

CYPSP representatives visit the Highland Council, Scotland on children's services planning study trip

10 June – 12 June 2013

Facilitated by Collaboration NI (www.collaborationni.org) a group of statutory and third sector colleagues involved with Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) structures visited Inverness to explore the approach taken by Highland Council to children's services planning. Accompanied by Majella McCloskey from Chief Officers, 3rd sector organisation CO3 (www.co3.bz/) the group had the opportunity to discuss how Highland is delivering good outcomes for children and young people.

Specifically the Collaboration NI study trip wanted to explore the themes of:

- a) Delivering better, more sustainable services to children through integrated planning
- b) Delivering for children through community planning
- c) Exploring successful collaboration for children and young people

Reflecting on the experiences of Highland Council in collaborative planning there were many common issues with CYPSP. There is a strong emphasis on outcomes, a commitment to collaborative working, a focussed shift to early intervention and a strong orientation to Early Years.

The influence of the Scottish Government policy 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) was strongly emphasised across both planning and service delivery.

The Council has driven a single assessment model very strongly with one plan for children who need it. The assessment is focussed on 'strengths and pressures'. Like CYPSP they use the 'Whole Child' Concept. The assessment model is known as the 'My World Triangle' with the three sides of the triangle known as my needs, my family's needs and my need from the community I live in.

Where Universal services cannot meet the needs of any child or young person a plan is developed. Once developed the plan is owned by a 'named person', where the plan is single agency or a 'lead professional' where the plan is multi-agency. Interestingly referral forms to additional

services do not exist and the plan itself becomes the 'passport' to additional support. (www.highland.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth.htm)

There has been considerable investment in the interface between targeted early intervention and 'children in need' and Highland Council staff emphasised that evidence was clearly showing that increased early intervention investment was showing improvements in outcomes for majority of children.

What helped drive change in planning was joint training, clarity about professional roles and the development of a shared language around what they were trying to achieve.

Some of the barriers faced were 'silo working' and information sharing.

They are currently working on 'For Highlands Children 4' and this new children's services plan is the children's part of the Community Planning partnerships 'Single Outcome Agreement'. This model where the children's plan fits with community planning is a model the CYPSP intend to do further work on.

A range of planning groups, similar to the CYPSP regional subgroups has been created and these are referred to as 'Improvement Groups'

They are charged with asking the questions:

1. How are doing for this group of children/young people?
2. How do we know?
3. What could we do to improve the outcomes for this group of children?

The plans must include national determined outcomes as well as local issues. There was a lot of interest in CYPSP system of Locality Planning as this was identified as an area where Highland Council needed to do more work.

The emphasis on early years/early interventions was emphasised in a meeting with their Early Years Collaboration. A follow up article will explore this in more detail.

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