



COSLA

CYP Board Item 07

Private and Confidential

COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group

Summary and Recommendations

This paper provides Board members with an update on the COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group, seeking comments on its scope and comments on initial thinking regarding family support provisions.

This paper invites Children and Young People Board to:

- Note and comment on the scope and work of the COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group;
- Comment on the discussion paper on family support attached as Appendix A.

References

Previous Report on the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable Children and Young People:

- COSLA Leaders– 17 April 2020 – Vulnerable Communities

Name Redacted

Policy Manager – Children and Young People

Name @cosla.gov.uk

Irrelevant & Sensitive

22 May 2020

COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group

Purpose

1. This paper provides Members with an overview of the work being taken forward by the COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group, seeking comments from the Board on its direction and on the family support work they are considering.

Current COSLA Position

2. Prior to the announcement of education settings being closed, and since then, COSLA has worked closely with SOLACE, ADES, Social Work Scotland and Scottish Government officials on approaches to supporting vulnerable children and young people. This has included the considerations around access to education and childcare hubs and other means of providing support.
3. On 17 April, COSLA Leaders considered a report on the work to support vulnerable communities across Scotland. The report set out the role of the multi-agency Chief Officer Groups (COGs) as the cornerstone of the approach to safeguarding, supporting and protecting vulnerable groups. This includes, but is not just about children and young people. This report was partly in response to concerns that there were low numbers of children and young people who may be considered vulnerable, including being looked after or on the edges of care or on the child protection register, who were accessing the childcare hubs. Scottish Government were also keen to understand what was happening locally across children's services partnerships to support vulnerable children and young people. SOLACE and COSLA officers were clear that this needs to be viewed in the wider context of the support and protection local authorities and their partners have oversight of via the COG structures.
4. Following the report to Leaders on 17 April COSLA worked with SOLACE, Scottish Government and partners to ascertain what additional data may be helpful at a local level. A dataset regarding children and young people was agreed and will be used for this purpose, and work is ongoing regarding data collection on adult support and protection. This information will be shared with Scottish Government in the short term to inform, for example, policy or funding matters. It is not intended to be shared indefinitely.

What is changing?

5. The COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group was established to have a key, priority focus on 'vulnerable children and young people' which, as agreed with COSLA, SOLACE and ADES, includes CYP from pre-birth to 18 years who:
 - Are at risk and receiving support from more than one agency - including CYP who had a child protection investigation in 2018/19 (and might be deemed to be either in care or 'on the edge of care'); who are on the child protection register; and who are looked after;
 - Have complex additional support needs; and/or
 - Are affected by poverty and deprivation (including receipt of free school meals).

6. The Leadership Group will also focus on specific groups of children and young people and families who are experiencing increased challenges and vulnerabilities as a result of the pandemic and mitigation measures, for example, stakeholders have highlighted current challenges for one parent households, families with a disabled adult or child, young carers, and children and young people with existing health conditions. They will also consider the broader health and wellbeing impacts across the population of children and young people, for example, including the impacts on mental health and impacts on children and young people identified through Adult Support and Protection.
7. The group is jointly chaired by the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Adviser and SOLACE Children and Families Lead and membership includes COSLA, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Social Work Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), Children in Scotland, Child Protection Committees Scotland, Coalition of Care and support Providers in Scotland (CCPS), Education Scotland, Independent Care Review, Inspiring Children's Futures, University of Strathclyde, Police Scotland, Public Health Scotland, and SCRA. The group meets weekly.
8. It is expected that a number of additional work streams will be developed following further discussion with the Leadership Group. There are clear links with the C-19 Education Recovery Group and workstreams associated with this.
9. The Leadership Group will report to the Deputy First Minister and the Communities and Public Services Ministerial Group, and COSLA Leaders. Reports will be made to the COSLA Children and Young People Board as required.
10. The Deputy First Minister has asked the Leadership Group to consider holistic family support and to offer initial thoughts by later this month. The Leadership Group have started to have discussions around what is required to develop family support provision across Scotland in response to both the immediate and longer term requirements of families dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Appendix A sets out the initial thinking of the Leadership Group, which was further discussed when they met on 14 May, and is likely to be further discussed on 21 May. In the discussion, points were raised which included the need to build on the Care Review findings and recommendations, consider a different approach to the standard commissioning approach in terms of how it is delivered, and to ensure the voices of children and young people and their families are central in any developments.
11. Members are asked to note that the Deputy First Minister has asked the Leadership Group to set out proposals for a national offer for preventative, relationship-based and holistic family support. Views proposed to date suggest this be designed and delivered locally, in partnership between the third sector and statutory agencies under new arrangements to replace existing models of commissioning, and should acknowledge the positive impact on wider service provision of preventative spend on family support as set out by the Independent Care Review; and the likelihood of increased demand for support services as a result of COVID-19. The work will be closely linked with the development of child poverty policy, and mental health and wellbeing policy. It is progressing at pace, and Leadership Group members are working with Scottish Government to form initial proposals for the Ministers.

Proposed COSLA Position

12. Members are asked to note the update on the work to support vulnerable children and young people and their families and provide comment on the scope and potential areas for consideration by the group. Members are also asked to comment on the initial Family Support discussion paper, and provide a steer for officers on the direction this work

should take. Officers will ensure finance colleagues are included in discussions as they progress.

Next Steps

13. Comments made by Members will be shared with the Leadership Group and Scottish Government officials supporting this work. Officers will work alongside Local Government professional associations and advisers to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable children and families within our communities are at the centre of this work, and that there are clear links made to the C-19 Education Recovery Group. Further developments regarding family support will be brought to the Board and Leaders as appropriate.

22 May 2020