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Overseen but often overlooked: Children and Young People 'Looked After at Home' in Scotland

Annex 3a: The Service Studies to accompany Report 3: Service provision

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Introduction

This document is an annex to the *Overseen but often Overlooked* report series which looks at the needs of children and young people looked after or previously looked after at home and service provision for this group of children and young people:

- Report 1 covers findings of a review of literature. This report also provides some general background to the study and a description of the methods used in the literature review.
- Report 2 covers new findings about the needs of children and describes the study approach and methods used in the primary research.
- Report 3 covers new findings about the provision and services for these children and young people. Annex 3a (this document) is a supplement to Report 3 and comprises a compilation of five service 'case' studies.

In order to get a better understanding of the contexts in which services are provided to children currently or previously on home supervision and to explore the diversity and nature of that provision, we asked five providers who had responded to other elements of the study to work with a researcher to develop a snapshot of their service.

The service case studies reported here are illustrative rather than representative; they were selected to provide diverse examples of provision. They highlight different approaches to meeting the different needs of children and young people who are currently or previously looked after at home.

We are very grateful for their time and assistance in this endeavour. All services were happy to be named in these studies; the following providers took part:

- Barnardo's 16+ At Home Project, Edinburgh
- Falkirk Council's Services for Children and Young People Looked After at Home Service
- Includem's Intensive Support Service for Vulnerable Young People in Scotland
- 6VT Youth Café, Voluntary Sector, Edinburgh
- East Renfrewshire Council's Looked After At Home Children and Young Persons Health Care Service

For each service, a succinct case study was produced; these are presented below. Each service study includes information about the service background, origin, referral process, user demographics and characteristics, and approaches, as well as additional information about how services have developed in order to meet the needs of children and young people looked after at home or previously at home.

The service studies vary: some outline greater levels of detail about the approaches used with children and young people whilst others focus on a detailed description of services provided. We were guided by the providers concerned, allowing them to identify what aspects of the service they felt would provide the most valuable lessons for others. There are also common threads; for example, it is evident that these providers recognised gaps in support for children and young people who are looked after at home and sought to address these.

It is clear across the service studies, as with the results of the survey, that services often have very different core aims in their work with children and young people. More generally in the study, we found that providers try to take a holistic approach ensuring their aims feed into the overall development and progress of children and young people, and often their families.

Themes in each service study strongly resonate with the wider findings reported in the three *Overseen but often Overlooked* reports. In this way, these studies provide a helpful context for understanding the various approaches taken by services. There were many other cross-cutting themes which applied to some or all of the service studies. Above all, the importance of developing real and lasting relationships was highlighted as an important feature of support to improve outcomes. If children and young people had positive relationships with one provider, this could sometimes help them to work with other providers. Furthermore, a strong relationship promoted children's engagement and encouraged full participation in the development of plans and goals that they wished to pursue. A (non-exhaustive) list of other themes emerging from service studies and aligned with wider findings included:

- Access and entitlement to services (universal)
- Importance of family unit and functioning
- The timing of support, intervening early in order to prevent problems from getting worse
- Continuity of support and relationships
- Flexibility of support and the importance of out-of-hours support during weekends and evenings
- Referral to services
- Holistic assessment e.g. including family members and communities in which they live (GIRFEC and SHANARRI)
- Mental health, difficulties addressing or accessing services
- Health needs
- Education and employment engagement (skills development, knowledge and young people's use of their time)
- Transitions
- Time keeping – in terms of attending appointments, meetings and interviews

- Differences in the needs of younger and older groups, or children facing various challenges
- Partnership working – often in terms of assessment and identification of additional types of support
- Leisure activities and opportunities
- Social networks
- Lack of knowledge and support to access benefits and services
- Tensions about social work involvement and whether support is directed towards the child / young person or parents
- Engagement and interaction with criminal justice agencies

Barnardo's 16+ At Home Project Edinburgh

Service history

Barnardo's initially ran a successful 16+ service in Edinburgh providing emotional and practical support to young people who were looked after away from home. Through this contact with throughcare services there was an increasing awareness of a deficit in provision for young people who had previously been looked after at home, who were entitled to a Throughcare and Aftercare (TCAC) service but who were seen as a relatively low priority for statutory service provision. In 2012 and 2013 successful bids were made to the STV Appeal for funding to develop and pilot a service supporting these young people in their transition to adulthood. This initial funding allowed a small project team to be put in place and development and testing of a service model. Beyond the end of the pilot period the project has continued to be financially supported (albeit at a slightly reduced level) by Barnardo's funding.

Three drivers prompted the decision to pilot a service:

- The known poor outcomes for care leavers who had been LAAH,
- The high proportion of care leavers who had been LAAH,
- The under-representation of these young people in statutory Throughcare and Aftercare services.

During the pilot stages the project has tested different delivery models, including locality-focused community-asset-based models and a wider service to young people across the city. The learning from this process suggested that the advantages of the locality-based model were exceeded by the city wide model which was able to respond to young people from different areas and to support their choices to access a wider range of opportunities than their immediate communities could provide. In addition, to successfully deliver a community asset approach may have required a higher level of staffing in order to interact with all the relevant community groups. The current model therefore works with young people from across the city.

To date, the project has worked with around 50 young people and continues to provide support to the majority of these. The size of the team has depended on funding available at any time, but typically incorporates a 0.5-1.0 full-time equivalent coordinator and 1.5 to 2 support workers.

Referral process

Young people who have been looked after at home and are seeking a TCAC service are initially assessed by Edinburgh City Council (ECC) social care team which holds responsibility to ensure

appropriate support is provided. Edinburgh City Council is well-placed to identify children and young people who are looked after at home and determine future needs. Edinburgh City Council may decide no service is required, may deliver a service directly, or may request that Barnardo's 16+ takes responsibility for providing a service and leading the coordination of the young person's Pathway Plan.

If the latter decision is made, a transition meeting occurs involving the young person, their social worker and a Barnardo's 16+ worker. This is to describe the project and the services that can be offered. If the young person wishes to engage with Barnardo's, they are assigned a key worker who is specifically experienced in working with young people looked after at home.

The referral process is designed to include young people looked after at home, who, despite an entitlement, are reported to be less likely to be offered a statutory TCAC service than their peers looked after away from home.

Description of current service

With young people's agreement, an assessment gathers further information about the young person's needs and aspirations. Generally this process will take place within the family home and in most cases will include family members. The assessment process is underpinned by GIRFEC principles and addresses different areas of each young person's life with the overall aim of promoting their wider wellbeing and developing their ability to understand and assert their rights.

Together the young person and key worker identify the personal outcomes towards which they would like to work and agree a programme of support. To date, the desired outcomes have varied from individual to individual but have typically included:

- improved family relationships and family communications;
- understanding rights and accessing benefits and entitlements;
- access to training and education;
- better access to health care and support services;
- improved access to leisure activities and opportunities;
- development of a positive social network.

A significant amount of support is also given to addressing emotional issues often resulting from earlier problems and trauma experienced by the young person; this may involve supporting the young person to access appropriate mental health services.

The project also offers a regular drop-in service, where young people are able to meet with and seek support from a worker without making an appointment, and access a range of different group activities offered by Barnardo's.

Each young person's individual pathway and progress is reviewed on a six-monthly basis. The project continuously adapts the support provided according to the young person's development, needs and wishes. It is reported that the projects' close relationship with the young people, families and professionals working with them is key to ensuring success. This approach ensures opportunities for all relevant people to input views as to what should be done to support each young person.

Unique aspects of the project

An important aspect of the service is that the key workers all have significant experience of working with young people who have been looked after at home. It is felt that these young people have not often experienced working with adults in a positive way. This is seen as a consequence of their previous looked after experience, where social care support has generally been focussed predominantly on addressing parents' issues rather than working directly with young people. This is unlike the experience of looked after children who have been accommodated, who in most cases will have had some experience of positive professionals or carers, and who are usually aware of how workers can help them with practical issues such as attaining their rights and entitlements.

It is suggested that workers with this group of young people need an appreciation of this difference and to understand that this does not make these young people intrinsically 'hard to reach'. They must have the skills to clearly explain their potential roles, overcome any initial suspicion or resistance and have the patience required to form a good working relationship with the young person. It is reported that by utilising workers with this knowledge and skill set, the 16+ project can shape the support offered to the young person and their family within a context of a positive working relationship.

Whilst the service is centred on the young person, it is inclusive of the family as a whole, such that parents may receive support and advice on benefits, parenting and other issues. This may be particularly helpful for unpicking benefits and other financial issues which may be contributing to tensions within the family. Project workers meet with families by agreement and will offer information and parenting advice. It is reported that parents appreciate this service, recognise the benefits for the young person and are often very willing to ask for help and advice. The ability to work with the family as well as the young person is seen as a key feature of the 16+ project which helps the young person to progress and succeed.

The inclusion of this service case study has been agreed by Barnardo's 16+ Looked After at Home Service. Further information about the service can be obtained from Grant Gilroy, Team Manager, Barnardos 16+ (Home), grant.gilroy@barnardos.org.uk, Tel. 0131 556 4583.

Falkirk Council's Services for Children and Young People Looked After at Home Service

Background

Around six years ago, in 2008, Falkirk Council developed an independent reviewing service for children and young people who were looked after at home. It had been noted that although area teams were asked to review cases of children and young people looked after at home (LAAH), high workloads meant these cases did not receive priority and were often not reviewed. There was concern that this provided a relatively low level of support, despite recognition that children and young people who were LAAH were sometimes at greater risk than children accommodated elsewhere. As a result, Falkirk Council identified a need for a Reviewing Officer specifically for children and young people who are looked after at home.

In total, the Reviewing Officer became responsible for four groups of children and young people¹:

- children and young people who are looked after at home (150 children),
- children and young people who receive respite through the Children with Disabilities Team (36 children),
- children and young people living at home (not on a compulsory supervision order) with respite arrangements in place (24 children),
- children and young people who are charged with violent or sexual offences (12 children).

It is reported that the majority of children and young people who were looked after at home tend to be upper primary school through to secondary school age and onwards (typically ages 10 to 15), and 11 ((7%) had a known disability. Often the order is put in place for non-attendance at school or being out of parental control and it is explained that, locally, police reports about drunkenness or reports of very poor school attendance are often drivers for becoming looked after at home.

¹ Figures for February 2014

Current review service

In 2009 the Reviewing Officer post was created to review cases for children and young people looked after at home; this was in addition to the two reviewing officers already in post. The Integrated Assessment Form for the initial review is usually completed within six weeks of a young person becoming looked after at home and subsequent reviews most often happen every six months.

Reviews are multi-agency, and although there is a recognition that involvement and collaboration could be improved further, parents, the child, health services, education, criminal justice (if they are involved), the children and families' social worker and voluntary agencies working with the child or family are invited to the review:

At that meeting we pull all the information together and look at why the young person has been placed on a compulsory supervision order, then make plans for the Form 4 ... after that review, everyone should work towards the plan (Participant).

Subsequent review meetings incorporate an update of progress and presentation and discussion of new plans.

Children and the review process

It is reported that securing children's effective participation can be a challenge, and doing so has become a key part of the Reviewing Officer's role. To support children to present their views at the review, the Reviewing Officer asks children to complete an online questionnaire, *Viewpoint*. The child then has the option as to whether this information is shared outside the social work team with others on the review panel.

The Reviewing Officer also offers to meet with children and young people 15 minutes prior to the review meeting to enable them to share further information at that time (as a few decide not to go to the full review meeting). On some occasions children, especially younger children, like to draw pictures which the social worker brings to the review. These can be very helpful to direct the discussion to issues the child has chosen.

It is reported to be important to involve children and young people in the process, particularly as they get older, as this ensures that they have contributed to the plan and helps to ensure they work towards it:

If they are a teenager it is really helpful to have them at their review or have their views represented as they really need to be part of their own plan (Participant).

Parents and the review process

Parents are offered a meeting with the social worker to discuss the report in advance of the review. Although parents tend to be more vocal in the reviews than children they are also offered 15 minutes with the Reviewing Officer before the review if they want to raise any issues. Parents also have the opportunity to submit a report using a basic template provided by social work to report how they think things have gone and what they want to happen for their child; however, it is suggested that parents very seldom provide written reports like this for reviews.

Services Provided

The health assessment is provided as soon as possible and usually this occurs before the initial review. Referrals are made to the Health Visitors or School Nurses to request a health assessment; where necessary (e.g. child not attending school) special arrangements are made to facilitate the assessment.

Plans for other services and support for the child are generally agreed at the review. Key features of these services provided include:

Family and Parenting Support: The Council has set up an intensive family support service which works with children most at risk, to prevent them becoming accommodated or to facilitate their return home. They also provide parenting support via the Mellow Parenting programme:

A lot of parents say within our review say 'I wish I'd done this years ago', it helps not only with the child I'm working with but maybe also with the younger ones. The young person might not see it as much, but the parents see it.... (Participant)

In addition the Council work with other agencies including Barnardo's Cluaran Project for children at risk of being accommodated who do not attend school, and the Caledonian Project for families experiencing domestic violence. It is reported that intensive support services were valued by young people and parents, making a big difference for some.

Families told staff that they 'don't know how it would have worked' if their child hadn't had support from the project.

Mental Health: It is reported that it can be difficult to secure access to the CAMHS service for children LAAH (and other looked after children). In response the Council has appointed a clinical psychologist to work within their intensive family support team. The council also works with Axis to provide support for young people with substance misuse problems.

Education: The Council works with schools and a range of organisations to support young people who are disengaged from education, including provision of work placements designed to help develop confidence and skills. Some schools are successfully able to provide support packages for these young people. Similarly the Barnardo's Cluaran Project has been able to provide support to some young people who are disengaged. In some cases the provision of transport can be instrumental in promoting school attendance; this has been achieved in various ways including provision of bus passes or in the shorter term through voluntary agency provision. On some occasions professionals working with the family have taken children to school; this has included social workers and community police officers.

Examples of Children and Young People's Progress and Successes

It is felt that the various forms of support offered have resulted in many examples of good outcomes which have included young people who:

- gained full-time employment or training placements,
- sustained a re-engagement with training and education,
- improved attendance and timekeeping at school,
- attended health appointments or updated immunisations,
- continued to do well when they returned home after being accommodated,
- were less likely to be considered a 'vulnerable person' by police,
- developed better relationships with the people working with them in social work, education and other agencies.

Future developments

Within the council, compulsory supervision orders for those looked after at home are typically removed at age 16 or 17, but it is reported that young people are still very vulnerable, particularly if young people become homeless because parents cannot cope when a support package is removed. It is suggested that support should be maintained for a longer period of time to ensure that the young person can remain at home. A further development being considered is provision of some form of ongoing support for young people's transitions to adult services, particularly around criminal justice where the consequences of missing appointments can lead to further involvement with the Courts.

The inclusion of this service case study has been agreed by Falkirk Council. Further information about the service can be obtained from Sarah Bayes, Looked After at Home Review Co-ordinator, by email sarah.bayes@falkirk.gov.uk or phone 01324 506400

Includem's Intensive Support Service for Vulnerable Young People in Scotland

Service history

Includem was established in 2000 as a charity with the key objective of delivering intensive support services to the most vulnerable children and young people across Scotland. Primarily, their services support young people aged 12-18, although Includem is registered with the SSSC to work with young people from the age of five who are subject to formal measures of care, looked after at home or in other community placements including kinship and foster care. Includem have developed a range of intensive support services within communities which they delivered to around 560 young people between 2012 and 2013. Around 140 of these were young people looked after at home. Presently Includem are providing services across Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, Fife, Dundee, Stirling and Clackmannanshire.

Includem works with a broad and diverse range of young people who typically face significant challenges in their lives and present with destructive behaviours that in many cases have left them on the outskirts of society. The service has worked with young people who are involved in the criminal justice system and experiencing troubled transitions to adulthood and include vulnerable young women, young people with sexually harmful behaviour, young people living in vulnerable families, those who are transitioning from residential or secure care settings back into the community and young people at highest risk requiring a 24/7 service.

Across their work, Includem identify a number of important features which they suggest contribute to success. These include persistence and determination, one-to-one relationships based on respect, honesty and care, help and support at times of need, focused supervision and support, crisis management, rigorous and positive responses to non-compliance, working in partnership with parents / carers, an active brokerage role, rigorous risk management and monitoring and evaluating outcomes. Includem's 'A Better Life' programme is a key feature of this work and aims to reduce young people's risk-taking and offending behaviours. It has been designed to be delivered in conjunction with these core service elements.

Includem's approach is additionally reported to be highly flexible, aiming to evolve continuously in response to emerging good practice, research, guidance, internal service reviews and the needs of the service commissioners.

Referral process

Includem is commissioned by local authorities to provide a tailored service to achieve specific outcomes identified by the authority. In commissioning the service, the referring agency has identified the need for intensive and holistic support for the young person. Includem produces an intervention plan based on the referring agency's assessment which they then use in conjunction with the 'A Better Life' Programme to shape the intervention with the young person in line with GIRFEC and the SHANARRI indicators of wellbeing.

The local authority remains actively involved in constructing the support required as well as participating in formal reviews. By working in partnership with the local authority and various agencies, support is designed around the needs of the individual young person.

Description of Current Service

The underpinning service values and ethos are holistic; the young person is seen in the context of their whole lives and all their social relationships (families, friends, and community). The programme of work undertaken with the young person strives to stabilise family and community placements, and smooth the necessary transitions between family, community and residential placements and beyond into adulthood. It is reported that this improves outcomes for the young people. A key aim of the service is to help mend and strengthen positive caring relationships within families and communities.

Typically each young person is assigned a project worker who will work with the young person on a one-to-one basis and bring in others as required. The approach is said to be characterised by the following:

- Significant effort and persistence is put into engaging young people and their families and building trusting, caring and respectful relationships.
- Tailored and responsive intensive support is provided: on average three planned contacts per week, at times of need.
- Access to a 24/7 helpline with crisis call-out service. Use of a specially designed cognitive-based toolkit 'A Better Life', with themed modules to address underlying issues and drive behaviour change.
- Work with families to (re)build better relationships with their children / young people.
- Support planning and goal-setting driven by the young people and families.
- Brokerage and support to access and maintain engagement with other services (e.g. housing,

education, health, addiction services, training/employment).

The service is delivered through five key stages:

- Assessment and Engagement
- Setting Goals and Action Planning
- Structured Programme Modules (A Better Life)
- Structured Coaching Conversations
- Review and Disengagement

The 'A Better Life' programme consists of an initial introductory module and up to ten flexible themed modules. These can be used as standalone modules or combined in order to offer a tailored programme to the young person. All young people work through the initial module 'This is my life'. This focuses on building a relationship with the young person as well as establishing the challenges the young person is facing, the goals they want to pursue and the nature of support they will need to achieve this. The themed modules include:

- Understanding How Others Feel
- Managing My Emotions
- People In My Life
- Beating Boredom
- Health and Wellbeing
- Independent Living
- Offending and Risk - Taking Behaviours
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Education, Training and Employment
- Working with Families

The individual pathway of each young person is unique, taking into consideration the young person's history and previous experiences. In addition, sexually harmful behaviour can be addressed by specially trained staff.

The final stage of Includem's programme involves creating a planned exit. The exit plan is prepared with the young person with a focus on helping them sustain their progress. Includem aim to reduce a young person's dependence on formal interventions and to support the young person to achieve their own goals and better cope with the challenges they face with the support of family, friends and their community.

The key element is the desire to provide support to the young person that allows them to remain within their family and community and, as part of this, Includem will work with other agencies. In order to facilitate this multi-agency, community and family-centred approach, Includem's services are aligned with the Scottish Government's GIRFEC principles. This is reported to provide a useful common language and approach and provides a framework within which outcomes can be set and progress measured.

One of the core elements of Includem's programme is the evaluation of outcomes; this is done using an approach which enables local authorities to set and monitor young people's outcomes and facilitates a consistent approach with their own service provision. This approach also supports local authorities to align their outcome priorities with broader national priorities and GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.

The inclusion of this service case study has been agreed by Includem. Further information about the service can be obtained from David Ferrier, Partnership Development Manager.
david.ferrier@includem.co.uk. 0141 427 0523

6VT Youth Café, Voluntary Sector, Edinburgh

Service Background

Established 20 years ago, 6VT have been providing a range of services to vulnerable children and young people, particularly those deemed vulnerable and 'at risk'. The service reports that it has worked with a footfall of 160,000 young people over the past 19 years. The majority of 6VT services, including the café drop-in, are available to all children and young people aged 11 and older (regardless of family background or social work involvement). In 2008 Edinburgh City Council formally commissioned 6VT to provide partnership services originally focused on supporting young people who were at risk of secure care, with the aim of preventing these young people from entering secure care settings. This service was known as ISMS, Intensive Support & Monitoring Service. Approximately two years later, the Scottish Government changed the funding stream and service provision was broadened to include any young person who was at risk of being accommodated or going further through the care system, and renamed Integrated Community Support Service (ICSS).

The most recent service development occurred in October 2013, when Edinburgh City Council's Youth Offending Service merged with ICSS and became the Young People's Service. 6VT jointly provide support to young people who have been involved in offending, mainly those on Movement Restriction Conditions. This is a partnership with Edinburgh City Council and Action for Children.

Service provision further diversified to include support for foster and kinship carers when Edinburgh City Council identified that difficulties faced by foster carers looking after teenage children was often a precursor to children becoming accommodated or going into secure care. Similarly, the Youth Café provides support to foster carers, offering temporary community-based supports to young people, to help relieve pressure and avoid emergency placements until an appropriate, long-term match is found.

The Café currently operates from a city centre location in Edinburgh and is open during evenings and weekends 52 weeks of the year. The Café's drop-in primarily provides a safe diversionary universal service for young people, whilst other services provided by 6VT offer targeted support to suit a wide range of needs:

- Key Steps: Housing and tenancy training
- Terrace Tots: support for young mums
- Family Café: opportunities for vulnerable families to come together to engage in activities.

- Evening and weekend support, mainly at the café, for young people who have been referred to the service
- Activity Agreement Hub: Employability supports.

Referral Process

Young people do not have to be referred to 6VT to take advantage of services. The Youth Café, however, typically provides more intensive services to young people who are formally referred, because of a perceived higher level of need and risk. The majority of young people referred to 6VT, approximately 80%, are referred because they are putting themselves at risk or because of welfare concerns. The remaining 20% of referrals are linked to young people's offending behaviour and are made through the Young People's Service:

- 1. Children's Hearing System.** Young people who are at risk of being secured are referred to 6VT through the Children's Panel.
- 2. Over 12s Panel.** This resource panel sits within Edinburgh City Council and is used to identify appropriate services and support for children and young people who are at risk of being accommodated. 6VT is one of a number of service options that are considered for young people in this position.
- 3. Young People's Service.** Referrals from Edinburgh City Council's Young People's Service are made to support young people who have been involved in offending. Young people referred through this pathway will be jointly supported by the Young People's Service and 6VT.

Referrals through the Children's Hearing System and Over 12s Resource Panel are made on a voluntary basis. The Café is presented to young people as an opportunity for support, and the young person can choose whether or not to engage. Referrals made through the Young People's Service for young people on a Movement Restriction Condition are on a compulsory basis.

In addition, social workers, health visitors and other professionals can make direct, informal referrals to 6VT, for example, to encourage young people to use the Café drop-in or Terrace Tots services. These young people, however, would not typically receive an intensive support package.

Of the 400 young people who use this service annually, around 40% (160) are or have been looked after at home.

Description of Current Services

Young people can make use of a broad range of support activities offered by 6VT to suit their needs. Most services are available to all young people as a form of universal service, although Evening and Weekend Support is only available to those who have been formally referred.

Evening and Weekend Support

This strand of 6VT provides intensive community-based evening and weekend care to young people. Young people can attend the youth café from 4pm every day to take part in personal development work, group work, individual work and family support work, to receive compensatory care and to attend the young people's meetings. For a smaller number of young people, evening and weekend support is risk management and supervision only, for example, checking young people are in their homes at the right time and that they are safe. Young people referred to the service receive 'as much or as little support as is required'.

Support can also be provided to families, for example, to provide support in getting children up in time for school or to help parents set boundaries for challenging behaviour.

6VT Drop-in

The 6VT drop-in is open to young people aged 14 – 21 years, as a form of universal youth provision. Each month there is a programme of social, educational and personal development activities in which young people can participate if they wish. They can access free internet and can buy (or exchange food vouchers for) inexpensive hot food, snacks and drinks. Young people who attend as part of their care plan are integrated into this service.

Activity Agreement Hub

The Activity Agreement Hub links into the drop-in service when young people are a little bit older, aged 16 plus. The Hub provides support to young people who are not quite ready for employment or education; it aims to provide challenging activities which are tailored to young people's ability. There is a minimum requirement of four hours per week for a young person to participate in the programme. For some young people an agreement may involve turning up at the Youth Café, joining in with group work and searching for jobs or training opportunities. Other young people might do two days of voluntary work in a charity shop each week or attend a training course. Young people who are on an activity agreement receive a maintenance allowance from the council, although gaining access to the maintenance allowance can be difficult for children who are looked after at home if parents are not willing to provide evidence about their level of income.

Key Steps

Key Steps provides independent living skills training and housing support for young people who are moving into independent accommodation. A key aim of this service is the prevention of homelessness for young people.

A related service offers support for young people who present as homeless to the local authority, to help negotiate a return home for the young person. 6VT reported that they will provide emergency food, if required and, on occasion, put young people on the Key Steps course to help them understand the realities and the practicalities of independent living, to prevent young people leaving home.

Terrace Tots

Terrace Tots was introduced when young parents who had previously been referred to the youth café suggested that they would benefit from a bespoke parent and toddlers group which offered some support for parenting. This service was reported to be a positive user-led form of support.

Family Café

The Family Café is designed to provide a supportive environment for families to get together, allowing parents to take part in activities with their children. Families can attend the café even if they are receiving support from other parenting or family support organisations. Often 6VT have found that involvement in the Family Café is a stepping stone for parents to seek formal supports, most commonly relating to finance and budgets or housing support.

Young People Referred through the Young People's Service

The Young People's Service is a statutory service for young offenders provided by Edinburgh City Council. 6VT has been commissioned by the Young People's Service to provide a joint support package for young people involved in offending and/or deemed at risk of being accommodated. Young people referred through this programme have exclusive statutory workers and access to services that the other young people attending 6VT will not have. 6VT are involved in formal social work activities such as attendance at meetings, reviews and hearings.

Service Impact and Successes

It was reported that offering universal services to young people increased the positive experience of the Youth Café for young people who are referred. Young people tend to think 'I'm here because it's a good place to be', rather than viewing the café as a social work intervention which is

only for 'social work kids'. Young people who have been referred often continue to use the service after it is no longer recommended for them through a formal referral pathway:

Many young people we worked with who didn't want to work with us initially still make use of the drop-in service, and they can do that up to age 21 on their own terms. It's been well used by that group of young people (Participant).

A key success of the youth café is the very high and increasing levels of engagement of young people who have been referred, and their families or carers. This has led to a very strong record of keeping young people at home and preventing them moving through the care system.

The inclusion of this service case study has been agreed by 6VT Youth Cafe. Further information about the service can be obtained from Dot Horne, Executive Director, contact@6vt.info or 0131 220 2108

6VT will be moving over the next year. Please check their website in case of new contact details: <http://www.6vt.info/>

East Renfrewshire Council's Looked After At Home Children and Young Persons Health Care Provision

Service Background

East Renfrewshire Council offers a statutory service for children and young people who have been placed on a Compulsory Supervision Order by the children's hearing system. Alongside this, the local authority have developed a specific 'looked after at home' policy to help guide service provision for this group of children and young people.

Health Component

One health-related component for LAAH young people is a health assessment service through a looked after at home nurse team; this service, introduced in 2010, is a more recent addition to the statutory service for LAAH children and young people. It was introduced both as a response to the introduction of GIRFEC and the SHANARRI framework and as an acknowledgement of the significant needs of LAAH young people in this area.

Referrals are made to the LAC nurse through social work, allowing for the health needs of LAAH young people to be assessed at the outset of the Order so that suitable arrangements can be put in place. More recently the LAC nurses have been co-located in social work offices in order to facilitate communication between professionals. This shift has allowed a greater number of looked after young people to be referred to the LAC nurse. In particular it was felt that co-location has allowed looked after at home children and young people to access health and wellbeing services at a far earlier stage and in a way that addresses the needs of the young person and family.

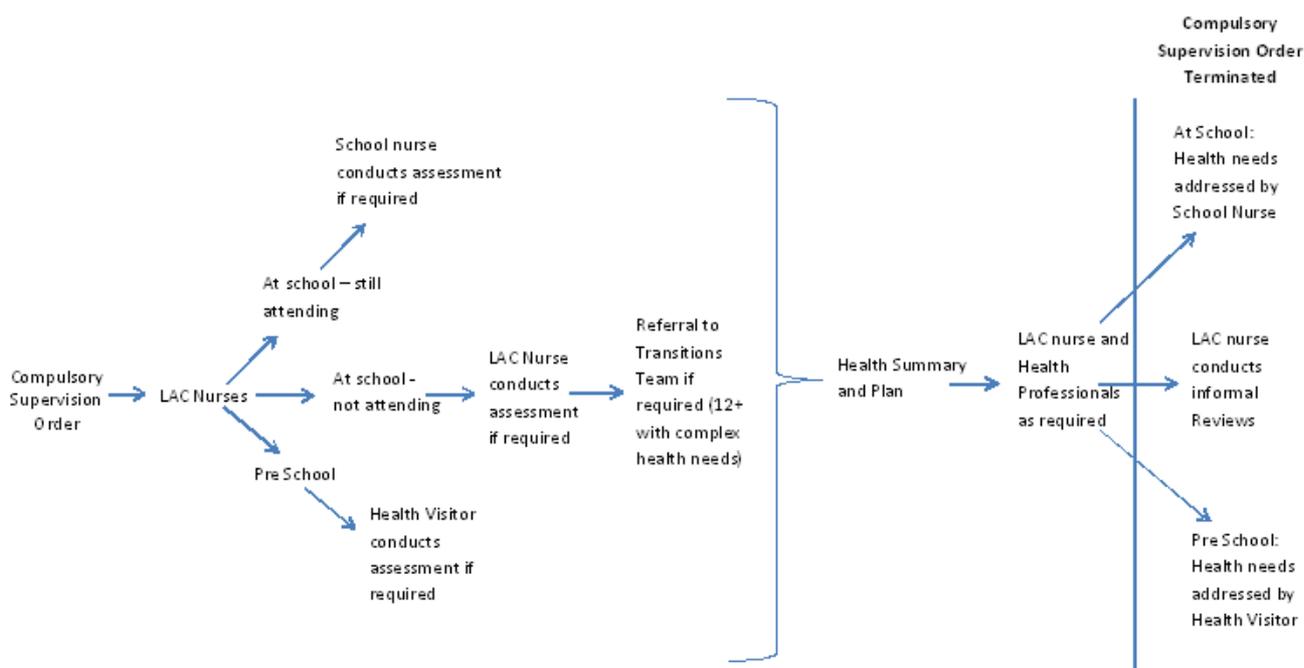
The local authority LAAH policy stipulates an aim that the health assessment should be completed within six weeks of the young person being placed on an Order (unless there is another up-to-date health review available). The health assessment offered is holistic, attending to height, weight, immunisations, mental health, social needs, eye tests, dental health and any specialist health needs.

Where a young person is placed on a Compulsory Supervision Order and is still attending school, their health needs are assessed and managed by the school nurse. Similarly, children under the age of five are assessed by the health visitor. This allows the LAC nurse to focus on young people who are less likely to be attending school. Where the child is aged over 12 and has complex support needs, the transitions team are also involved in the assessment process.

Following the health assessment, a health summary and action plan are produced. With the consent of the parent (or where possible, the young person) these are distributed to relevant health professionals. The health summary and action plan identifies professionals to support the young person in addressing the objectives resulting from the health assessment. Following this, there is an informal review of the objectives in order to assess the progress and identify any further needs. This will usually be undertaken by the professional carrying out the initial assessment and any further reviews will be at their discretion.

On a monthly basis, the LAC nurse is provided with a list of all the young people within the local authority who are on a Compulsory Supervision Order at that time to ensure that where needed, LAAH young people receive an up-to-date health assessment. When the Order is removed the LAC nurse transfers the case over to the school nurse or Health Visitor as appropriate.

The process is summarised in the flow diagram below:



Partnership working and service provision

Key to the provision of health services for looked after at home young people within East Renfrewshire are the links that have been established between the authority, the LAC nurse team and other health providers within the community.

One example includes strong links developed with the CAMHS service, which recently relocated to a local health centre. This partnership came about as a result of recognition of a gap within the

service provision for looked after young people within the authority and has resulted in new opportunities for collaboration. As part of this partnership work with CAMHS, the social work department are in the process of developing secondment opportunities for the social work team with the aim of forming better links with mental health services within the authority as well as developing joint working. Looking to the future, it is hoped that greater links with CAMHS will make the referral process to mental health services much more efficient and allow for their service to be accessed far earlier by children and young people who have been placed on an order. The links with CAMHS will allow the referral of LAAH to an anxiety group.

Another example is a dental referral pathway which was developed by the LAC nurse team working with LAAH young people.

The authority has also created an 'access card' that entitles all LAC children and young people within the authority to access sports facilities and other opportunities within the authority. LAAH young people get an access card when they are placed on an Order and the social work team works to encourage the young person to engage with the services and activities offered with the aim of boosting the young person's self-esteem and awareness of the benefits of health and fitness. The social work department's Young Person's Team work alongside any young people who are having difficulties engaging in the opportunities within the community and are able to assist the young person by taking them to an activity for the first few times and working on a one-to-one basis with the young person until their confidence is raised.

This integrated approach to health service provision for LAAH children and young people is strengthened through LAC nurses' capacity to support social work colleagues in identifying and addressing the health needs of LAAH children and young people at the earliest opportunity when the young person is placed on an Order. This allows earlier access to services for LAAH young people and is similar to the service provision available to their peers in other placement types. Further to this, the close links that have been established with other local professionals has provided an environment that facilitates knowledge exchange and the provision of practice-based examples for staff to consider.

Looking to the future

There have also been recent investments made in training, including training around 15 members of social work staff on the Triple P parenting programme. The programme links in with the holistic approach to service provision that East Renfrewshire Council are adopting for LAAH children and young people by addressing wider issues of health and wellbeing. The objective is to provide ongoing parenting classes that parents can opt into or be referred to. This is a project that the

authority hopes to develop and to see being valuable to the parents of LAAH children and young people.

East Renfrewshire Council indicated that ongoing progress towards being more outcomes-focused in line with GIRFEC is being made and further work is under way to deliver this. As part of this outcomes approach, it is hoped that by adopting an integrated health focus from the outset, a collaborative approach to supporting the young person and their families will develop, involving social work, health and external services.

The inclusion of this service case study has been agreed by East Renfrewshire. Further information about the service can be obtained from Ronnie Kirk, Service Manager, Children and Families, Barrhead Council Offices.

About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.

For more information

Visit: www.celcis.org
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