



Early Action System Change

West Dunbartonshire



Overall Aim:



- To work towards shifting 5% of West Dunbartonshire Council's spend into the prevention of homelessness by the conclusion of the 3-year project.



Why....



- Action for children has a proven track record of shifting resources in youth homelessness- Dundee Youth Housing service has shown a 35% decrease in referrals to supported accommodation.
- Young people presenting to WDC as homeless accounted for a third of homeless presentations in 2015/16 and 28% during 2017/18.
- Around a third of repeat presentations – assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness twice in the same 12-month period- were young people.

Early Intervention



- Multi-agency, partnership approach
- Co-production with young people
- Themes
- Housing Options test of change
- Schools based test of change



Partnerships



- EASC have established partnerships within Local Authority area; Local Authority departments; and 3rd sector organisations who are in contact/ offering support to young people.
- Able to identify areas of research in relation to early intervention and the root causes surrounding youth homelessness.
- Importance of continuity between service providers to deliver a 'joined up' approach to meet the holistic needs of young people.

Co-production



- **Identifying** root causes of potential homelessness to break down current barriers that young people face when accessing services
- **Focus groups** with young people who are currently known to homelessness services
- **Expert group** of 6 young people with lived experience of homelessness. The first meeting took place in November 2019 and allowed the young people to discuss current homeless provision for their age group within WD. One of the participants is a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament who has experienced homelessness with his family when he was a child and is keen to raise any suggestions generated from the expert group meetings at local and national government level.
- **One to One** consultations with young people who have experienced youth homelessness
- **Community events** gathering the views of the public on youth homelessness

Consultation and Engagement



- Providing young people with a platform to identify issues specific to them.
- Enabling young people to contribute to future system change by recognising their existing experiences.
- Maintaining self-directed learning throughout



Themes



- Common themes that are presenting from the voices of our young people and from partnership meetings with services;
 - Family breakdown
 - Mental Health
 - Substance use
 - Bereavement



Our Young Peoples voices....



- What does it mean to be homeless?

" You don't have any money for food"

"You don't have a place to live"

- Why might someone be homeless?

" They might have no family"

"You might lose your job"

"You can't pay rent"

"You have noise complaints"

"You buy drugs and alcohol instead of paying your rent"

- Why might someone leave home at 16 years old?

" Pregnant and parents don't accept it"

" To go to university"

" Just want to live on their own"

" Want to have their own rules"

- What would be good about having your own house?

"Don't get moaned at"

" Eat what you want"

" Have your friends over and have parties"

Housing Options Test of Change



- Working in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council homelessness department.
- Structured plan in place with WDC staff supporting AFC staff to deliver a housing options approach, identifying support needs and introducing appropriate interventions at earliest point.
- Crisis referrals to homelessness team remain with homelessness team due to statutory duty
- Shared living approach discussed, based on an initiative used by the Simon community as an alternative approach to housing young people

Predictions...



- Working alongside the homelessness team to deliver the housing options approach will allow interventions to be put in place for young people making housing enquiries which will reduce homeless presentations.
- Working alongside young people offering interventions and follow up upon 'return to previous tenancy' will reduce repeat presentations



School based test of change



- Clydebank High School identified as pilot Secondary school
- Area of highest demand for tenancies across WDC
- Pastoral care team have identified 14 pupils across the S4-S6 year groups who are at risk of homelessness.
- 1-1 sessions looking at individual needs and offering appropriate interventions
- Group sessions looking at general housing / budgeting/ homelessness advice



Predictions...



- Working alongside S4-S6 pupils in Clydebank High School will identify young people who may be at risk of homelessness at the earliest point and allow staff to intervene pre-crisis and in turn reduce homeless presentations within WDC



Scotcen Analysis



- Scotcen will analyse the data generated by the housing options and school-based tests of change to determine economic savings that the tests of change and the partnership between WDC and Action for Children will evidence.
- Scotcen will carry out research interviews with young people and stakeholders to gather individual experiences of young people and the opinions of stakeholders who are in direct contact with young people who are experiencing homelessness to further inform their research.

Summary....



- The Early Action System Change project is predicted to show cost savings for West Dunbartonshire Council in relation to homelessness by its completion date.
- The Housing options test of change and Schools based test of change will inform our research and both will be monitored to ensure delivery of most relevant interventions
- This in turn will lead to young people shaping the solutions for future homelessness prevention and influencing how these solutions and future interventions will look and function.



QUESTIONS?

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