



THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

REPORT OF MEETINGS

Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership (CSSaPP)

14 June 2022

THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY

KEY POINTS

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A PERSONAL RECORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TSDG, NORMA AUSTIN HART. IT IS BASED ON MY OWN OBSERVATIONS. IT IS NOT A FORMAL MINUTE OF THE MEETING.

1. The Promise is a ten-year plan to reshape children's care service across Scotland, following a negative review. The plan is under review to consider the impact of the pandemic and Scottish Government direction is still awaited. Locally work is underway towards shifting the balance to reduce the number of children who are 'looked after'. This is being done in partnership with the third sector, Aberlour was mentioned by Stephen Morgan.

The children's services team is working with 200 families. Fifty per cent of children's services team's work is with families they would not normally be working with and the other fifty per cent is with those on the social work register. The voice of children has not always been heard regularly enough. There are many actions planned which will capture the voice of the child as the loudest voice at every point in the process, beyond the statutory requirements. Can our services be pushed to provide 24-hour support?

While 24 hours support cannot be resourced at the moment there are many examples of where social work staff go above and beyond the call of duty. 'It is important that all voices are heard not just the loudest and let's not incorrectly balance quantitative and qualitative data.'

2. Bright Spots is a set of questions for children in the care system. In England and Wales when orgs use the Bright Spots properly and feed the results into service planning, those services improve. D&G was chosen for a pilot of Bright Spots in Scotland (with two others) and a very high per cent of D&G's looked after children responded.

The majority of looked after children live at home. The results eventually will feed into the corporate parenting plan: 94% said they always felt safe; 97% said they trusted the adults they lived with; 94% said they had a good friend; 88% had access to nature and outdoors; 30% didn't who their social worker was- raises questions about how to improve SW communications

8-18 year olds showed lower levels of feeling they participate than the same group in England and Wales though this may not be comparing 'like for like'. 48% of 8-11 year olds said they were less likely to have liked school because of bullying

Wellbeing and safety indicators are quite high but communications with social work and schools need to improve. The detailed report will follow once it is moderated. The group discussed what will be done with the results of the survey without reaching a conclusion.

3. With regard to the D&G Framework for Inclusion the chair talked about recent work with learners; in summary the report shows that the lower the household income the less time you will spend in school. Family is the main determinant of how successful a person is likely to be. About a third of children have additional support needs.

We do not have a blank piece of paper. The answer is in partnerships, options and communications. We have a busy policy landscape; the Challenge framework; PETH; Morgan report, Warber report and many others. The chair has taken an innovative approach by taking all the aspects of this cluttered landscape and looking at it through the lens of the child to try to simplify it. There are seven themes in the Morgan report. These are the basis of the chair's analysis. The report's results should impact on all people working with children and young people in D&G. This report has been approved by DGC and Education Scotland.

It is the most important single approach to children's services for the foreseeable future. Education services staff will be in touch with all partners shortly to discuss how to move forward. The report will be circulated to CSSaPP and further discussions will take place. I supported this approach and said we look forward to hearing more.

4. Under updates, there was reference to the recent TSDG Children and Young People Forum with a membership of 50 TSOs. CSSaPP were encouraged to engage with the forum. There was also reference to TSDG digital inclusion research and the introduction meeting on 22 June. Children's services will be represented at this meeting.

There was reference to the TSDG survey of participating TSOs to inform the new Children's Services Plan. GIRFEC is being updated and there was discussion about it. It is still the main policy for children in Scotland and it is to be hoped that it is not being watered down. For example, there was not much reference to GIRFEC in The Promise even though it is a similar model.

There will be a UNCRC bill coming through shortly which will impact on DGC children's services, a working group will be set up.