

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
27 August 2015

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	ECAS 57/15

Update on Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse Group (CAPSM)

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report informs Committee of the progress of work being led by the Children Affected by Substance Misuse Sub-group.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children Affected by Substance Misuse Group was set up in 2012, as a Sub-group of the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy Group and Child Protection Committees. This was in order to comment on and develop training around implementation of the national 'Getting Our Priorities Right' guidance, which sets out the challenge of adult problematic alcohol or drug use.
- 1.2 Work around Children Affected by Substance Misuse is generally referred to as CAPSM, and the Sub-group considers good practice and further work that needs to be developed, and it contributes to an improvement plan around service provision for children affected by parental substance misuse.

2. Getting Our Priorities Right Protocol

- 2.1 A local practitioner's guide to Getting our Priorities Right – Highland Protocol has been endorsed by the Child Protection Committee, and has also been agreed by Adult Services. The protocol is kept under review and is now online on the *For Highland's Children* and NHS Highland websites. The guidance has also been sent to all substance misuse adult services staff. It is available at: http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/2-childprotection/publications_97_782523064.docx
- 2.2 A half day training programme is to be rolled out across Highland to promote the protocol. This is an addition to the current two day course which is jointly delivered with Adult Services. Discussions are taking place with Adult Services to establish if the half day course can also be co-delivered.
- 2.3 The Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership hosted a stakeholder event on 30th June 2015. The CAPSM Sub-group contributed by providing a workshop which raised the profile of the Getting Our Priorities Right protocol, placing an emphasis on a 'whole family approach' to recovery.
- 2.4 The Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership has agreed to fund training for practitioners working with younger children who may be affected by parental substance misuse. These are half day sessions delivered by Alcohol Focus Scotland, and they will support early identification and intervention with younger children. The training will take place on the 15th and 16th September 2015.
- 2.5 The training provides two resource packs which can be used by practitioners

working with pre-school children such as nursery staff and primary aged children such as Children Services Workers. The half day sessions are for up to 20 staff, and staff evaluation of the training is very positive.

3. Catalyst Project - Update

- 3.1 This collaboration is led by Action for Children, and involves an 18 month consultation process, which will explore the types of interventions and services that would best support the needs of children and families affected by substance misuse. Funding of £53,000 has been secured from Lloyds TSB, and the Alness area has been selected for the project, due to services reporting a high prevalence of parental addiction.
- 3.2 The project will use an asset based approach to consult and engage with the local community. The emphasis will be on seeking the views of children using innovative and creative approaches such as art, drama and group work. The project aims to use young peoples' views to shape future service delivery and will use the Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement methodology to test ideas. A presentation of the initiative was given to the East Ross District Partnership on 5th June 2015
- 3.4 The Youth Action Service is providing a staff secondment for the 18 month period. Links have also been made with the Family Firm initiative (employability of looked after children), with a view to young people becoming involved and gaining work experience.
- 3.5 The aim of this project is to
- Increase awareness of the views from children and young people;
 - Increase understanding of support needs for children and young people;
 - Enhance practitioner skills to deliver supportive models based on evidence of need;
 - Increase in strategic planning and policy developments in this area;
 - Contribute to the improved long term wellbeing of children and young people.

4. Rock Challenge Event

- 4.1 The 2015 Rock Challenge Event took place in Eden Court in March, and is generally regarded as being a great success. Bridgend Primary came first in the primary schools competition, and Alness Academy came first in the secondary schools competition. Dingwall Academy joined Alness in the national final in Dundee.
- 4.2 Several hundred young people participated, and each one was asked to complete a questionnaire - and 374 were returned. 100% of the young people who responded rated the initiative as excellent, and:
- **86%** said that they spent 3 or more months rehearsing with **82%** spending 3 or more hours per week on their production outside of curriculum time.
 - **4%** reported that they smoked before becoming involved in the Rock Challenge. Of those, **66%** have stopped or reduced the amount they smoke since involvement in the initiative.
 - **7%** reported they drank alcohol before becoming involved in the event. Of those, **75%** have stopped or reduced their alcohol intake since becoming involved.

- **1%** of the respondents used illegal substances before involvement, **100%** of these students have now reduced or stopped their drug usage.
- **99%** felt their self-esteem had improved, with teamwork skills improving in **96%**.
- **8%** said they had played truant from school before. Of these **62%** have stopped due to their involvement in Rock Challenge.
- **97%** of respondents reported they enjoy school more since becoming involved.
- **98%** reported they have better relationships with their teachers.
- **95%** reported they have made new friends through the Rock Challenge.

5. **A.D.A.M Website**

5.1 Alcohol Focus Scotland has recently launched the A.D.A.M (another's drinking affects me) website. This is for children and young people aged 11-16 years who may be affected or are concerned by another person's drinking. The website has been developed in consultation with young people who have experienced harm as a result of someone else's drinking and offers an opportunity to explore if and how the young person is being affected. Details of the website are being sent to head teachers of secondary schools across Highland through the Quality Improvement Officers.

6. **Overdoses**

6.1 Regular lists of people who have experienced near-fatal overdoses are issued by the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership to CAPSM Sub-group members. In Children's Services, the names are checked to ascertain whether there are children living in the households who may require support. Guidance on how to support staff working with children who have suffered the loss of a parent or carer has also been provided to Children's Services Managers.

7. **Implications**

7.1 There are no **Resource** implications to the Council at present. There are no **Legal, Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Risk, Gaelic or Rural** implications arising from this report.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1 Committee is asked to note and comment on the progress of work with children affected by parental substance misuse.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 29 July 2015

Author: Debbie Milton, Area Children's Services Manager