



BETTER OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CONFERENCE REPORT

**Children & Young People's
Strategic Partnership**

**PERTH CONCERT HALL
TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2009**



Introduction

The first 'Better Outcomes for the Children and Young People of Perth & Kinross' conference took place on 18 April 2008. The conference was very well attended by staff from across all the local partner organisations. Feedback received through the evaluation indicated that the majority of participants had found the conference very good or excellent.

As a result Perth & Kinross Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership held a second conference on 22 June 2009 focused on improving our delivery of those outcomes that will enable our children and young people to have the best start in life. This event provided an opportunity for over 200 providers of services for children and young people in Perth and Kinross to hear directly national perspectives and contemporary thinking on the issues.

The day considered the effect of particular life circumstances on children, including the longer term impact they have as these children move into adolescence and adulthood.

Synopsis of the day

The Conference included keynote presentations from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, from the National Violence Reduction Unit and John Fyffe, Executive Director Education and Children's Services, Perth and Kinross Council.

John Carnochan's presentation of 'David's Story' summarised the key events in the life of a young man who grown up in a family resistant to service interventions. As a result opportunities were missed that could perhaps have lead to better outcomes for 'David' and the man he murdered. This passionate account of the challenges some children and young people face and the importance of the right interventions by service providers was an invaluable setting for the day.

John Fyffe provided a challenging presentation that directed the participants to recognise that 'David's story' could happen in Perth and Kinross therefore we need to continue to strive to provide effective services that support all our children and young people. He also highlighted the vision for the future that focuses on transformational change that will require strong leadership to maintain focus. In particular there is a need to work towards -

- Truly integrated services - producing better outcomes
- Personalisation of services with the child at the centre
- Relationships – not structures
- Confidence in our workforce
- Belief in Public service
- Better engagement with children, young people and families

Fiona Hyslop shared the Scottish Government's vision for the early years with the conference participants.

Following lunch Julie Russo and Sheila Messenger, Depute Educational Psychologists, Education and Children's Services, Perth & Kinross Council, provided two presentations. Julie focussed on how children and young people develop good emotional health and well-being; in particular how people working with children and young people can support the development of key protective factors such as resilience, connectedness and engagement. Sheila's presentation went on to develop this theme further with a particular focus on ...

The final group of presentations were led by Bill Atkinson, Head of Children's Services, Perth & Kinross Council, who introduced the key priorities of the Integrated Children's Services Plan for Perth and Kinross. Bill encouraged participants to consider how their work contributes to delivery of these priorities and the plan. Some current practice examples were shared by three practitioners. Brenda Kerr, Head Teacher at Rattray Primary, provided an overview of the initiatives her school has developed to better engage parents and develop early interventions. Sheila Cron, Public Health Practitioner with Perth and Kinross Community Health Partnership, illustrated the impact that Baby Bumps, a group for teenagers who are pregnant or mothers, has had on the health and wellbeing of both the girls and their babies. Finally Anne Dalzeil, Head Teacher at Letham Primary, shared her experience of how a 'nurture' approach can make a difference for children at all ages. In particular she highlighted how her school had worked to support a particularly vulnerable young boy. The longer term impact of all these interventions on the outcomes for the children clearly relate to the key messages of the speakers earlier in the day.

Table Top Discussions

Through a number of opportunities for table top discussion attendees were encouraged to relate the information they gain from the speakers to their experience of local delivery of services.

The key points of these discussions were noted and a summary of these are included as Appendix 2. The main themes running through these discussions were:

- Better information sharing and networking is required between organisations
- Better engagement with communities is needed to understand local challenges
- Resources should be targeted to earlier intervention
- Integrated working needs to be enhanced and silo working overcome
- Leadership and willingness to embrace change is required

Next Steps

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership are keen to continue to develop communication with organisations delivering services for children and young people in all localities in Perth and Kinross. Therefore they will engage in another series of locality seminars to meet directly with service providers to discuss the local challenges and opportunities. These seminars will be scheduled between November 2009 and February 2010.

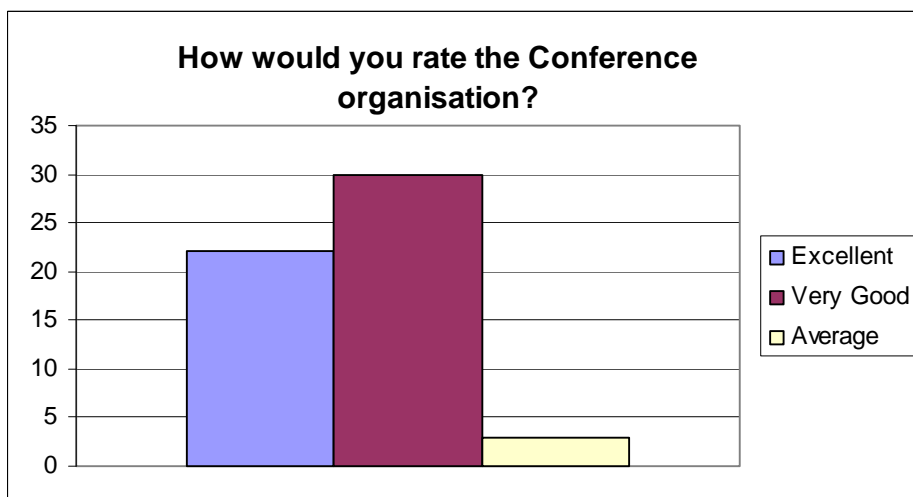
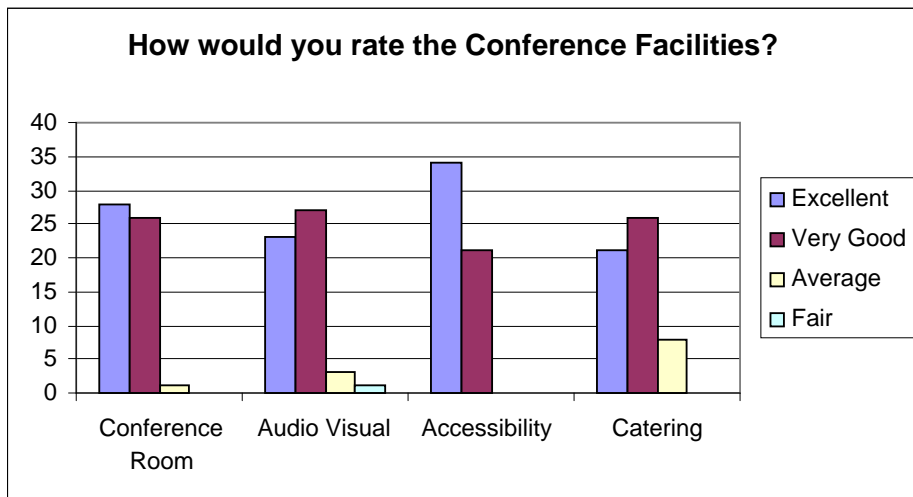
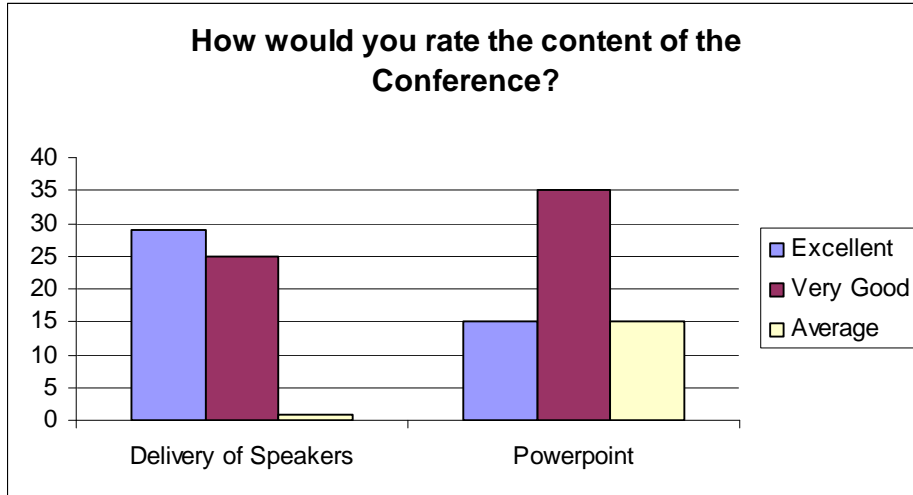
Other effective methods of engaging communities to inform decision making will be developed through improvement actions being led by Perth and Kinross Council. This will contribute to development and implementation of a new approach to locality planning by the Community Planning Partnership which will build on existing structures and initiatives. The development will include a strong focus on ensuring integrated practice and resources to meet the needs of children, young people and families in locality areas. It will also focus on developing local networks to enhance information sharing and the dissemination of good practice.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership will further develop their strategic planning to ensure delivery of the priorities in the Integrated Children's Services Plan. This will include consideration of resource allocation to enhance early intervention opportunities and integrated working. In locality areas service providers will continue to develop integrated working approaches.

The Integrated Children's Services Plan will be published on the Perth and Kinross Council website. Work will then be undertaken to identify the key actions required in each locality to support delivery of this plan.

Participants Evaluation of the Conference

Very positive feedback was received from those participants who returned evaluation questionnaires. The content of the conference, facilities and organisation were all predominantly rated very good or average.



Participants' reflections on the day

- Excellent quality of the speakers
- Need to focus on what we do
- Made me realise the need to build on what is already happening and share good practice
- Very good, really enjoyed it; inspirational – make us all look at our practice
- Now recognise importance of good parenting
- Realise importance of effective partnerships/relationships and working together
- Quite inspiring listening to the work being done in the community by practitioners
- Could maybe have been an even more focussed event, although the day was good
- We need to build on what works (e.g. nurture initiatives) and use resources across all partners to make a difference
- Interesting and more importantly, inspiring

Summary

This conference provided a key opportunity to focus on actions that the Partnership and related services can undertake to achieve better outcomes for the children and young people in Perth and Kinross. The outcomes of the conference that participants have taken away will not only strengthen the impact of local the revised Integrated Children's services Plan but also the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement for Perth and Kinross.

Table Top Discussions – Key Issues Raised

Table Top Discussion 1

What are the barriers to earlier interventions?

- No holistic approach to information sharing/who to contact; increased challenges in rural areas/across dispersed services
- Systems re pre 3s and mental health referrals
- Reducing gaps between services that children can fall in
- Time needed to build relationships
- Limited resources to cover key times i.e. summer holidays, after school
- Perceptions of services
- Stigma of working with services; reluctance to get involved
- Too much focus on short term and attainment targets
- Cultural barriers – negative outlook, personal roles - varying levels of when to intervene - differences
- Systems and structures can discourage innovation and improvement
- Professional accountability/approaches/structures compartmentalise people
- Working on a year to year budget, short term progress; lack of funding
- Performance boundaries and roles; working out-with comfort zone
- Finance, professional resilience, high workloads, shifting the balance from work at the start and to early intervention
- Legal – communication transfer due to legal/confidential fears
- Incompatible IT systems/differences in communication systems and methods
- Lack of lets and accommodation to run groups
- Constant structure and staff changes are disruptive, unintended consequences

How can we reduce or overcome these?

- Support earlier; targeting those most in need
- More nurture groups, P1-3 support, parenting programmes; build in resilience from the earliest stages for parents and children
- Develop and share knowledge and skills – empathy, assessing sensitively, overcoming resistance, perseverance, working with substance misuse, value “soft skills” more
- Male role models – valuing young boys
- Clear about our measurable outcomes
- Need joined up working; some very good work but lack of cohesion
- Parents need to be involved, can’t devolve responsibility
- Rationalisation of methodologies e.g. parenting programmes
- Clear, disseminated responsibility to designated professionals (akin to girfec ideal), clear relationships established with roles to avoid duplication. Better communication, sharing of skills, common goals and shared objectives. Courage to challenge when appropriate.
- Achieve cultural change naturally through taking a long term view and planning resources across time.

- Flexibility of curriculum in schools; more on teaching relationship skills
- Learn from the success of early intervention strategies - evaluate what makes them work and replicate this widely; stop inventing new projects
- Improve the quality of the learning and teaching
- Ensure that finances are redirected to wherever they have most impact
- Break the Cycle!
- Find the local “hook” to engage parents – could be a full time nurse
- Develop information sharing - SWIFT/MIS/GIRFEC; more effective networking. Need to consider how info can be kept current.
- A better attitude to risk
- A database where ‘cause for concerns’ – logged professionals able to see the whole picture and agencies/names involved
- Integrated team approach – community campus model
- Listen to local needs/intelligence and address geographic issues - resources need to follow problems
- Need to ensure that high level strategy works on the ground and that protocols are effective; reflect on what works and learn lessons
- Involve children/parents/the community in decision making; increase confidence to take responsibility and get involved
- Need rural model for early interventions
- Leadership and “courage”
- Re-educate attitudes of staff/general public/service users/politicians.
- Give individuals the right/ability to aspire to employment – not everyone is academic.
- Target setting: targets do not necessarily measure improved human relationships because cannot be counted or evidence value for money.

What are the lessons to be learned and how could they be applied to other areas?

- Support by managers should be evident at all levels. Openness and transparency is required. Communication should be consistent and empathy in line with parenting strategy principles encouraged.
- Integrated, focussed working
- Sharing information is key, everyone taking on their responsibilities
- Important to have consistency across authority – large/small schools, city centre/rural areas.
- Developing a common language for sharing practice/information.
- Use of fostering for young mums and baby? Unborn baby protocol seen as positive. Rattray area good example of interagency working.
- Multi-agency training around parenting should be provided. Links to domestic violence, drugs and alcohol work.
- Transformation – spread change and new models; celebrate/share good practice; analyse and disseminate what works.
- Opportunities for schools to have lower level (not CP3) to feed info Police/agencies
- Learn from high performing countries like Finland and Sweden which focus on more social aspects of early years.
- Local solution to local problems; use services i.e. community wardens

Table Top Discussion 2

How do we improve our understanding of local needs to inform local services and overall planning?

- Use local agencies to learn local needs and responses; listen to/ involve local people; give different ways to express needs/views
- Expect to hear different needs in different areas
- Keep initiatives small before rolling out.
- Identifying local resources; engage and use inspirational leaders – win hearts and minds
- Look at and interpret statistical data (e.g. income, crime, teenage pregnancies)

Where does or could the service you or your team provide support delivery of the ICSP?

- Use of new community campus to provide facilities to work with families and young children.
- Look at how we deliver services in rural areas
- Become less target focus - ease bureaucratic burden - streamlining resources, no bombarding people with services
- Shorten formal school day – extra curriculum activities in school
- Schools a community hub which can generate an increased willingness to identify other latent needs
- Pupil council/pupil groups run assemblies. Let children/young people see what 'happens next' when they have given their views
- Have staff tasked to do direct work
- The 'nurture group' concept should be expanded/developed supported by line managers/peers; roll out bounce back on a wider basis
- "I would commission the two (ED – PSY) speakers to inspire my volunteers"
- Increase appreciation of attachment theory and its impact on a child's education & development
- Nurture staff at all levels; an ethos of mutual respect and empathy should be established; adult behaviour is often very bad role modelling
- Team meetings, cup of tea, taking the time out, allowing space for reflection, supervision, listening to colleagues, giving praise, networking, teambuilding,
- Using buddy systems
- Help staff see the links to a common goal
- Better outcomes seminars to continue and deliver message on a wider scale
- Make staff feel they are doing a worthwhile job, good communication
- Induction packs and processes – can we share opportunities
- Training to do your job properly – ongoing needs to be met
- Networking is crucial – working in personal silos is damaging
- Promote what we do in a positive way

How can you and your organisation take time to develop better relationships with the children and young people you work with?

- Address organisational culture that conveys that consultation with young people is tokenistic with only transient attention to views gained.
- Looking at different ways of working so we can reach more young people – group work, go to where young people are, taking time to build relationships; identify and respond to individual needs.
- Respond to children – thinking about the way we talk to them - listen to children’s behaviour – what is the route cause? Don’t label
- Explaining to the child we cannot always resolve things
- Art and other mediums of communication are very useful, communication must be at the level of the child
- Development of the whole child should be key to curriculum rather than focusing on subjects and academic achievement only.
- Involve children at various levels – incorporate their interest - find out what each child is good at
- Accept we may not like what we hear
- Use of mediation, restorative practices helps more fully involve young people and provides a safe environment to express views.
- Co-operative learning approaches in schools will help allow pupils to share views and develop better relationships
- Creating “special places” where children feel safe
- Training children to express their views, be emotionally literate
- IT creatively used; DVD/video – big brother diary room
- Provide places they want to access – not based in the city
- Be aware of your own feelings
- Be prepared to step out of comfort zones/respond to young people in a manner they accept
- Remind those working with children and young people that it is their responsibility to develop and nurture relationships with pupils
- Focus on the positive and stop highlighting the negative

Table Top Discussion 3

What can be taken away from the speakers and discussions held to improve integrated working in your area?

- Be bold, be brave, be decisive. Belief of all involved. Articulate the vision into daily practice
- Information sharing must take place at a more sustained and deeper level; and earlier. Importance of everyone working together to make a difference – referral pathways – good communication
- Inter-agency working should be made accountable - integrated working gets results, there are already results of progress
- Champion, leadership, valuing working as a team
- Importance of transition – continuity
- Sharing good practice – reflecting in other areas what we are doing well – networking
- Extension of nurture ethos Make the small things happen
- Allow time of reflection, getting the “light bulbs” moment and act
- The new community campus will assist joined up working
- Include parents in future events
- LOCAL is the key; housing, police, health; get staff into the community – anywhere they will meet local people

What key actions would you like to see happen – at a Perth and Kinross area and local level?

- More joined up working and quality joint training that is relevant and at an advanced level
- Champions to motivate – sharing good practice to reinforce messages
- Counsellor in every primary and secondary school
- Use of Integrated Team Meetings to involve primary schools
- Build on the models of the projects that we know are working
- Senior managers visiting practice environments – lets them know how's it going for real?
- Early years network – engaging with teaching networks
- Share information so that everyone made aware of good practice
- Key statistics for areas produced and available online ERIC/Glow
- Develop community policing/health links to schools
- Building up relationships in Highland Perthshire between services
- Directory of who is who and who does what
- More practitioner based forums to tackle real issues in localities
- More engagement with communities

Who needs to be involved in making these happen?

- All groups working with children and families
- Children, young people and their families themselves
- Needs co-ordinated with clear leadership
- All partner needs to be a commitment from management