

CELCIS REACH: Lisa McKenzie | What drift and delay really means for children

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Lisa McKenzie from East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership talking about the improvements they made with the help of PACE.

In terms of our PACE journey so far we really began our PACE journey in January in 2016 and I'm absolutely honoured and privileged that I'm in a position to chair our PACE champions group. Having buy-in from different agencies across health, social care, Children's Hearings Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration and also from frontline staff and key managers across the organization has been absolutely key to achieving some of the difference that we've made in terms of improving assessment time skills for our pre-birth to three children.

Within East Renfrewshire health and Social Care Partnership we've been undertaking a very significant children's services redesign to integrate our health and social care. So, we have level one which is basically our Named Person Service, level two, our Request for Assistance Team and that's absolutely key in terms of getting it right from the start of a child's journey. Tier four is our Community Social Work Team and at tier four we have set up our intensive family support service and our integrated services for our vulnerable young people. That is linked to our CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) service too.

The drift and delay that we have for children in East Renfrewshire was pretty significant and our zero to three population actually only made up 23% of our total looked after and looked after and accommodated population. When we really looked at our data and our looked after children, that caused us some significant concern because we've set up requests for assistance at tier two which was in November 2014, so we know that for children who are in tier three, they have the highest level needs within our health and social care partnership. So, the importance of getting their assessments completed within our the 40-day national time scale has been really important so we've worked together with the team of social workers, we've had fantastic support from CELCIS and Linda Davidson in particular and Micky Anderson, who's helped us with our data analysis and we've been able to see significant improvement. The drift was really quite phenomenal and looking at our data up until the end of September, we've had about 10 children that have come through to tier three with the most high level needs and they've actually improved, their

assessments have been completed in on the 40 days which is just phenomenal really because we had a drift of about a year prior to that. I cannot highlight enough in the PACE work how important it is to address drift from the beginning of a child's journey through to securing a child in a permanent destination. The other area of drift that we've had which has been really significant has been for our looked after at home population. So, East Renfrewshire had the biggest proportion of children looked after at home in Scotland, so we were quite surprised when we looked at our data on those children and when we actually started to consider as a PACE champions group what that drift actually means for some of those children. It's about going to Children's Hearings on a regular basis, it means basically that children have social workers, it accentuates the fact that they're different and that's not what we want for children. We want children to feel safe and secure in a permanent destination. So, when we started our pace journey we had about 220 looked after and looked after and accommodated children across our local authority area and actually we now have about 132 looked after and looked after and accommodated children within our health and social care partnership. We've managed to secure permanent destinations for some of those children, which is fantastic. Particularly for our looked after at home population.

However, we still have some way to go. We are still looking at drifts across the system. We have children who've been in kinship arrangements for some time and in terms of our PACE work going forward we really want to address the drift for the children who've been in the system longer than two years and certainly for those who've been in the system for five years or more. I chair the kinship panel and through the kinship panel and through the work that we're doing with PACE we're looking to secure permanent destinations for children in kinship care to take them out of the children's hearing system. In terms of the improvement work we've done with the pre-birth to threes which has been significant over the last six months, we're now looking to measure their journey to permanence. So, what we're saying is it's not just important to get their assessments completed within a reasonable time scale, within the 40 days, it's absolutely crucial that we look to secure them in a permanent destination nine months after they become looked after. We're doing some key work with Children's Hearings Scotland and our multi-agency partnership to ensure that children who are going into the Hearings System have that multi-agency meeting before they go to the hearing so that there's a shared agreement and the parents are involved and actually we try and get the permanence discussion happening at the point that the children go into the hearing system because we want to really try and reduce drift and delay from the beginning of our child's journey.

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