

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEETHURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2020Report by Director of EducationACCESS TO COUNSELLING IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE SCHOOLS**PURPOSE**

1. To update elected members of the department's interim arrangements for access to counselling in East Renfrewshire schools.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Education Committee is asked to :
 - Note the department's arrangements for access to counselling in schools for session 2020 / 2021.

BACKGROUND

2. In July 2019 the Scottish Government made a commitment to fund local authorities to the sum of £12 million pounds to support delivery of the access to school counselling services.
3. The delivery of a Youth Counselling service is designed to support children and young people more efficiently and effectively with issues affecting their mental health and wellbeing and to help school staff to engage children and young people with appropriate support services from within their local communities and at an early stage.
4. The Scottish Government and Local Authority leaders agreed a partnership approach to the delivery of counselling services with clear aims and principles including access to counselling through primary, secondary and special schools, ensuring consistently high quality services available locally, for pupils aged 10 and over. A full list of the aims and principles can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.
5. East Renfrewshire Council's Health and Social Care Partnership currently commission a Youth Counselling Service from Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH) and has done so for a considerable number of years.
6. The Educational Psychology Service worked alongside many agencies and professionals to create an East Renfrewshire framework and resource to support professionals, parents, carers and young people with their mental health and wellbeing. The 'Healthier Minds' Framework and associated resources was launched on the 5th of February 2020. The framework contains helpful information and practical advice to support children and young people manage life's challenges. The online resource includes excellent materials that can be download for use by professionals and families. <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/healthierminds>

REPORT

7. East Renfrewshire Council is committed to relational approaches that promote positive mental health for children and young people and their families through the development of effective support networks that nurture resilience and wellbeing.
8. In response to this commitment from the Scottish Government to support the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people, a coproduction event was held on 12th of November 2019 to explore the design of a new service.
9. The following stakeholders and invited guests attended the coproduction event:
 - Staff and senior pupils from all seven secondary schools and Isobel Mair School
 - Depute Head Teachers from two primary schools
 - Members of the care experienced young people's Champions Board
 - Parent Council Chairs representatives
 - Head of Education Services (Equalities and Equity)
 - Head of Public Protection and Children's Service (Chief Social Work Officer)
 - Quality Improvement Officer
 - Social Work Service Managers
 - Social Workers
 - Principal Educational Psychologist and members of the Educational Psychology Service
 - Children First
 - RAMH
 - Health Improvement colleagues
 - COSLA
10. During the coproduction event a number of brief presentations were given regarding important aspects of how we support children and young people's mental wellbeing. Information was also shared regarding existing commissioned services from Children First (Family Wellbeing Service) and RAMH (Youth Counselling). All participants took part in group discussions around two key questions:
 - *What do young people need to protect, promote and support their mental health and wellbeing?*
 - *What would an effective service to support children and young people's mental wellbeing in schools look like?*
11. The views expressed during the workshop were captured and analysed by our Educational Psychology Team and used to draw up the relevant documentation required to participate in a procurement process. An overview of the views from the workshop is attached (Appendix 2).
12. Unfortunately Covid-19 has delayed the procurement process and we are unable to provide the service as designed by stakeholders on time. The procurement process has now commenced and we are on schedule to introduce our 'Healthier Minds Service' early 2021. This service will complement the Healthier Minds Framework, described in paragraph 6.
13. In response to this delay senior Education Officers met with staff and pupils to discuss alternative interim arrangements for session 2020 / 2021. It was clear that those consulted wanted to continue with a holistic approach and identified 3 key areas of focus:

- Direct access to support for pupils and staff;
 - Maximising the capacity of school staff and young people;
 - Prevention and self-care approaches.
14. To provide direct access to mental health and wellbeing support for our pupils in primary 7 and secondary school we will increase our Youth Counselling capacity by 100%. This will double the number of counsellors our HSCP colleagues commission from RAMH at the moment. We have also seconded a range of practitioners from Education, Social Work and Health who will offer a range of mental health and wellbeing supports, including one to one interventions with children and young people. This interim team will be known as the Recovery Team.
 15. To help build the capacity of our school staff we have also organised COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy) training for 2 members of staff in each secondary school and 1 per primary school and Isobel Mair. In addition to the COSCA training a member of the Recovery Team will be able to extend Mental First Aid Training to staff sets in all our schools. This training will provide a basic level of understanding and support.
 16. Training sessions will also be available for young people to provide them with tools to prevent them becoming ill and to support their peers on a day to day basis in a mentor type capacity.
 17. Our knowledge of mental health and wellbeing is such that the best advice to children, young people and families is around safeguarding their mental health and having a lifestyle that prevents the need for interventions. This Health Promoting approach will be explored further as part of the offer to schools in the short and longer term. Members of the Recovery Team will sign post school staff to a range of resources, materials and supports as well as working directly with young people to upskill their knowledge with the potential to them providing a peer support model.
 18. The interim arrangement described above will be available for the whole academic session, overlapping with the new Healthier Minds Service when it is introduced in 2021.

CONSULTATION

19. A range of stakeholders were consulted on the Healthier Minds Service. A full list of consultees can be found in paragraph 8.
20. School staff and senior pupils were consulted along with colleagues in Health and Social Care Partnership regarding the interim arrangements.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

21. The Scottish Government and Local Authority Leaders reached a joint agreement on the distribution of funding and aims and principles for the delivery of counsellors through schools.
22. A fixed sum of £45,000 was awarded to each Local Authority. With East Renfrewshire receiving a total of £311,000 (part year) for session 2020/2021 and £411,000 for each of the following 3 years.

23. Interim arrangements along with the Healthier Minds model will be met within the funds allocated.

RECOMMENDATION

24. Education Committee is asked to :

- Note the department's arrangements for access to counselling in schools for session 2020 / 2021.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
1 October 2020

Convener Contact Details

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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COUNSELLORS THROUGH SCHOOLS

Appendix 1

Partnership approach aims and principles

Aims

To provide, in partnership between local and national government

- access to counselling through schools, enabling locally provided support for children and young people towards positive mental health and wellbeing.
- high quality and effective counselling support as part of a range of supports available locally to children and young people.
- counsellors who are accredited and working to an agreed standard across Scotland
- Access to counselling through primary, secondary and special schools, ensuring consistently high quality services available locally, for pupils aged 10 and over.

Principles

- The commitment to the provision of counselling through schools should be delivered in partnership between national and local government, and relevant partners, and should build upon the services already in place wherever possible.
- The provision of counselling should be part of a holistic [child centred] approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people,
- Counselling services should be delivered within an agreed definition of counselling by qualified counsellors registered with an appropriate registration body.
- Counselling services should be available to secondary school pupils primarily and primary, and special schools in communities for pupils aged 10 and over.
- In recognition of the need to ensure young people are safe, services should ensure a robust assessment is carried out and that young people are supported to access alternative services where counselling may not be appropriate.
- There should be availability of counselling services during school holidays, to ensure continued support to vulnerable young people
- The provision of counselling through schools should align to, and/or enhance the local services to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Counselling services should be accessible. Utilising technology, virtual approaches and delivery in non-educational settings where communities need it, particularly in rural communities.
- Local policies and procedures in relation to child protection and information sharing should be followed. The requirements of the registering body, for example in terms of professional conduct and supervision should also be followed.
- The commitment to counselling through schools will be delivered in 2 phases, with full delivery expected by September 2020

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Additional Information to be considered alongside East Renfrewshire's Access to Counselling in Schools – Local Authority Plan

East Renfrewshire Council is committed to relational approaches that promote positive mental health for children and young people and their families through the development of effective support networks that nurture resilience and wellbeing. In response to this holistic approach and the commitment that our schools show to supporting young people beyond counselling, a coproduction event was held on 12th of November 2019 to explore the design of a new service. The following stakeholders were involved in the coproduction event:

- Staff and senior pupils from all seven secondary schools and Isobel Mair School
- Depute Head Teachers from two primary schools
- Members of the care experienced young people's Champions Board
- Parent Council Chairs
- The Head of Service, Education
- Head of Public Protection and Children's Service (Chief Social Work Officer)
- Quality Improvement Officer
- Social Work Service Managers
- Social Workers
- Principal Educational Psychologist and members of the Educational Psychology Service
- Children First
- RAMH

- Health Improvement
- COSLA

During the coproduction event a number of brief presentations were given regarding important aspects of how we support children and young people's mental wellbeing. Information was also shared regarding existing commissioned services from Children First (Family Wellbeing Service) and RAMH (Youth Counselling). All participants took part in group discussions around two key questions:

- 1. What do young people need to protect, promote and support their mental health and wellbeing?*
- 2. What would an effective service to support children and young people's mental wellbeing in schools look like?*

All participants were seated in mixed groups and discussion was facilitated by a scribe at each of the tables. Responses were collated on flip chart paper. At the same time, an artist and selected sixth year children and young people depicted the discussion visually using graphics and cartoons.

Analysis

Responses were collated and then read and analysed by members of the Educational Psychology Service. Themes identified were those which were the most prevalent in all group responses. These were further broken down into main themes and relevant sub-themes.

Main Themes

Responses to question 1 and 2 highlighted the importance of the adoption of **whole school, relationship-based and nurturing approaches** as a means of best supporting children and young people's wellbeing and addressing their mental health needs. This was viewed as forming the basis of universal support and providing the foundation on which to build more tailored and targeted supports

Key components of universal supports to meet children and young people's needs are represented visually in diagram 1 and detailed below:

- A main component of a whole-school approach includes the **promotion of positive relationships** at all levels within the school and across the community: between adults and children and young people, children and young people and children and young people and staff and parents.
- A **nurturing and supportive ethos**, with identified places for children and young people and also parents to go as required, and where groups and support can be provided. This includes spaces for families to access.
- A whole school approach to **understanding and talking about mental wellbeing and mental health** so that children and young people feel listened to and can identify a 'key adult' to provide this support.
- The promotion of a **culture** where mental health and wellbeing are **discussed and understood from a young age**.
- A focus on **building coping skills** amongst children and young people and **building capacity amongst parents and staff** to talk about feelings and promote wellbeing.
- The **provision of training** so that all staff and also parents have an understanding of **strategies, skills and knowledge of the impact of attachment and trauma**.
- The **provision of appropriate resources** and **signposting** for parents and children and young people.
- The provision of support to school, children and families from **other agencies**. This includes training and building capacity amongst school staff.
- **Identified groups and activities** in the wider community and at school for children, young people and their families

Targeted Approaches

Further analysis highlighted the principles of targeted approaches in schools which were viewed as meeting the needs of individual children and young people. This formed an important sub theme and was set within the context of whole school, relationship-based approaches.

The responses from participants identified key components of the provision of targeted approaches:

- The provision of **clear processes** which combine **assessment of individual need** with **clear signposting** and the provision of and access to **appropriate resources**.
- Approaches to interventions which are based on **knowledge of the child and young person**, and also their **active involvement** in the process.
- A **range of appropriate interventions** which include individual and group support and which **are tailored according to a child or young person's needs and interests**. This may include; relaxation or addressing anxiety groups or interventions; CBT approaches; Yoga; exercise; Mindfulness: Pupil specific extra-curricular activities.
- Interventions led by a **range of adults and agencies**

What do Children and Young People Need to Protect, Promote and Support their Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Relationship-based, Whole School Approach

Nurturing Respect Trust Feeling Valued Supporting Each Other Friendly Communication

Strong, positive-pupil-staff, staff-parent, pupil-pupil relationships

**NURTURING
ETHOS &
ENVIRONMENT**

NURTURING CULTURE

- Open door policy
- Large network of support
- Time to support pupils
- It's ok not to be ok'
- Self-Care

APPROPRIATE SPACE

- Nurture rooms/ Nurture zone/comfortable spaces
- Nurture hub
- Families room
- Fun zone/place to talk
- Drop ins
- Tea and coffee/sofas

**BUILDING
CAPACITY
AMONGST
SCHOOL STAFF**

- Staff have knowledge of pupils; knowing things they can do; being able to talk to pupils
- Upskilling ALL staff on trauma, attachment and mental health
- Consultation with other agencies
- Teachers to understand their own anxieties
- JST well represented

**UNIVERSAL
APPROACH:
SUPPORTING ALL
PUPILS**

- Early understanding of how to support mental wellbeing
- Preventative approaches
- Having a key adult to talk to pupils
- Pupil voice
- Peer training and support (mentors)
- Important part of lessons – relaxation strategies/PSE
- Questionnaires to monitor wellbeing

**SUPPORTING
PARENTS AND
PROVIDING
INFORMATION**

- Support for parents and carers
- Knowledge of families
- Building capacity
- Training in attachment and trauma for parents
- Information about how to build resilience
- Providing tools to be used at home: mental health handbook for parents
- Family support and groups
- Therapeutic help for families

**BRIDGING SUPPORT BETWEEN
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY**

What would an Effective Service look like?

**CLEAR PROCESSES
AND SIGNPOSTING**

Clear access procedures
 Assessment of Individual Needs
 Signposting to correct service
 Highlighting priorities (e.g. Care Experienced)
 Groups based on assessment of needs
 Adaptable to individual needs
 Reduce having to tell stories over and over

**TARGETED SUPPORT FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUNG**

**INDIVIDUALISED
APPROACHES TO
INTERVENTION**

Adaptable to individual needs
 The right support at the right time
 Intervention based on CYP's history; protective factors
 Context specific
 Long term view of recovery
 CYP actively involved and supported to find solutions to their own problems

**CHOICE OF
INTERVENTION**

Based on CYP's preferences and choice
 More options than counselling: lots of different types of support delivered by a range of people:
 Targeted Individual and Group Interventions:

- Building Resilience
- Relaxation/Exam Stress
- Mindfulness
- Yoga/Exercise
- Time out of busy school
- pupil-specific extracurricular activities
- CBT (LLTF)

with hope

Next steps:

The outputs from this work will shape future service provision and allow us to target the additional resource, in line with the policy intention and the needs of our school community. We therefore are in the process of beginning a procurement process where we can commission a service that can work with our schools and partners such as Educational Psychology, School Nursing etc to support the broad-based holistic approach outlined above, complementing and extending our existing youth counselling service.

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