

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(3)-04-11 : Paper 2

Contribution from Barnardo's Cymru to Committee Legacy Report

Thanks for requesting contributions for consideration to the committee legacy it provided in its self some food for thought.

As a team we have been considering individual issue based ideas for future consideration but would hope that a major legacy of this particular committee would be it's commitment to different and innovative practice in evidence gathering and work programme planning. Practice we would like to see become standard across other committees.

During discussions we have pondered on whether a future committee might best focus significant effort to the scrutiny of policy implementation. Some thing specific for implementation might be the need to scrutinise the implementation of the new CSE guidance in a couple of years as previous guidance had not been effectively implemented. Working towards the implementation of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure and the realities of rights based services could also provide opportunity for robust scrutiny.

In terms of issue focused work:

Mental Health

Although this has been a hot topic recently there remain very grave concerns about the lack of specialist CAMHS practitioners and CAMHS expertise in Wales. All policy, strategic and action planning documents addressing the needs of vulnerable groups of children such as LAC, young offenders, trafficked children, to name but a small cohort, will refer to their need for a degree of CAMHS input as part of their care planning, or as a specified service they should have access to. And yet CAMHS expertise is a very limited resource in Wales and specialist CAMHS practitioners on the ground remain woefully few.

We were extremely pleased that the WAG decided to make CAMHS provisions in Wales extend to those on the cusp of their 18th birthday. However the reality of imposing this on specialist CAMHS services, with minimal amounts of funding, is clearly posing a huge problem and risks forcing resource in to achieving this at the expense of interventions for some younger children. It certainly pulls resource away from any potential community role, where earlier interventions might more usefully take place.

Additionally the pressures which children's social care teams have always been under to meet actual need have more recently come under pressure from increased demand. Consequently there is evidence emerging that Social Services are pulling their staff out of specialist CAMHS teams. A short sighted strategy it would seem, as improving the quality and capacity of our 'in house' specialist CAMHS provision should help earlier and more effective mental health intervention for those who are most damaged, the LA's saw a substantial increase in the costs of care in response to an increase in demand for specialist placements in the year ending April 2010 and spent a total of more than £17,000,000 across Wales.

Pleased as we are to see the development of the Mental Health Measure, the task of making it a reality for children and young people in Wales will be severely hampered by the shortfall in specialist CAMHS staff. Adult mental health provision hugely outstrips CAMHS provision in all areas of Wales.

I know this is going back to the 'we need more funding' argument but as I'm now getting a measure of how limited the CAMHS provision is compared to adult provision, and bearing in mind that 50% of diagnosable mental health illnesses have emerged by the age of 14 and 75% have emerged by mid-twenties then it's an unavoidable issue.

Personalised care

This might initially appear most suited to an equalities focused committee however personalised care could be a significant development across many areas of services to children and their families for example disabled young people and independence, young carers, children who are affected by substance misuse, their own, familial or parental.

There are significant gains possible through a provision of necessary care that fits the child rather than fitting a child to available service, gains both in the effective and efficient use of monies and appropriate experiences of the service user.

Bullying

Review the recommendations made by the CCfW in 'Children don't complain' specifically in relation to transparency and ease of access for children to complaints procedures.

Examine preventative and responsive anti bullying practice in Wales. Bullying occurs at school, in community settings and at home from other children through cyber technology (texts, computer etc). Wales has organisations that come together with civil servants 3 or 4 times per year to discuss anti bullying practice and plan for activity during anti bullying week. However, this network has no paid coordinator and 'respect wales', the national anti bullying website, is in its infancy. There is no mention of bullying within the National play implementation plan and whilst schools are required to have an anti bullying policy there is little known about how they are effectively put into practice. According to childline bullying is still the first concern that children have. With the 2003 Respecting others

Welsh anti bullying guidance having been updated this year (2011) it could be a prudent time to review how joined up Welsh anti bullying work is, children's experiences of bullying within, and outside of, school, and the success of initiatives to combat bullying.

Children's Rights

Rights of C&YP Measure

Scrutiny of or inquiry into the;

Creation of regulation and guidance.

Issues of WFD at WAG, the NAFW as well as a broad church of services accessed by C&YP and their families.

A particular emphasis around article 42 rights of knowledge and understanding might be a focus here.

The reality of rights based services from commissioning to delivery.

Cost benefit projections of rights based services.

It would be very easy to highlight many additional areas; however we are concerned that as a nation we might create enthusiastic legislative programmes, the envy of other nations, without concentrating sufficient capacity and resource into implementing the progressive policy outcomes from what has already been enacted.