

## The Highland Council

### Education, Children and Adult Services Committee 11 February 2015

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	ECAS 28/15

#### Family Support Work Review

#### Report by Director of Care and Learning

##### Summary

This report updates members about the review of support work within care and protection, children's disability and early years' services. It seeks agreement to the reallocation of these budgets as part of the proposed model.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The opportunity to review family support across the spectrum of need arose during the formation of the Family Teams. It was originally envisaged that the support work review and recommendations for restructure would be brought to committee as part of the recommendations for the formation of Family Teams. This did not prove possible due to the complexity and breadth of this further reorganisation.
- 1.2 The family support that has been considered within this review is:
  - the support provided to individuals and communities by third sector child agencies,
  - support work within care and protection, and
  - support work within children's disability services.
- 1.3 Support provided by the third sector is part of the community capacity building provision and is based around befriending, some home visiting and some group work. This support is usually accessed by self-referral, although universal services often signpost families to these resources. At present, this service is not available in every District.
- 1.4 Support work within care and protection has a broader role, and in the past this has been organised and delivered in different ways in each District. The main tasks allocated to these staff have been transporting children to placements and contact and assisting with supervised contact between parents, children and siblings. There are also some practical tasks such as help with attendance at appointments.
- 1.5 Support work within children's disability services is provided in response to needs identified in the child's plan and is therefore a targeted service. The support workers provide practical assistance and respite for families accessing this service.
- 1.6 It is also necessary to consider the need for some aspects of this support to be provided through Self Directed Support Packages (SDS).

## **2. Purpose and Process of the Review.**

- 2.1 The purpose of the review was to achieve consistency across the services and Districts in these various areas of provision.
- 2.2 It has also been recognised for some time that the use of zero hours contracts for support workers in care and protection, has caused great difficulties in recruitment and retention, as well as being unsatisfactory for the staff members concerned. Consideration has also been given to the impact of these contracts for children and their families; as it has proved difficult for the service to provide continuity of care due to staff turnover.
- 2.3 The review has looked at the means of providing support work in a more child and family centred way, with consistency provided through a contracted staff group who the Council could train and retain. This would mean a much more reliable and satisfied staff group, who it is envisaged would consequently provide a much improved service. It would also increase the effectiveness of the service.
- 2.4 Children's disability services have worked with contracted support workers, and the review was able to consider how this has worked in comparison to the use of zero hours contracts, and to also consider the impact of Self Directed Support on future service provision.
- 2.5 The review was initiated with an analysis of existing services by a seconded management trainee. This was subject to consideration by Service Managers, the various organisations involved in these services, and other stakeholders – including at the relevant Improvement Groups. Updates were reported to members as part of the development of the Family Teams.
- 2.6 The funding available for the review is:
- £852,781 - Council funded support workers
  - £417,028 - Commissioned community capacity building services
  - £533,642 - Other commissioned early years services
- 2.7 Further to the Council budget agreed in February 2014, the available funding amount was reduced by £0.2m for efficiency savings. It was envisaged that increased performance could be achieved from a better organisation of the service, and through ending the practice of zero hours contracts. The improved organisation has now been achieved through the deployment of dedicated posts to organise provision within the Family Teams.
- 2.8 The initial analysis indicated that the previously commissioned services did not fulfil the necessary requirements or achieve best value, and committee agreed to decommission these services at an early stage in the process.
- 2.9 The budget for contracted support workers within the children's disability services is not included within these figures, as there is no planned change to the current funding level, and there are associated proposals to this meeting of the Committee (see the report on Self Directed Support).

## **3. Outcome of the Review**

- 3.1 Officers have given consideration to the level of support work that is required in the different areas of service. The analysis of need and case histories, has

indicated the highest need for the Support Worker role for children with disabilities. Accordingly, a formula of 1.0 fte Support Worker per practitioner (social worker and family keyworker) is proposed for disability services, and around 50% of this level within care and protection services - where there are more practitioners, meaning a higher total budget.

3.2 Given the envisaged increase in demand for self directed support, it is further proposed that the formula for disability services should not be used to put more posts into the teams, but should be utilised to provide a budget for self-directed support packages.

3.3 It is also proposed that the budget for community capacity building will increase from £417,028 to £523,947 and that a separate piece of work should be completed to consider the delivery a community capacity building service across Highland, with a further report to committee.

3.4 Accordingly, it is proposed that the current allocation of £1.8m is reallocated as below.

<b>Care and Protection and Family Support</b>	<b>Disability Services/SDS</b>	<b>Community Capacity Building</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>£644,281</b>	<b>£435,223</b>	<b>£523,947</b>	<b>£1,603,451</b> (achieves savings)

3.5 Using the formula described, each Area will consequently receive a budget for self directed support as follows;

- West - £42,977
- North - £69,804
- Mid - £70,115
- South - £98,497.

3.6 This totals £281,393, and additional funding for care packages to the value of £153,830, giving a total of £435,223.

3.7 In Care and Protection provision, the allocation of funding will provide a mixture of new full time and part time support worker posts as follows;

- West – 4.1 fte
- North – 4.3fte
- Mid – 6.3 fte
- South –12.5 fte.

3.8 Each area has a number of staff members carrying out the role of support worker on Zero Hour contracts. The numbers of staff are as follows;

- West - 3 members of staff
- North - 3 members of staff
- Mid – 8 members of staff
- South -13 members of staff.

3.9 Each Area will work with H.R Business partners to establish how many staff in each area would wish to be matched into new contracts with set hours. As all Areas are experiencing a shortage of Support Workers at present, it is envisaged that after the matching process, there will be vacancies to be advertised.

#### **4 Implications**

4.1 **Resources:** these proposals are funded from the redesign of existing services.

4.2 **Equalities:** these proposals represent a more equitable use of resources, and will also address a significant equalities issue for staff.

4.3 There are no **risk, Gaelic, rural, legal or climate change/carbon clever** implications arising from this report.

#### **5. Recommendation**

5.1 Members are asked to agree the allocation of support work funding and posts as set out in this report, and the re-allocation of funds for self-directed support. Members are further asked to agree the funding allocation for community capacity building should be subject of a future report.

Designation: Director of Care & Learning

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