

APPENDIX 2

MORE CHOICES, MORE CHANCES EVALUATION JULY 2008

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) Strategy group have over the last 12 months commissioned a series of activities aimed at supporting the development of the Moray MCMC Strategy and Action Plan. The initiatives will be detailed in this paper along with the key aims and work carried out by the MCMC Development team (who were contracted by the Strategy Group). Where appropriate the initiatives and development work will be linked with key actions from the Strategy Action Plan. The group is currently reviewing the strategy and the future direction of the strategy group, the contract for the development team and the role of the group in relation to The Fairer Scotland Fund.

2.0 Development Team:

The MCMC Development Team were commissioned to undertake a series of key actions to drive forward the MCMC Strategy and ensure the implementation of the key themes outlined in the Strategy document.

Examples of these would include:

- To identify and clarify the needs of the young people in Moray who are in need of MCMC or at risk.
- Map existing service currently working with the MCMC group.
- Establish existing education, employment and training opportunities currently available in Moray

2.1 A core piece of work undertaken was mapping and research among 3 key stakeholder groups - Agencies working with young people, young people and employers.

The aim of this was to establish:

- A comprehensive overview of existing provision (which will include gaps in services, and ideas for service improvement)
- Ideas and views from young people on their experiences and ideas for future improvements
- Employers views and opinions on young people, what their experiences have been with young people and what they feel they can contribute to the MCMC agenda

The resultant information from this research work will be available following the publication of the report in August 2008 which will include a series of recommendations for the Strategy group on how services for MCMC young people could be strengthened.

Action Plan links:

Improve Intelligence in relation to the status of the 14 – 19 year old age groups.

Mapping of services aimed at key groups of YP

Raise the profile of and increase the engagement of employers in the MCMC Agenda.

Establish employers perceptions and attitudes towards young people from the target group.

Other core work for the Development Team included:

- Supporting the Strategy group in their work including development of updating the Action Plan on a quarterly basis.
- Provision of regular reports on progress.
- Proving a coordinating role across other linked Strategy groups.

3.0 INITIATIVES

In addition to the core work the Development team supported the MCMC Strategy Funding sub group in the development of a series of initiatives.

These initiatives were borne primarily from the result of the initial research carried out and included:

3.1 INTERAGENCY TRAINING/PARTNERSHIP WORKING.

3.1.1 Networking Event – was held to launch the Strategy and promote the training initiatives. The event was attended by a number of key agencies and provided a forum for information sharing and networking.

3.1.2 A series of interagency awareness raising sessions which were delivered to and by practitioners. These sessions were developed in response to the need for a greater awareness among agencies of what each other does and to achieve a core minimum standard of knowledge and skills among those working directly with young people. An evaluation of this initiative has been carried out and the initial results indicate that those who attended found it very positive not only for improved delivery but for raising awareness of other services roles and remits. The evaluation also highlighted a need for additional training around mental health and homelessness. From the results of this programme the Strategy group funded 12 places for training on Mental Health for practitioners.

3.1.3 On line Skills Survey was launched to establish current set of skills currently held by practitioners working with young people. The survey was developed through consultation with key agencies. Analysis of the key findings have still to be carried out but initial results indicate that there are some key areas where are gaps in skills and knowledge. These initiatives highlighted a real willingness among agencies to work in partnership and a clear aspiration to share information and strengthen links.

Action Plan Links:

Develop with partner's effective key worker support which ensures that young people receive appropriate support when they need it and specifically at key transition points.

Develop generic key worker training ensure consistency in delivery and maintain high quality delivery to young people.

3.2 Directory of Services for Young People.

The Directory which includes a comprehensive overview of all service working with young people will be incorporated with the existing Additional Support for Learning Directory. It will be available as an on line tool and can be updated on a regularly.

Action Plan Links:

Mapping of services aimed at key groups of YP

3.2 INTERVENTION RESOURCES

3.2.1 Voucher Scheme

Vouchers have been made available to agencies working with young people. The vouchers are aimed at providing interventions which will provide additionally to young people support package and are aimed at:

- Aiding employability, education and /or training
- Boosting confidence and self esteem.

The use of this voucher scheme is administered and co-ordinated by the Development Team and is evaluated on an ongoing basis. Initial evidence suggests that the vouchers used are providing useful additionally as part of a young persons overall support package.

3.2.2 Resources:

A package of resources which can be utilised by agencies working on project with young people in need of More Choices and More Chances and includes: laptop with editing software, camcorder etc. The take up on the use of this scheme has been limited and it requires to be better publicised.

3.2.3 Study Kits

Young people who attend college on exceptional entry (before their official leaving date for school) are unable to access funding through the Bursary scheme and have therefore have no access to money to purchase equipment for courses. This acts as a barrier for this group of young people starting college. The Strategy group agreed to fund a selection of study kits for this target group of young people.

Action Plan Links:

Develop with partner's effective key worker support which ensures that young people receive appropriate support when they need it and specifically at key transition points.

3.3 Pilot Activities for young people;

The Strategy group have funded several pilot initiatives aimed directly at young people. These initiatives have included young people who are currently within full time education and those currently in the More Choices category and were developed in response to identified need for these groups of young people.

The following Early Intervention initiatives have still to be evaluated:

3.3.1 Elgin High School/ College Collaboration aimed at 8 young people from S4 who were currently not engaging with education. The programme consisted of a series of activities designed to re-engage the young people and was delivered as a multi agency approach. Initial feedback has indicated that 6 of the young people who were involved are now re-engaged with positive destinations after the Summer.

3.3.2 Elgin High School S3 project Aimed at young people in S3 who are at risk of entering the MCMC category additional support was targeted at these individuals. A more detailed evaluation is still to be carried out on this project

3.3.3 Speyside High School and Forres Academy Aimed at young people who potentially were at risk of falling into the MCMC category and was designed to add value to existing provision already delivered within each school. The target group was 6 young people who required intensive support with a further 20 being offered less intensive support. This initiative aimed to keep the young people engaged and prepare them for life after school in partnership with other agencies including Careers Scotland.

Action Plan Links:

Recognise young people wider achievements through giving credit to the different skills and abilities.

Develop suitable models and expand choice for work related vocation learning including Skills for Work courses within schools, colleges and partner organisations in order that young people can develop their vocational and employability skills

Target:

Additional action for those who currently do not benefit appropriately from school including improving the outcomes for looked after children.

3.4 MCMC YOUNG PEOPLE:

3.4.1 The Loft Parenting Project – aimed at 12 young parents from the Keith area to provide support to build confidence and competence through a series of workshops over a 6 week period. The overall aim to ensure that the young people, when ready would have the skills and confidence to progress into training and/ or employment. This was developed in response to the high numbers of young parents aged 16 currently living in the Keith area.

3.4.2 Young Peoples Multi Agency Activity Project: - This initiative had 2 main aims – one to provide a way to engage with young people aged 16 and 17 who were known to services but not currently engaging fully and support them to build confidence, motivation and raise their personal self belief in themselves to overcome barriers to finding work and secondly to encourage partnership working. The project consisted of a series of employment focused and leisure/confidence building

activities. From an initial 12 young people starting on the course 6 fully completed and achieved their Bronze Youth Achievement Awards with a further 3 achieving other certificates. Of the 6 young people who completed the course – one has moved area, 2 are now working, 1 is going to college in September and 2 have been referred to Get Ready for Work. The evaluation of this indicated that the young people felt much more positive about their lives, confident about finding work and had gained more motivation. An awards ceremony was held to present the young people with their certificates which they were presented with by the Vice Convenor of Moray Council.

Action Plan links

Develop more effective engagement strategies with young people

Utilise existing structures partners will collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the MCMC group and those at risk.

Use existing award schemes such as the New Start Duke of Edinburgh award and the Millennium Volunteer Awards to celebrate young people's achievements.

Award ceremonies/events for young people who have progressed where appropriate.