

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 2 OCTOBER 2003

EAST AYRSHIRE MULTI-AGENCY FORUM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members of the outcome of the Multi-Agency Forum for Young People which was held on Thursday 20 June 2003, and to note how issues will be progressed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Policy & Resources Committee of 29 November 2001 agreed to establish a Multi-Agency Forum for Young People. It was agreed that Community Planning Partners and in particular representatives from Strathclyde Police and NHS Ayrshire & Arran should be invited to become members of the Forum.
- 2.2** At the Policy & Resources Committee of 20 February 2003 it was agreed that a note of each Forum meeting would be submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee.

3. MULTI-AGENCY FORUM MEETING OF 20 JUNE 2003

- 3.1** A number of issues were raised by young people at the Forum which require the Council and its Community Planning Partners' attention. The Forum minute is attached as an appendix. These are:

- **Youth Crime**

In relation to the issues raised by young people with regard to youth crime it is proposed that the undernoted actions are taken:

- Over the coming year the Dialogue Youth Initiative will consider how it works with young people to improve their perception of safety within the communities of East Ayrshire. Strathclyde Police are represented on the Officer Reference Group which is charged with overseeing the development of Dialogue Youth and the Dialogue Youth Officer Reference Group will seek the commitment of Strathclyde Police to take this forward.
- The various youth groups and forums in East Ayrshire will be asked to consider both how young people can be supported to feel safer in their communities and also whether there are additional services which can be put in place to prevent youth crime.

- **Teenage Smoking**

- Youth groups, projects and young people's forums should be encouraged through project staff and Community Learning & Development staff to consider how best services can reduce the rate of teenage smoking.

- **Teenage Pregnancy**

- Ayrshire & Arran Health Board requires to develop a Child Health Strategy in conjunction with the three Ayrshire local authorities. One of the priorities to be addressed in this Strategy is to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy. This will involve a review of current approaches to sexual health and sex education. A number of strategies are in place to address the high rate of teenage pregnancy and it should be noted, that the rate per thousand teenage pregnancy in young people aged between 13 – 15 years in East Ayrshire has reduced.

- **Access for Young People with Disabilities**

- Initially, further debate and discussion requires to take place regarding this particular issue. The local authority has published it's Accessibility Strategy for school based education and is currently concluding work in relation to the Community Learning and Development Service.

In addition, the Council-wide review of property is being carried out through the department of Development Services.

There are clearly wider issues in relation to inclusion for young people with disabilities and we know from other consultative forums with young people that the whole issue of access to buildings generally including retail firms is a particular concern for them.

It is therefore proposed at this stage that more work is done to understand the issues faced by young people with a disability and that this should be taken through the Dialogue Youth Initiative to allow the widest possible range of service providers including retailers and transport services to consider options for the future.

- **Addiction Issues**

- A presentation was made at the Forum about some of the services currently available to both prevent addiction in young people and to support young people who have addiction problems. The infrastructure both within the Council and the Health Service has been expanding and at this stage it is recognised that the recent staff in post and the recent service developments need time to consolidate their work.

- **Teenage Mental Health**

- This issue was raised by young people, but is in fact a current local and national issue for both statutory services and the voluntary sector. There is an ongoing debate about how positive mental and emotional health can be promoted through schools and the wider community.

Mental health is a priority to be considered as part of the Child Health Strategy in conjunction with Children and Young Person's Service Plans. It is also recognised in East Ayrshire's Community Plan as a priority in the promoting health theme.

There is a clearly recognised gap in not only the Council's approach but across Community Planning Partners in relation to teenage mental health and it is proposed at this stage that the next Children and Young Person's Service Plan and the Child Health Strategy properly reviews current services and identifies where improvements require to take place.

- **General**

- Representatives of the Multi-Agency Forum for Young People were invited to join the Authority wide Student Council Forum to plan for a seminar in November for young people which will consider and debate the issue of active citizenship for young people. The seminar is targeted at secondary school aged pupils and will also involve young people from youth projects and in particular members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

4. POLICY/LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil at this stage.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members of the Policy & Resources Committee are asked to:

- (i) endorse the action contained in this report; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JM/KG/SR
25 July 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. East Ayrshire Multi-Agency Forum for Young People - P&R Committee Report 29 November 2001
2. East Ayrshire Multi-Agency Forum for Young People - P&R Committee Report 20 February 2003

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

EAST AYRSHIRE**MULTI-AGENCY FORUM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****NOTE OF MEETING – THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2003****ATTENDING**

Councillor Tommy Farrell, Children and Young Person's Champion (Chair)
Catherine Govans, North West Youth Centre
Frazer Wright, MSYP and Looking Forward Group
Kerry Anne Clark, The Youthie
Leanne Young, MSYP and the Dairy Project
Louise Hunter, Looking Forward Group
Louise McDowall, MSYP and Stewarton Senior Youth Group
Cleo Cumisky, Youth Forum
Ashley Roxburgh, Youth Forum
Michael Johnstone, Stewarton Youth Group
Superintendent Hugh McKnight, Strathclyde Police
Prof. Gordon Wilson, Vice Chair of NHS Ayrshire & Arran Chair of Acute NHS Trust
John Mulgrew, Director of Educational & Social Services

PART MEETING

Fiona MacKinnon, Service Unit Manager, East Ayrshire Council
Tam Weir, Drug Education Advisor, East Ayrshire Council
Lisa Graham, Trippin Magazine
Alan Hamilton, Trippin Magazine
Phil Forbes, Bridge Project

APOLOGIES

David McDowall, MSYP and Stewarton Senior Youth Group
Carly Kirkwood, The Youthie
Craig Glover, MSYP and the Dairy Project
Jessie Marsh, MSYP and Cumnock Youth Forum
George Irving, Chair of NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Drew McIntyre, Leader of the Council

1. INTRODUCTION

Councillor Farrell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. DIALOGUE YOUTH UPDATE

Councillor Farrell asked for an update on the Dialogue Youth Initiative. Anne Jackson reported that this initiative has already been piloted in 4 Local Authorities across Scotland. It will offer improved information services to young people as well as supporting the development of a SMART card, which will give young people access to discounts from local and national businesses. It is hoped to have the new

staff appointed in the very near future. Youth Forum Representatives will be involved in the interview process.

3. **YOUTH CRIME**

Leanne Young asked how youth crime is being tackled and whether young people are considered as victims of youth crime. Superintendent McKnight indicated that the Police do not differentiate between young people and adults as victims of crime. Supt. McKnight reported that youth crime in East Ayrshire over the last year has fallen by 20% approximately, although he recognised that young people may still have a perception of high crime.

John Mulgrew reported on the new initiative offering increased access to P.E. and sport involving young people in sporting activities and helping to divert young people from crime.

Supt. McKnight explained how the fast track facility for children's hearings operates and also of the different ways that the Police use to keep track of repeat offenders.

Kay Gilmour advised that East Ayrshire Council has employed Detached Youth Workers in the Shortlees/Riccarton and North West Kilmarnock area. Their main aim is to go out and meet young people on the street who otherwise might not approach the authorities for information or advice.

Some young people indicated that they do not always feel safe at night. Councillor Farrell asked that this is discussed at local Youth Forums and in particular to bring back views about what would make them feel safer to this Forum.

Supt. McKnight offered to meet Youth Forums individually to answer any questions on a one-to-one basis.

4. **TEENAGE SMOKING**

The issue of raising the awareness of young people regarding the long-term effects of smoking was discussed.

Professor Gordon Wilson responded that NHS Ayrshire & Arran treat smoking as a major issue. Statistics show an increase in smoking amongst young women. The NHS Board are talking with young people to find out what information would help to prevent smoking in the first place, and if they have started - how best to stop. The Health Board is also working with the Council through nurses in schools to discuss and advise young people about the effects of smoking and raising awareness.

Prof. Wilson was asked about which age group school nurses target for stopping smoking. Prof. Wilson reported that Learning Partnerships work closely with young people from Primary 7 upwards.

Cllr. Farrell invited the young people to come up with ideas on how awareness can be improved.

5. TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The quality of sex education in schools and the problems of teenage pregnancy were raised. John Mulgrew indicated that these issues are being addressed in schools.

Prof. Wilson stated that he believes sex education is best delivered in small groups but he is not convinced about single sex or mixed groups. Nurses in schools are implementing sex education from Primary 6 and up and teachers have undergone training to deliver sex education. The general feeling is that most pupils would prefer a nurse rather than a teacher for this.

Frazer Wright stated that pupils would prefer that sex education is delivered in single sex groups and men to deliver the education to boys groups.

6. ACCESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Frazer Wright asked what could be done to improve the inclusion of young people with disabilities in educational and social issues.

Anne Jackson reported that East Ayrshire Council continue to work hard to ensure that forums like the Multi Agency Forum for Young People are in place and that young people with disabilities are represented.

Cllr. Farrell stated that it is East Ayrshire Council policy to ensure that disabled access is included in all new planning applications.

Kay Gilmour advised of a NOF fund application that supports young people with a disability access out of school care groups.

7. ADDICTION ISSUES

Cllr. Farrell welcomed and introduced Fiona MacKinnon, Lisa and Alan, Tam Weir and Phil Forbes to do a brief presentation on work that is being carried out in East Ayrshire concerning addiction issues.

Fiona MacKinnon explained the structure of the Children & Families Fieldwork Teams and the work that they carry out. They target the most vulnerable young people in secondary schools.

Tam Weir spoke about his role of coordinating drugs education. He reported that a recent survey indicated that S1-S3 pupils indicated that many know it is dangerous to take drugs but are unaware of the real dangers of taking them.

Lisa and Alan from 'Trippin' magazine informed the group of how they gathered information for the magazine by interviewing local celebrities and how the magazine was a way of raising drugs awareness and providing news. They talked about the magazine content and the competition that was being run - first prize a Play Station 2.

Finally, Phil Forbes from Bridge Addiction Services talked about the alternatives to addictions. There are 3 ongoing initiatives. They are:

- ◆ Board Game and Video
- ◆ Drama Initiatives; and
- ◆ Mural Project

Supt. McKnight praised the 'Trippin' magazine by saying that it was very informative and well-put together and encouraged people to take the time to read it.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN FULL TIME EDUCATION

Cleo Cumisky raised the issue of the bursary and bonus systems that are in place within schools. She explained that she feels that the bonus system is unfair as students who are not eligible for bursaries also work hard to get good grades but do not benefit from the £150 bonus scheme.

Cllr. Farrell indicated that the guidelines for the scheme are set by the Scottish Executive. The scheme, which was piloted in East Ayrshire, was devised to promote attendance at schools by supporting young people from low-income families to stay on at school. The scheme in East Ayrshire has been very successful as the number of young people that are staying on at school has risen significantly and the levels of attainment are also rising. Cllr Farrell suggested that the issue of bonuses and the present system could be raised by MSYP's at the Scottish Youth Parliament.

9. TEENAGE MENTAL HEALTH

Frazer Wright questioned what is being done to raise awareness of teenage mental health issues locally.

Prof. Wilson commented that the issue of teenage mental health is a sensitive one and ways are being developed to promote positive aspects such as improving self-esteem rather than promoting mental health. Guidance staff in schools also support this work. HEBS Live & Loud event in Glasgow on 27 July will focus on raising awareness of mental health and young people.

10. HEADLINES UPDATE

Kay Gilmour provided an update on the next Headlines magazine. It is due out end of July and Craig Glover (MSYP) and others have been involved in providing articles for this issue.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Farrell reported that the Student Council Forum has agreed to support a conference in November and he extended the invitation to include the Multi Agency Forum delegates.

A query was raised as to whether the issue of a bus being available to take the MSYP's to Edinburgh had been progressed. Anne Jackson stated that there is a budget available to MSYP's which they can choose to use for this purpose.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**Thursday 18 September 2003 at 1500 hrs in Crosshouse
Community Education Centre, Playingfield Road, Crosshouse**