

## Section 7 Involving children and young people



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Involving children, young people and their families in designing services and setting priorities is an essential component of the integrated children's services framework. We believe it should be at the heart of everything we do.

All partners have actively participated in setting the vision for integrated children's services in Renfrewshire and in the production of this plan. This partnership approach is reflected throughout the plan, and will continue to be strengthened during the implementation phase.

Over the next three years, through our integrated children's services planning arrangements we will develop models for joint consultation and we will improve the way we engage with hard-to-reach families and children.

During the preparation of this plan, young people, parents and staff were given the opportunity to comment on children's services. Discussions concentrated on what children's services mean, how to access services and information, how well services share information and work together and areas for improvement.

Results show that most people know how

to access information and services but the promotion of information was still felt to be poor. There were concerns about how well services link together and share information. People felt this could be improved to avoid duplication. Parents and young people felt that communication could be better and that they should be more involved in shaping services. Professionals expressed the view that good practice from other local authorities should be more readily available to them.

Consultation responses are reflected throughout the action plans in terms of future strategic objectives and target outcomes.

### Community councils

A questionnaire was sent to Renfrewshire's 22 community councils in relation to services for children, young people and their families. In particular we were interested in how members thought we should prioritise funding of care services. A copy of the questionnaire is contained in appendix 3.

Of 74 questionnaires returned, 55 were used to provide an evaluation of services, the other 19 were unable to rank the service

priorities as they considered all children's services to be very important.

Protecting children and young people from neglect, abuse or violence at home is considered to be the most important priority for social work, with comments of "this is what I think is the core problem. If this is rectified then this should help children have a more stable life and journey through adulthood".

The second highest priority is considered to be help for children and young people who are carers with a comment of "children should not have to do this work; they should be enjoying their childhood... they have to get all the help they can." The respondents third highest priority for social work is supporting children and young people whose parents or carers misuse drugs or alcohol.

Mid point ratings included "all agencies to get better at information sharing about vulnerable children/young people", and "stop children and young offenders carrying out any more crime or anti-social behaviour".

Supporting young people leaving local authority care homes for independent living and recruiting more foster carers are considered by community councils to be the



lowest priorities for social work spending.

Key comments made on service provision were "massive new funding may not be needed. Very focused measures on trouble spots such as offences, would achieve a lot." "There can never be enough money, but if workers are motivated by good management, make best use of available finance, improvements will be made."

"Involvement of all people working in this field (collaborative working/multi-sector co-operation) is crucial."

### Public Service Panel

In Spring 2005, Renfrewshire's Public Services, consisting of 1000 people from a cross section of Renfrewshire and a further 1000 people from SIP areas, was consulted on how we should prioritise the funding of social work services, using the same set of questions we sent to community councils.

The panel concurred with other consultation findings that the top priority for social work is protecting children from abuse, neglect or violence. The panel considered the second highest priority is "support for children and young people whose carers misuse drugs or alcohol" (20%).

Mid rated priorities are supporting children and young people with disabilities and stopping children and young offenders carrying out any more crime or antisocial behaviour.

Finally, the lowest rated priority is considered to be helping children and young people who are currently using drugs/alcohol.

The results of both Public Services Panel and community council members' questionnaires will be used to inform implementation, future planning and communication about children's services in Renfrewshire.

### Child protection

In 2003/04 Renfrewshire public services panel were asked for their views about child protection. 72% of Renfrewshire residents knew how to report concerns about the welfare of a child but there was a general feeling that public awareness should be raised on child protection through a variety of media.

### RAMPS (Reparation & Mediation/ Parent Support)

An evaluation by the RAMPS Team carried out in 2004, confirmed many of the young people took part in the RAMPS programme to "let the victim know why the crime had been committed" and "to give something back to the victim". The majority of young people who participated by completing the questionnaire, said they would now think before getting into trouble. This evaluation involved young people, parents/guardians, victims, stakeholder agencies, YMCA and Victim Support.

### Health

A number of consultations have been carried out by Argyll & Clyde Health Board involving young people.

During 2004, 'pathways' consultation was undertaken as part of NHS Argyll and Clyde's clinical strategy and the modernization of local health services. Parents of children with additional support needs are consulted through focus groups operating in the Panda Centre.



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The Young People's Lifestyle Survey 2002 was designed to allow comparisons between various groupings of the population of young people in Argyll & Clyde: secondary school years S1, S3 and S5; boys and girls; areas of residence – SIP and non-SIP. The findings of the survey were presented in the Director of Public Health's 2003 Report.

33 secondary and 4 special needs schools took part in the survey, totalling 2,592 children, 962 of whom were from 14 Renfrewshire schools. (12 secondary and 2 special needs schools).

The Lifestyle Survey covered health and wellbeing, smoking, alcohol, drugs, dental health, food and eating, young carers, exercise and leisure and sexual health. Of those who completed the survey, 6% said that they would like more information on sexual health and 5% that they would like better facilities or more affordable things to do for teenagers. 2% raised issues in their lives with which they need help and support, such as bullying, depression, bereavement and pregnancy.

#### Sexual health

The Sexual Health Baseline Study for Argyll & Clyde reported in May 2004, concentrating on young people aged 12-25 years old, based on 400 in-home interviews. In general awareness, understanding and attitudes varied according to age and gender, with females demonstrating better awareness and understanding, however this is lessened in the 12-15 year age group.

#### Young people and housing

The young persons' housing forum is a registered tenant organisation for 16-25 year olds which is consulted on proposals relating to housing management, standards of service and tenant participation. In addition, young people's views have been used to inform the Renfrewshire housing quality standard, a young persons information pack and the homelessness strategy. In 2005, the young persons' housing forum will be involved in producing a youth housing strategy for Renfrewshire.

#### Scottish Women's Aid

We have drawn upon research carried out by Scottish Women's Aid during the compilation of this plan. We have tried to incorporate many of the issues raised by the Listen Louder Service document.

