

Newsletter

November 2006

HELLO FROM FALKIRK'S CHILDREN'S COMMISSION

Welcome to the first edition of the "for falkirk's bairns" newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep staff and partners up to date with what is happening and what will happen, and as you will read a lot has happened, hence the delay!!!

Introduction by Janet Birks

OUR VISION

"We want every child and young person to have an enjoyable, fulfilling life in a nurturing, healthy and safe environment. We will encourage children and young people to work to their potential and make a positive contribution to society."

The last 7 months have been very exciting, challenging and busy for Falkirk's Children's Commission as we work towards improving outcomes for all children and young people in the Falkirk Council area.

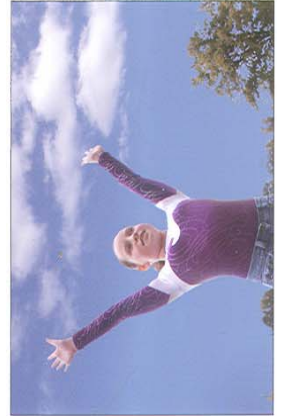
To achieve our vision partner agencies are committed to responding imaginatively and flexibly in delivering services. In June 2006 we embarked on our "matching needs and services" exercise. You will find some more detail on this within this newsletter. The aims of this process are to identify what we do well, what we could improve and most importantly to work towards

delivering services for children and young people where they want them and when they need them. Within this process we will be clear about the services that all children and young people are entitled to in the Falkirk area.

The process has provided us with a wealth of information about all our services to children and young people from Housing and Social Work, Education, Community Services, Health, Police and the Voluntary Sector.

I am excited now by the opportunity ahead to reshape the services we deliver to children and young people and commitment shown by all partner agencies to take this forward.

These are positive times, not only for staff but for all children and young people in our area.



What's Happened so Far?

Information Events

These events were held during May and June 2006 in Callender House. Seventeen sessions were held and over 300 members of staff attended from a variety of services and agencies. Each session started with a presentation delivered by a member of the Children's Commission Project Board. There then followed three workshops, around entitlement to services, tiered services and outcomes. The feedback from the events was very positive and staff welcomed the opportunity to discuss with colleagues the integrated agenda and improved outcomes for children and young people in the Falkirk Council area.

Matching Needs and Services Exercise

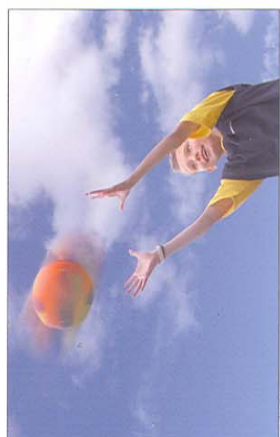
The matching needs and services exercise is based on the Dartington model of research. The process commenced in June 2006 and involved Falkirk Council's Housing and Social Work, Education, and Community Services, Forth Valley Health Board, and Central Scotland Police.

Each service identified vulnerable children or young people and selected sample files to be used in the process. A total of 306 files were used and each agency identified its own core group of staff to complete information required for the process.

Three consumer groups were identified comprising of a parents group, a young person's group and representatives from the Voluntary Sector's Children's Forum.

A multi-agency audit group was formed to audit the files looking at desired outcomes for the child or young person at the time of referral, and whether services delivered achieved such outcomes. The three consumer groups also 'checked' anonymised work.

The process was completed in August 2006 and the information gathered was aggregated for analysis by Forth Valley Geographical Information Services. The aggregation of data was a lengthy process and one that had not been highlighted by Dartington. The information was passed to Forth Valley GIS at the beginning of October for analysis.



What's Happened so Far?

FFB EXPERIENCES

As part of the matching needs and services process, service users were included. A parents group was established as was a group of young people. They were involved in the same process as the multi-agency group with a sample of anonymised files. A great deal of skill was required by everyone to identify the needs of the children and young people who were vulnerable and often in crisis. All were patient, non-judgemental and very empathetic. The process was complex and time consuming and, on occasions, emotional.

Due to their hard work and dedication Anne Stewart, Parents' Initiative Co-ordinator, who supported the parents' group through this process, has nominated the group for a Scottish Adult Learning Partnership Award...GOOD LUCK.

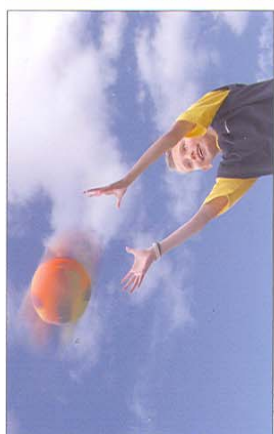
Two parents who were involved in the process are contributing to the delivery of a workshop 'Parental Involvement in Matching Needs and Services' at the annual conference of the Scottish Network for Parental Involvement on 16th November 2006.

There are approximately 28,000 children under 16 and 15,600 16-24 year olds in Falkirk

15% of Falkirk's households live in priority poverty areas

Between 2000 and 2002 there were 770 teenage pregnancies in the Falkirk area - slightly below the Scottish average

Falkirk has 285 looked after young people



What's Happened so Far?

Emerging Themes from the Matching Needs and Services Process and Logic Modelling

As part of the matching needs and services process, the multi-agency audit group did a 'shuffling exercise' to identify emerging themes. Here are a few examples of issues facing young people:

Loss/Separation/
Bereavement/Trauma/Rejection

Domestic Violence

Self-harming Behaviour

Living Arrangements

Substance Misuse

Exclusion

Lack of Community

Resources

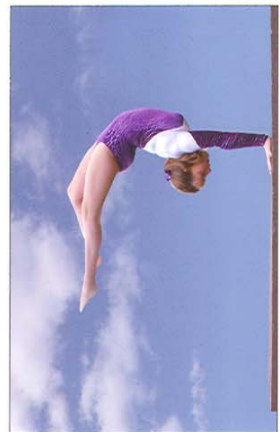
Support Needs of Parents

Depression

Care/Protection Issues

Parenting Skills

This information then set the scene for the Logic Modelling Process. Key strategic stakeholders met for three days, facilitated by Mark Davison from the Centre for Innovation. During this process discussions were held around defining the need based on information gathered and researched, agree customers, and agree the outcomes.



What's Happened so Far?



WHAT NEXT????

1. Analysis of Information Gathered:

Further analysis is required of the information. Gathered narrative will be added to produce a meaningful document. When complete, this document will be of immense value to services and agencies to scrutinise and inform of outcomes achieved.

2. Further consultation is required with communities around:

What sort of services they want to access;

How they want to access them;

Where they want them delivered.

3. Following this process, consultation will take place with key groups of staff in all agencies, proposing several models for implementing services at a local level.

In 2003/04 there were 958 exclusions from schools in Falkirk

At March 2004 there were 69 children and young people on the child protection register in Falkirk - the largest group of these were suffering from neglect

In Falkirk in 2004/05 there were 3,576 referrals made to the Children's Hearing System

NEWSFLASH

SUCCESS FOR FALKIRK BAIRNS !!!!

Falkirk Councils' Celebrating Success for employees had several nominations relating to children's services. This year under the award category of 'Service Accessibility' the Annual Parents' Conference was awarded First Place, while under the award category of 'Community Involvement' Grangemouth High School's end of year show "As you were" was also awarded first place.

WELL DONE!!!

Runners up at the awards included:

Involving young people in Service Planning;

ILC Family Support Services.

A VERY BIG WELL DONE!!!

This is a huge achievement and indicates how much has been achieved over the past year recognising the importance of integrated working, involvement of children and young people in service delivery.

AND FINALLY....

From everyone in the Children's Commission have a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year for Falkirk's bairns. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you in 2007.



FUTURE UPDATES

An updated FFB news letter will be issued in mid-January 2007 and will give details of progress on improving outcomes for Falkirk's Bairns.

