

Intensive Family Support Team

Existing Staffing	FTE	Total (£)
Family Support Development Workers	6.0	201,121
Family Support Team Manager	1.0	47,477
Resource Worker (SAYF)	1.0	42,043
Snr FS Worker (Play Therapist)	1.0	33,356
Healthy Eating Worker	1.0	22,326
	<u>10.0</u>	<u>346,323</u>

Proposed IFST		
Senior Family Support Worker	2.0	66,713
Family Support Worker	4.0	113,256
Clerical Assistant	0.5	9,919
Family Support Team Manager	1.0	47,477
Resource Worker (SAYF)	1.0	42,043
Snr FS Worker (Play Therapist)	1.0	33,356
Healthy Eating Worker	1.0	22,326
Unsociable Hours Payments		11,233
	<u>10.5</u>	<u>346,323</u>