



Report by the Chief Education Officer

Management Group : 13 May 2021

Subject: Nurtured Delivery Improvement Group (DIG) Update

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update members on the work of the Nurtured Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG).

2. Recommendations

2.1 CPWD is asked to:

- note progress and focus of work in response to COVID19 by the Nurtured DIG.

3. Background

3.1 Through multi-agency planning, the Nurtured DIG aims to ensure:

- all WDC children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- families are supported in accessing education, learning and attainment opportunities and
- ensure improved life chances for all children, young people and families.

3.2 The Nurtured DIG aims are articulated in an Action Plan 2019-2022 which align with WDC Integrated Children's Services work.

3.3 In response to COVID19 partners have re-aligned priorities and focus of resources and support to address challenges faced by children, young people and families at this time.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Since March 2020 all Nurtured DIG engagement has been remote with a focus on supporting the wellbeing of our stakeholders.

- 4.2** All partners have faced significant challenges in service delivery in light of COVID19, resulting in DIG outcomes being re-prioritised. All partners are in the process of planning revisions to staff engagement with children and families reflecting lifting of COVID restrictions.
- 4.3** Within children's community health services, Health Visitors and School Nurses continue to deliver the Scottish Government care pathways with a focus on the most vulnerable children and young people. Face-to-face home visiting remains prioritised around child protection interventions, with a range of supportive services delivered virtually including parenting programmes, focused work on dental health and the emotional wellbeing of young people, targeted interventions with breast feeding mothers and comprehensive immunisation programmes. Collaborative work with partner agencies provide support to Team around the Child (TATC) meetings, Education consultations, perinatal mental health and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC). Quality improvement activity and regulated supervision of undergraduate and post graduate students provides essential workforce continuity and oversight. The school nursing programme is preparing to re-start in school settings.
- 4.4** HSCP Children's Social Work Services have maintained many aspects of service delivery during the pandemic, including upscaling of some activities as the first phase of lockdown began to ease. Priority has continued to focus on the most vulnerable families and child protection activity. Looked after children, including those in kinship care, remain a priority, with positive working relationships across education, social work and health supporting the safe care of children and young people at this time.

Contact between looked after children and their families uses a blended model of face to face, outdoor and remote contact arrangements. Referral rates to social work duty continue to be high; the implementation of the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 has been challenging for all agencies however local protocols are in development in line with Police Scotland guidance. Regular Violence Against Women Partnership meetings are continuing as, does MARAC. There has been increased numbers of IRD's which have been resource intensive for all service areas.

Children and families are supported via multi-agency Team Around the Child planning meetings which have been maintained and moved to a remote platform for delivery. This practice will be reviewed in line with restrictions and reflect learning of positive impacts for families.

Comprehensive local guidance for staff around provision of services and response to demands and priorities continues to be updated on an ongoing basis.

- 4.5** Children's Hearings have continued using an alternative venue to ensure that all meetings adhere to social distancing protocols. Service has resumed and

continues to support families with plans in place to resume the service in situ with appropriate adaptations.

- 4.6** All children and young people have returned to educational settings and are being supported in the transition back to learning in school and the associated routines and challenges. Our focus of recovery at this time still has wellbeing at its core. Systems have been established to ensure those shielding, most at risk of missing out or non-engagement have regular supportive contact with a member of school staff and are supported to return in a way which best meets their needs.

Free School Meal entitlement was provided for all eligible Early Years, all P1-3 and eligible P4-S6 pupils when learning at home. Now that almost all pupils have returned to school, FME will be provided in school settings with payment to cover holiday periods. We are planning for an enhanced Summer Holiday Programme which will offer fun filled holiday activities across the summer holiday period for children, young people and families across West Dunbartonshire. This will involve a range of community partners and venues; including our local parks and will ensure access to free lunches.

- 4.7** Community partners such as Y-Sort-it and the Champions Board continue to work and engage with stakeholder by adapting their practice to the current restrictions. Focus has been on ensuring the wellbeing and continuing engagement of the most vulnerable and at risk such as Young Carers and Care Experienced young people; ensuring they have access to the most appropriate resources to address their needs. This included a move to remote engagement and support, devising programmes of engagement using outdoors as a setting and using alternative provisions to ensure adherence to social distancing protocols. As we progress, a return to the use of premises will develop where deemed safe.

- 4.8** Working 4U continues to address the underlying causes of poverty, as well as the symptoms, by specifically tackling unemployment, providing opportunities to increase levels of education, skills, confidence and personal development as well support to claim in and out of work benefits and manage debt. Working 4U activities centre on the delivery of specialist services (Work Learn, Money) with the support for families, children and young people captured in Working 4Us contribution to the local child poverty action report.

Learning and Development continues to primarily support disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities. This has covered a wide range of activity, such as youth work, family and adult learning, including adult literacy and English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) and community development and capacity building.

Key Activities developed and delivered in 2020/2021 include:

- Development of youth outreach to deliver diversionary activities;

- Development of resources to address the negative impact of high interest and illicit money lending;
- Contribution to development and delivery of care connections- meeting support needs for young people who have disengaged from education;
- Family learning and progression to community based qualifications;
- community based period poverty and addressing community-based food insecurity.

Employability support has continued to encompass all the things that enable people to increase their chances of getting a job, staying in a job, and progressing further in work. Support that focusses on families, children and young people has included:

- Delivery of the apprenticeship pathway;
- Growth of access to foundation apprenticeships;
- Supporting parents to seek and secure employment through the Parental Employability Support Fund;
- Further development of the poverty and social inclusion project – assisting families to overcome challenges to opportunity and participation in community life.

4.9 Partners have reflected upon the impact of COVID on our children and families and agree our priorities should be aligned to needs identified and reflect local and national expectations on supporting children and young people. These are: addressing the challenges of poverty, mental health and ensuring early family help, whilst ensuring the voices of those we serve are integral to the processes.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications as a result of this report. However, it is essential partners re-align resource allocation and priorities to meet the needs of children, young people and families at this time.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications for Community Planning West Dunbartonshire resulting from this report. All activities related to the implementation of these interventions are contained within service Budgets.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 If the Council is unable to ensure positive outcomes for children, we will not be meeting their needs (Children and Young People Act 2014) (Equalities Act 2010).

7.2 If the Council is unable to meet the needs of children, young people and families this could result in reputational damage.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The revised supports and guidance enhance the quality of the service provided to all children, young people and families, therefore it can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities

9. Consultation

9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Person to Contact: Claire Cusick Senior Education Officer

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All