

Housing - the missing piece of the jigsaw?

South Lanarkshire perspective on GIRFEC and housing/homelessness

Shelter Conference

30th March 2010

Current Age	Blantyre	Cambuslang	Carlisle	East Kilbride	Hamilton	Lanark	Larkhall	Rutherglen	Totals
0	5	5	2	6	5	5	6	9	43
1	15	23	15	25	30	23	28	21	180
2	13	19	11	22	34	12	25	15	151
3	13	16	9	27	34	11	12	11	133
4	12	9	8	24	33	14	19	8	127
5	12	11	11	16	19	15	13	6	103
6	12	7	12	4	24	11	11	8	89
7	9	12	11	13	16	12	20	6	99
8	9	6	7	9	15	7	16	15	84
9	8	5	14	14	24	10	9	4	88
10	9	15	10	23	19	11	10	12	109
11	6	8	3	19	15	6	7	4	68
12	5	7	10	9	18	5	9	8	71
13	8	8	6	10	16	12	10	6	76
14	5	11	8	7	14	8	10	2	65
15	3	8	4	11	15	16	13	7	77
16	3	8	11	18	20	12	16	7	95
Total	147	178	152	257	351	190	234	149	1658

2008

2009

Issues for Homeless Children

- Disruption to education - getting to school & educational attainment
- Health issues - pre 5s, 5-10s, 10+
- Coping with change, loss, bereavement
- Sense of instability & impermanence
- Shame, embarrassment, anxiety
- Experience of bullying or harassment
- Impact of unsuitable housing
- Coping with parents under pressure

Key points:

- Housing is not a child focused service
- Child focused services tend not to consider/understand impact of poor housing & homelessness on children
- Children's needs often get lost when a family is homeless
- How do we address these issues together to support children?

Available Resources

- Children affected by homelessness subgroup since 2002 - feeds into ICS & homelessness strategy groups & links to homelessness operational working group & homelessness service user involvement working group
- Some specialist services - Shelter families, Women's Aid, Family (housing) support workers, Breaking the Cycle
- Mainstream services working with children - education, social work, NHS, integrated children's services
- Consultation work with children affected by homelessness

Children Affected by Homelessness Action Plan (links to main ICS plan)

- Developing effective reporting information, including outcomes
- Develop system to make sure all homeless children at least have someone keeping an eye on them - schools & public health nursing
- Support re continuity of education
- Support re health issues
- Play & activity opportunities
- Awareness raising in schools - including tackling stigma & bullying
- Getting regular feedback from children
- Young people - substance misuse (health) & MCMC

GIRFEC in South Lanarkshire

- Lanarkshire learning partnership has key role
- Government funding for resource team to implement GIRFEC approach across all services - delivering culture, systems & practice change
- Locally based GIRFEC structures comprising Education, SW, NHS & ICS
- GIRFEC is not a separate issue but an approach & way of working across key services
- Spirit/philosophy applies across the board: early years framework, parenting strategy, children with additional support needs etc etc
- Applies to children affected by homelessness because it applies to all children!

Getting Homelessness on the children's agenda

- CABH sub group is key element
- Provides champions across key services
- Updates to ICS steering group which has GIRFEC implementation as key priority area
- Actions in main ICS action plan (includes multi-agency training & awareness raising)
- CD produced with/by homeless children
- Local area co-ordination groups for ICS tasked to consider needs of homeless children
- To everyone's benefit!

Getting children's issues on the housing/homelessness agenda

- Housing duty to consider the best interests of children in providing housing (since 1987) - relevance to making a reasonable offer
- Unsuitable accommodation order has raised profile in homelessness services
- Child protection awareness
- Further training/awareness raising
- Housing representation on local ICS area co-ordination groups
- To everyone's benefit!

Education pilot

- Family support workers & school attendance officers
- Dec 07 - June 08
- FSWs shared information on children referred to them
- 86 children
- 15 changed school & 15 had attendance below 80%
- Better support for children
- Better awareness
- Prevention role for attendance officers

GIRFEC - information exchange

- March 08 - August 09
- Concept of watching brief or active service
- Explore how we should manage data sharing
- Permissions from families
- Through GIRFEC local structures (East Kilbride)
- Education pilot 1st of all
- 148 children during period
- Highly successful - now rolling out
- Taking forward NHS aspect of pilot - more complex

Government Guidance on Best Interests of Children

- Discussed at ICS strategy group
- Agreed to work with Shelter to pilot implementation
- Key assessment areas in revised GIRFEC practice papers across key services
- Continue with action plan

Discussion points

- What do you know about children affected by homelessness in your area?
- How is GIRFEC being implemented in your area?
- What is in place to provide support for children affected by homelessness in your area? What else do you need?
- What building blocks do you have?
- How can you move forward?