



Centre for excellence
for looked after children in Scotland

A Programme of Improvement to Address Neglect and Enhance Wellbeing

Update Report to Scottish Government:
Exploration Stage (June – August 2017)

Claire Burns

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Overview

Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Inverclyde continue to be involved in the exciting and innovating programme of addressing neglect and enhancing wellbeing. All three local areas began their journey with CELCIS to 'address neglect and enhance wellbeing' in September 2016. The CELCIS team began by meeting with strategic leaders aligned to the programme to talk about the background, context and commitment needed in embarking on this new type of multi-agency working. All three areas continue to stay committed to this partnership working and to further developing their understanding of the factors that contribute to neglect.

Over the last quarter, we have focused efforts on ensuring that the programme is strongly aligned to key local and national priorities including the Attainment Challenge, the Pupil Equity Fund, Local Outcome Improvement Plans, How Good is Our School 4, Getting it Right for Every Child and the national health visitor and midwifery universal pathway. This focus is driven by the findings of the Brock report (2016), which highlights the multiple barriers to achieving integrated, early intervention approaches, resulting in part from complex laws and divergent national strategies and policies.

Maintaining key links with strategic leadership is crucial to ensuring the continued success of the work. Ongoing careful strategic analysis about how to build the right relationships has led to further connections being made across sectors and a variety of disciplines. This engagement has been positive, with a real sense of commitment and vision from strategic leaders to take the neglect work forward.

Local implementation teams are being formed across all three areas. We are striving to ensure that these teams include a mix of professional backgrounds to ensure the work is driven and influenced by multiple parts of the system. Such teams include representation from health, social work, education, third sector, GIRFEC strategy teams and quality improvement and data teams. This level of diversity has been beneficial in enabling key engagement across the local areas and has informed an emerging design of the future system (process or practice) that is integrated and aims to maximise the resource within the system.

The CELCIS enabling team offers each local area's implementation team the opportunity to meet for two full days a month. The CELCIS team guides and enables the local engagement with key agencies and personnel by supporting the planning, designing, problem solving, learning and reflection related to this complex change effort. In addition to the two days on site, weekly telephone calls support planning and progress on the local plan, as well as an additional opportunity for guidance and support with active implementation.

Our Journey since June

The local areas are at different stages of their implementation journey. We continue to support teams to reflect on the exploration process to ensure that they have engaged with all the relevant stakeholders and that the themes prioritised by teams reflect findings from the exploration discussions. There is strong evidence to suggest that early investment in a thorough exploration, including an analysis of common strengths and challenges, predicts much more successful achievements as the work progresses. This engagement with multiple stakeholders, operating at different levels in the system, is critical to developing an understanding of strengths and challenges in the system as it currently functions, and attends to the importance of developing 'buy in' for the change initiative. During this stage, diverse perspectives are gathered about what works well for families in all three of the areas, with particular attention to how best to intervene earlier and more effectively to prevent the long-term impact of neglect. Through this process, key themes have emerged and careful consideration has been given to the development of a set of key improvement priorities that would have the greatest impact on achieving positive outcomes for children and their families across all three areas.

Next Steps

The context within each of the Community Planning Partnership areas differs, as well as the focus of the areas of improvement that each has chosen which influences the nature and the pace of the work as it evolves. The work is complex as it involves engagement across the whole service system, re-orienting the system towards early help, and linking and connecting across multiple organisational structures and remits.

Perth & Kinross have elected to focus on preparation for parenthood and early years, with an emphasis on pregnancy through to first year of life. Given this core focus, universal services within health are core to informing and leading the work alongside the children and adult services within the local authority and third sector. The work is currently focused on ensuring that all the right partners are involved to inform the design work as to how the service system can be more responsive to adult, children and family needs at the earliest point.

Inverclyde have spent time mapping strengths and challenges within their service system. They have recently emerged from their children's services inspection feeling energised for their next steps. They have a planned away day to focus on what has emerged from exploration, reviewing their design ideas and considering how best to develop an implementation team that can take this work forward. They have also focused on ensuring that connections are made at all levels across the service system, including engaging with new strategic leads and elected members.

Dundee have prioritised a set of core elements of GIRFEC implementation. They are focusing their improvement efforts on designing the following necessary aspects of GIRFEC: support to named person, best practices in family (parent and child) engagement in assessment and planning, strengthening the whole service system culture and ethos. Their work has focused on making sense of alignment across policy initiatives to strengthen community, school and targeted responses. The Dundee Implementation Team has just identified the area of Dundee in which the 'on-the-ground' changes will begin. In September, three primary schools will be invited to participate in this multi-faceted change approach, as a place to begin the actual change process, building out into the wider community to include representatives of all services that have a critical role in strengthening earlier response to unmet needs. Through this area-based approach, the Dundee Implementation Team, supported by CELCIS, will engage with and support all the partners involved, including families themselves at the centre of discussions, to test out and refine the design ideas outlined above.

Priorities for September – November 2017

At the beginning of September, CELCIS will host the third Community of Practice event that brings together representatives from each of the local areas and provides a platform for building capacity in relation to active implementation, sharing ideas and problem solving. It also enables reflection on common barriers and facilitators in relation to this work. Such sharing of experience and ideas helps to shape our response to unmet need across Scotland.

As we step into this third event, we begin to examine the evidence underpinning the installation phase of active implementation and the tools available to support make the structural and instrumental changes necessary to initiate the improvement. Its focus is on the practical preparations needed to initiate the innovation. Once a decision is made to adopt an innovation, changes must often be made in multiple settings and systems to accommodate and fully support the new practice, program or innovation.

Celcis Protecting Children Team

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Contact Information

Claire Burns
Director of Programmes and Service
claire.burns@strath.ac.uk

Sharon Glasgow
Child Protection Programme Lead
sharon.glasgow@stath.ac.uk

Melissa Van Dyke
National Expert Advisor on Implementation
melissa.van-dyke@strath.ac.uk

About CELCIS

CELCIS, based at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, is committed to making positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of Scotland's children living in and on the edges of care. Ours is a truly collaborative agenda; we work alongside partners, professionals and systems with responsibility for nurturing our vulnerable children and families. Together we work to understand the issues, build on existing strengths, introduce best possible practice and develop solutions. What's more, to achieve effective, enduring and positive change across the board, we take an innovative, evidence-based improvement approach across complex systems.

For more information

Visit: www.celcis.org **Email:** celcis@strath.ac.uk **Tel:** 0141 444 8500