

Collated Feedback from breakout rooms from Engagement Session  
17 August 2020 – 9.30 – 11.30am - held by Zoom Call

**We have incorporated all of the feedback that was recorded and given to us, without editing or deleting.**

**We have suggested some potential questions at the end of each section, to get the FAQ started.**

**Q1. Is there anything to be added to the mapping and needs assessment, are there any gaps or points of clarification?**

- What are we referring to when we mention mapping exercise and have, we seen this?
- Organisations could cover more than one area of the continuum. Services were not asked where they fit some services are in the wrong category, how do we highlight that to the commissioners.
- Clearly mention of prevention and early intervention but don't seem to be enough emphasis on this. Lot of support and emphasis on putting YP at the centre of decision making etc There is no emphasis on the parents, made no reference to National parenting strategy all t. No mention of ACES etc.
- Clarity over where early intervention starts and what does it actually mean, universal services provide this but depends when it starts.
- Hard to benchmark early intervention but there are lots of tools that can be used
- Based on previous reviews will COVID-19 impact be taken into account and what resources will be available to help with increased demand
- Explanation and more detail of what early intervention is
- Timescales lost 6 months due to COVID-19, pressures due to impact of pandemic has lead to increased demand on services
- This is an opportunity for Fife Council to define key terms - universal/additional/intensive/early intervention
- Home-Starts have traditionally been 'Universal' but are now classed as 'Additional' - why?
- A visual representation of all services available, despite how they are funded, would be very helpful
- A recognition that different services have different thresholds for referrals
- There appears to be little mention of Early Intervention or consideration of Universal services having a preventative function
- Through the Wellbeing Process statutory refer to Third Sector and in some cases “step away”. If there is no Third Sector service this will increase demand on statutory services
- Explored Fife wide/local based organisations and what will the focus/criteria be e.g. advocacy support, family support?

- Members of the groups expressed their understanding that Fife Council has priorities and have to save money, however they felt that as individual organisations we all want to do provide unique/different services within our communities but how can we do that? How will each organisation contribute towards the commissioning process?
- Discussion on how we have got to where we are now:
  - Lots of discussion/engagement
  - Individual consultations/reviews
  - Review of SLA /core offers/grants
  - Utilising a commissioning approach
  - What is involved in commissioning and that organisations may not be fully aware of the process
- Some people shared that they expected more individual engagement and felt this process was about money. It is important that the third sector has been involved and continues to be as it partnership working with Council services
- Home Start is not universal and is targeted and they shared that this encourages them to look at their services and external funding. Agreement from other members of the team that individual collaboration was expected and questioned if additional funds were going to be considered to reflect the support we give to children & families and salaries to staff in the third sector.
- Discussion around Kirkcaldy and the areas of need within Kirkcaldy and how they can vary and individual services explained how they are feeling and reiterated how they expected a meeting individually with strategic group.
- Pay scales discussed and questions around fairness within third and statutory sectors. Also grant to reflect the number of families they support and work they carry out as some services have received the same amount of funds for numerous years. Discussion on annual return/3-year monitoring and how this should support the funding required.

### **Suggested questions from the feedback**

Q. Is this partnership working or distinct funding arrangements between the Council and each provider? Will the third sector have any say on how funds are allocated, or are organisations just submitting funding applications?

A. The process of submitting a grant application is the same as previous years and in line with the Monitoring & Evaluation framework. Funding will be allocated to the range of service specifications (briefs) by Fife Council.

Q. Some organisations expect detailed meetings/dialogue on an individual basis with the commissioning group as well as a direct say on the process – will this happen?

A. Previous thematic reviews and the independent review undertaken last year involved 1-1 meetings with each service and group sessions, all this activity has been considered in terms of this next stage of re-commissioning and the current engagement sessions provide further opportunity for dialogue. Fife Council Link officers also meet regularly with funded services.

Q. Early intervention and prevention was mentioned most – there's not enough emphasis on that and organisations are worried about that. What's the thinking on this?

A. The information within the Strategic Needs Assessment provides a clear explanation of the Belonging to Fife Strategy and within this the focus on prevention within the context of the Children & Families Social Work Service i.e. (page 9).<sup>1</sup> *It is difficult to benchmark the scale or impact of this preventative working, as there are no national data sources to enable benchmarking. However, preventative working is likely to be a key factor in a smaller proportion of children in Fife being formally looked after than is the case in the rest of Scotland (particularly given the above-average rates of child poverty in Fife). The approach is consistent with the Scottish Government's priority of early intervention and prevention for those in **greatest need**. In the Fife context this requires activity **not targeted at the universal level of need but focused on children and young people with additional or intensive needs** (i.e. GIRIFF Continuum of Need).*

In simple terms, the Belonging to Fife strategy requires services to be re-positioned to support children in need (Section 22), children on the edge of care and children subject to child protection measures and looked after. This refocusing as part of a preventative agenda will enable more children to remain in the care of their families and wider community. Universal services in Health, Education, and other Directorates all have a contribution to prevention and early intervention as outlined in the Plan for Fife and Children's Services Plan.

A key theme through the review, was the need to reduce reliance on high cost residential placements. Children and Families Social Work have made concerted efforts to realise this, working through the Belonging to Fife strategy. To date there are 60 fewer young people in HCRP than this time last year and fewer children and young people are being placed outwith their families/communities. This means that the support is required, wrapped around families, working with crisis to ensure children and young people can remain in their own homes/communities. This is an area of critical need supported by the success of the Belonging to Fife strategy.

There is no linear argument/evidence around reducing funding, leading to fewer services leading to more demand for services. We do have a strong evidence base that if we work in different ways we can achieve better outcomes.

Q. The pandemic has had a big impact in how we work and how we work together, but also on demand and resources – how will this be taken into account?

A. The C&F service has sought feedback from children, parents/carers and also staff, this learning has been shared at Children's Services Partnership sessions where common themes were identified, for example 'virtual' engagement has worked well in some situations, practical assistance has been essential, face to face contact and visits remain important and the impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health. Data analysis is ongoing and in some cases demand has reduced for example referrals to the Contact Centre and a reduction in Police cause for concern reports. However, services will need to be agile and responsive as needs/demand on services can vary.

Regular feedback from children and families and across services should be an integral part of performance monitoring to ensure services are effective and deployed efficiently.

Q. Some organisations deliver multiple services and should appear in other places in the mapping, but this hasn't happened. Can this be remedied?

A. Yes. Mapping is a continuous process and the recent work on mapping has updated details including funding and descriptors. Mapping is an illustration of where we are now, however full consideration is also required on where we need to be in terms of models and types of services within the current funding available to achieve the priorities in the strategy.

Q. How does the Council envisage that we will submit individual responses in a short timeframe, without knowing what else is being funded and who is doing what, and without the time to collaborate with other potential providers, for a new place-based approach when services in areas are not yet known? And how will Fife-wide providers be supported to develop up to 7 different locality-based arrangements?

A. The grant application process will be explained in detail on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August, a place-based approach is not a concept that can be delivered overnight. This is the first stage of developing more community facing services in the 7 localities. Some services are currently delivering in localities already and others are Fife-wide. A key priority is to better align and co-ordinate support. The majority of current commissioned services have been operating in Fife for many years and have opportunities to collaborate, it would be helpful for the third sector to share what has worked well to date.

Q. Still some terminology issues persist, including some people now knowing what the mapping exercise was about. How do we resolve these issues?

A. Mapping information was taken from current Service Level Agreements providing a summary of issues including location, core service 'offer', funding, profile of children and families supported, specialism and types of interventions.

FVA will put the various documents, strategies, reports and so on in a single page on their website and share the link. It is up to organisations to read through the documents and raise any specific issues directly with FVA, citing the document they are referring to.

Q. Reduced funding will lead to fewer services and reduced capacity, coupled with less focus on early intervention and prevention means more demand for statutory services. Has this been taken into account in a full mapping of all demand and all services (statutory and voluntary)?

A. The analysis from the independent review report and strategic needs assessment have considered the current demand for statutory (C&F) services and what is required to be more efficient and effective. This has considered the impact of placements for children out with Fife which are not sustainable and result in a disconnect for children and young people from their families, school and community, leading to poorer outcomes. The objectives in the Belonging to Fife strategy clarify what is required to

shift the balance of care and further develop services across both the statutory and third sectors. Commissioning arrangements need to reflect the strategy as the means through which we deliver the priorities set within the strategy.

**Q2. What are the issues for your organisation e.g. staffing impact, training and development?**

- Transitioning period will be resource heavy in relation to aligning with new priorities.
- More work for managers to comply, timescales are very tight no time for collaboration or partnership working will cause services to compete with each other.
- Services spending time getting back to normal and provides less time to fully participate
- This process has by passed the whole issues of being in a pandemic. And services trying to get back to normal.
- Concerns raised around timeline
- Uncertainty for staff with year to year contracts which causes staff to be anxious – staff want to be committed to their job roles
- Need to ensure that the process is fair
- In the event of another pandemic will anything be included around how organisations would continue to provide their service
- How do services adapt for increased demand?
- How detailed are briefs going to be?
- Not yet sure what staff will need to be trained in
- Is very difficult to talk about the impact on our organisation when we do not know what the proposals are. Difference between a % cut and decommissioning a whole service.
- Huge staffing implications if services are decommissioned
- Many services have trimmed and cut back over recent years and have nothing left to cut except staff time and therefore capacity
- Organisations trying to upskill all staff so they are better equipped to attract additional funding
- Despite work done over the years Fife Council is not clear on what outcomes they want from the voluntary sector - all orgs should be consistent in their reporting and be given training on how to do it
- As many services use Local Authority funding for match funding the risk is greater that the loss of funding from the Council for Third Sector services – has this been considered
- The loss of the CPC Training Co-ordinator has been felt. The group felt that there should be a training collaborative with the Council with the Third sector receiving and delivering multi-agency training
- We discussed the timeline of review which commenced in 2018. Maybe be beneficial for FVA to organise further collaboration as this has been noted

### **Suggested questions from the feedback**

Q. We've lost 6 months, and organisations are still managing the impact of the pandemic - is the original timetable realistically achievable?

A. The independent review in 2019 and earlier thematic review of family support services in 2018 confirmed the need for change and improvement across services. Covid-19 halted some of the planning to re-commission. We have revisited the timescale and timeline and will work towards 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 which is more than 6 months away. We recognise that any change in services will need to have an implementation or decommissioning plan and we will work with organisations to ensure this happens.

Q. Will the Council produce detailed briefs?

A. Yes, and drafts will be circulated inviting feedback on content.

Q. How do we ensure fairness in this process?

A. The grant application process has a clear question and scoring matrix and is developed in line with procurement plans. This has to be robust as it is open to internal auditors and scrutiny by elected members.

Q. Will business continuity/contingency planning arrangements now be required from all providers in order to get funding?

A. Business continuity plans should already be part of your planning, especially at the moment with the pandemic.

Q. Many organisations are concerned about staffing – salary levels, job security, training expectations, redundancies, retention.

A. Organisations have their own financial modelling, training, redundancy procedures as part of their charitable status and SLA, as part of the submission for funding this should be taken on board by the management and/or board of directors/Trustees of the organisation.

Q. Have match funding implications been considered by the Council?

A. While we appreciate that match funding is an important element of bring funding into augment services we will consider this, but it cannot be a key factor for organisations receiving funding through this re-commissioning process.

### **Q3. What are the issues for the wider sector e.g. how you collaborate, locality/Fife Wide or both provision?**

- Not enough time for collaboration and will cause services to compete and will just become a tendering process and not a working together approach.
- There is a danger that this just ends up providing a saving of £410,000 and not about providing the right services for Fife and what is required.
- Be realistic about what we can do and not have unrealistic expectations on people about collaboration.

- Commissioning process does not encourage collaboration.
- Concerns around competing against each other – some organisations may end up with less money
- Concerns around timeline to work collaboratively
- Need to learn from previous experience and need this to be a better process
- Interdisciplinary teams can work if the organisations are committed to that way of working and not reliant on individual personnel who have a passion, who then leave and it all falls to bits
- Given the short time scales, it feels like Fife Council already has a plan, that might be tweaked from these sessions. Why not tell us what your plans are - we are trying to second guess!
- The 7 localities are all have different needs and are all operating differently – some more effective than others - needs refresh with defined purpose and goals
- Across Fife there are lots of networks and lots of duplication and not enough communication
- Organisations anticipate the support/input of what family's needs may be following the pandemic. And the focus is likely to be poverty, place-based communities, emotional support.
- Organisations wish to view the funding info held on their own services and amend their service overview.
- Discussed how Fife Council vision is not just focusing on care; they are supporting the most vulnerable children and young people and services will be tailored to work in line with this looking at working with third sector expertise and how we can work innovatively.

### **Suggested questions from the feedback**

Q. Losing 6 months during the pandemic makes collaboration almost impossible and results in missed opportunities. What can be done about that?

A. FVA as the third sector interface has previously and will continue to offer support to enhance collaboration, also the well-established Voluntary Sector Children's Services Forum is the vehicle to enable closer partnerships within the sector. The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated partnership working across all services.

Q. Does the Council know exactly what it wants to fund and who it wants to do it?

A. Priorities have been confirmed above and in the Strategic Needs Assessment and mapping. The grants application is the mechanism to fairly and robustly assess and score applications against service briefs.

Q. Each area works differently, and some are more effective than others. Is this being reviewed, who leads on this and must all providers work together at a locality level in the ways that have already emerged?

A. Collaborative and partnership working is essential and a priority in the Plan for Fife is to better join up services to be more effective. No one agency or person leads on this work, the mechanism is through the Children Services Partnership and at a community



level. Experience through COVID –19, working collaboratively together has shown we can adapt and move within a good enough timescale to meet changing need.

**Q4. What support do you require from FVA or Fife Council e.g. facilitation sessions to consider collaborative/partnership models?**

- Need clarity on where they want us to go, need parameters. There is rough guidelines but what are the details what does 24/7 actually look like and who should this be done with, third sector alone or in partnership with FFS/social work etc. who is the 24/7 service for etc.
- Put some parameters around this and give us time to collaborate. Need somebody to facilitate this. Timeframes need to be considered e.g. distribution of papers timeously; needs to be a consistent message between the council officers; if they are referring to strategies these should be written down and shared.
- Social impact process could be looked at if third sector is interested.
- Would be helpful to have a straight-forward process
- Any kind of support and guidance would be welcomed
- Clarity on what partnership is
- All organisations are unique
- Joint sessions around collaborative working
- Support regarding consortium bids - recognition this won't happen overnight and is a long-term process
- For intensive support fortnightly meetings happen to discuss referrals (Barnardos), this doesn't happen for other levels. Discussion about how it was stopped under the pretence of data protection however this was felt not to ring true as voluntary agencies still sit on nursery admission panels.
- What does the council actually want - partnership working or tendering? They go against each other.
- We do not want duplication of services but referring agencies often refer a family to lots of agencies in the hope that one will have capacity so the family has some support but can often result in a family having multiple agencies involved. The more agencies involved the less chance the family can take responsibility.
- Thinking more creatively as per the care review about boundaries to support e.g. age of children, time frame of support
- Would be good to have some sort of pathway - not rigid
- Services feel under pressure to move families on - but to where?
- There are significant challenges in bringing a partnership together in the timescales
- Have the council taken learning from current successful partnerships into the current model
- Is it an application – grant/bid etc. Clarity on the process. Also, questions around who sets the amount of funding based on what? Is their scope to apply for more funding than currently receiving.
- Next week's meeting is about next steps, what you expect from that.
- Is there enough support? Is it a strong partnership?



- Individuals expressed that it can become frustrating to attend so many meetings due to workload/time restraints of their own service however felt there is a lot of support e.g. children's forum, child services meeting, GIRFEC, etc. but at times are unrealistic to attend. An online platform and receptive communication may work better at times.

### **Suggested questions from the feedback**

Q. Can we have clarity on exactly how the commissioning process will work and the timescale?

A. Yes, the commissioning process will be set out in a timetable with timescales.

Q. Who will decide on the amount of money going to each area/service/organisation? Is any of that known already?

A. Service briefs will be available to all third sector organisations in Fife to submit an application(s). Each brief will have a total funding award. The grant application process is the means to determine who is successful based on a set of key requirements. The ADP (Alcohol and Drugs Partnership) commissioning model in Fife is a good example of the process that will be followed.

Q. If we want a collaborative, partnership approach then we need more support and more time to pull it together, is that possible?

A. The timescales are outlined in the Strategic Re-commissioning Plan for E&CS document previously circulated.

Q. Is attendance at all meetings compulsory? Can organisations skip meetings and have a separate dialogue and process directly with the Council?

A. The expectation is that all stakeholders commit to the engagement sessions. The process has been set out clearly and there won't be any variation for any organisation. All providers will be treated equally, with the same access to briefs, information, the dialogue and process. This is the process that we've collectively agreed to pursue and there are no alternative ways of securing a funding arrangement outwith this process.