

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Education & Families Committee

approval noting

Ref AG/DB

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Resilience and Mental Health Strategy - Education and Families

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Executive Summary

The issue of mental health and wellbeing, along with the resilience of children and young people are issues which have received increasing attention in recent years. Both locally and nationally indicators of concern have been observed around mental health and wellbeing. Demand on mental health treatment services has risen significantly. The limited availability of preventative and early intervention services has been identified as an issue nationally by Audit Scotland. Such pressures are also experienced locally within North Lanarkshire's Children's Services Partnership.

This paper sets out the case for developing a Resilience and Mental Health Strategy within the Education and Families Service, based on developments in the wider partnership, which is focussed on improving the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Education and Families Committee:

- (1) note the contents of this report;
- (2) agree the plan to set in place a Resilience and Mental Health Strategy for children and young people within the Education and Families Service;
- (3) note that a further report will be brought to committee to present the completed strategy.

Supporting Documents

Council business plan to 2020

Improve economic opportunities and outcomes

- Improve outcomes for all children and young people and minimise the poverty related gap in attainment; Focus on prevention and early intervention of health and wellbeing

1. Background

- 1.1 Mental ill health has been recognised for some years as a significant societal issue, with effects that go well beyond the boundaries of traditional mental health services. It is estimated that at least one in 10 children and young people have a possible diagnosable mental health problem, and this has considerable personal, social and economic impacts across the lifecycle of those affected.
- 1.2 Over recent years referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have been increasing and as a result these services have been struggling to keep up with the demand for support, CAMHS within Lanarkshire reported a 13% increase in referrals from 2015 to 2016, with an increasing trend in referral patterns across recent years. Alongside referral based information, there have been a number of studies in recent years that indicate a significant minority of young people experience emotional distress. For example, the Scottish Adolescent Lifestyles and Substance Misuse Survey in 2015 indicated that across Scotland 26% of S4 pupils reported experiencing a significant degree of distress.
- 1.3 Within North Lanarkshire surveys undertaken as part of the Realigning Children's Services (RCS) programme highlighted that most children and young people reported being happy and healthy and having positive relationships. A significant percentage of secondary age pupils however, primarily girls and in particular in S3 and S4 had poorer mental health and emotional wellbeing as indicated by their Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) scores. In addition to this there have been recent concerns around a number of suicides by young men, indicating that the issues of mental ill health cut across genders and can have grave consequences where issues have not been identified.
- 1.4 Mental health, wellbeing and resilience difficulties are seen to affect young people across all backgrounds but with increased prevalence with particular groups of young people:
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing difficulties are associated with higher levels of family deprivation
 - Pupils with lower attachment to school are more likely to report issues of mental health and distress
 - Young People with a disability or life limiting illness are more likely to be affected by poor mental health
 - Looked After Children are more likely to experience issues of poor mental wellbeing

2. Report

- 2.1 The information in the previous section indicates increasing level of mental health and emotional wellbeing and resilience concerns among children and young people. It also indicates the range of groups that show particular risks and the demands placed on services to respond to these issues.

- 2.2 It is clear that increasing concerns around the mental health of children and young people cannot simply be met through CAMHS referrals, nor are clinical and specialist services the best or appropriate response to all mental health and wellbeing needs.
- 2.3 In their report on Children and Young People's Mental Health, Audit Scotland identified the challenges in accessing services at a preventative or early intervention stage. Given the increasing demands facing CAMHS referred to above, such early intervention and preventative approaches offer the best option to address issues of emotional wellbeing resilience and distress before they become significant for children and young people.
- 2.4 The Children's Services Partnership has mental health wellbeing and resilience as a key priority. This indicates the importance of mental health for the multi-agency partnership whilst recognising the importance of building resilience in children as the means to help children and young people withstand the emotional pressures that they face. The concept of resilience, as the capacity in children to withstand negative life events, is key in preventing mental health difficulties and requires to be at the forefront of any strategy around mental health and young people.
- 2.5 The National Improvement Framework sets Health and Wellbeing as one of the priorities for children in Scotland, and the Education and Families Service has an established group working on this priority. Within the framework mental health will impact on many of the priorities, but this focus on Health and Wellbeing will allow the development and implementation of a strategic approach to building resilience and supporting good mental health across the service. This will in turn link to the work being carried out on a multi-agency basis through the Mental Health and Wellbeing and Resilience task group of the Children's Services Partnership and will lead to the development of a new Mental Health Strategy for Lanarkshire.
- 2.6 Approval is sought from Committee to develop a Resilience and Mental Health Strategy across the Education and Families Service. This will influence approaches to promoting mental health and wellbeing and building resilience from nursery and early years, through primary and secondary age groups to young adults. In turn this will have the potential to positively impact on many aspects of young people's lives and contribute towards a strong start for them through their life.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

As regards the Fairer Scotland Conversation, the development of a Resilience and Mental Health Strategy across the Education and Families Service will allow a greater focus on strong mental health as part of a strong start for all young people.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

Improving mental health will be a positive step towards greater equality for the children and young people using our services. As such the development of this strategy will be a strong step towards greater equality.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

There will be no additional financial commitment necessary to set up the strategy.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

The development of this strategy will have no HR impact and may provide evidence of meeting our legislative requirements in a broad area of responsibility such as equalities, disability and corporate parenting.

4.3 Environmental Impact

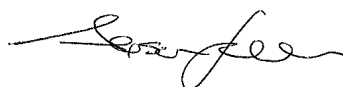
There will be no environmental impact.

4.4 Risk Impact

Developing an Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be a useful component in reducing future risks around young people, mental health and wellbeing in the future.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 The strategy once developed will be reported back to Committee. At that stage measures of success in implementing the strategy will be identified and reported.
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Joint Interim Executive Directors Education and Families