

## Section 2 Introduction



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This integrated children's services plan identifies the principal factors that will influence service needs, their development and delivery until 2008. The plan describes how, based on resources which are likely to be available to us, we aim to:

- ❖ provide excellent universal services for all; and
- ❖ target specialist services to meet need and reduce inequalities.

We subscribe to the principles espoused in "For Scotland's Children", the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, "Its Everybody's Job To Make Sure I'm Alright" and other national strategies and are seeking to apply these effectively for the benefit of all children in Renfrewshire.

We are keen to ensure that our plan takes account of children's views as far as possible, is a useful document which is accessible to all, effectively links planning activity to service delivery and provides an impetus to integrated services in the coming years.

In this plan we emphasise the principal areas of shared concern where better joint working will significantly improve outcomes for children while providing clear signposts to

other agency plans and strategies which have an impact on Renfrewshire's children.

The plan reflects the results of consultation with young people in recent months. Other consultation exercises with children, families and communities are either in progress, or planned for the next few months. The results of these will inform both the final plan and the implementation process.

This plan is available in an easy to read summary, or if you would like it in Braille, tape and large print or translated into Urdu, Punjabi and Cantonese, please contact the Child Care Section, Social Work Department, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, North Building, Cotton Street, Paisley. PA1 1TZ, telephone 0141 842 5174, or email: [childcare.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk).

#### Format of the plan

We have produced our plan in accordance with Scottish Executive guidance and set out strategic information in a way which, we hope, is accessible, concise and informative to families, children, young people, staff and other stakeholders. We welcome comment and feedback on the plan. The document is structured as follows:

**Context:** using quantitative and qualitative data we have set out the relative position of Renfrewshire's children in respect of the population as a whole, (with regards to) educational attainment, deprivation levels as measured by a range of indicators and general health.

**Funding:** we have explained how agencies or services spend their budgets collectively and individually on services for children, highlighting those elements where aligned budgets are operating.

**Performance:** in section 5 we report on key aspects of performance and achievements in relation to the targets we set ourselves in the 2002-04 children's services plan

**Services for all children:** the Renfrewshire partnership endorses the view that, where possible, children's needs should be met by universal services unless multi-disciplinary assessment indicates otherwise. The plan identifies our objectives and shared priorities to improve access to universal services for all, reduce exclusion and achieve better outcomes in the context of the national 7-point vision. We have set these out in the plan to reflect a child's pathway of:

- ❖ birth and early years;



- ❖ school age;

- ❖ training and moving into work.

### **Children with additional support needs:**

a relatively small but significant proportion of children in Renfrewshire have additional needs and require extra support to achieve their development milestones into adulthood. This plan identifies our strategic objectives and shared priorities in relation to specialist or targeted services for children who are vulnerable or at risk because of their additional needs i.e.:

- ❖ child Protection;

- ❖ looked after children;

- ❖ support to the children's hearing system;

- ❖ youth justice;

- ❖ children with additional needs including disabilities;

- ❖ children affected by drugs and alcohol;

- ❖ children and young people affected by domestic abuse;

- ❖ children's mental health and emotional

wellbeing;

- ❖ children affected by homelessness; and

- ❖ young carers.

**Action Plan:** this section translates our joint strategic objectives into key activities to achieve greater integration, with clear targets and outcome measures for Renfrewshire children's services. The action plan explicitly shows how our activities will deliver the 7 elements of the vision set out in the national guidance, namely that children are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, respected and responsible, active and included.

### **Main challenges and strategic priorities for children's services**

National policy initiatives will influence our joint work over the next three years. In addition to these, the partnership is faced with changing local pressures which shape our shared priorities. These include:

- ❖ **new statutory responsibilities** like the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004, have important implications for schools, social work and health in meeting our obligations towards children;

- ❖ **improving health:** we recognise the vital role the Council plays with the NHS in reducing health inequalities in Renfrewshire, by protecting good health and promoting better health, by encouraging healthy eating and increasing participation in sport and exercise. Much progress needs to be made in the coming years to improve the health and wellbeing of our children and young people;

- ❖ **improving care and protection of children** in line with the national child protection reform programme. A significant increase in the number of children requiring care and protection presents us with particular challenges linked to the effects on families and communities of increasing drug misuse;

- ❖ **providing excellent learning environments** through the Public Private Partnership programme and schools estates strategy.

- ❖ **achieving NHS reforms** as set out in Argyll and Clyde's clinical strategy and the development of a new community health partnership (CHP), which will manage all child health services in Renfrewshire;



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- ❖ **reducing homelessness** and its impact on children and young people;
- ❖ **increasing foster care services** and reducing the number of children and young people in residential care and the time they spend in residential units;
- ❖ **managing financial pressures** associated with increasing and more complex demands on children's services which are not matched by increasing resources; and
- ❖ **improving service integration and joint working.** As partners we recognise the benefits to children and their families of planning and delivering services in an integrated way. There are many examples of good practice in Renfrewshire and we are committed to build on these over the next three years, through initiatives like integrated assessment to ensure that children and young people have speedy access to age-appropriate services and opportunities which help them achieve their developmental milestones.

