

LOCHEE WARD PATHFINDER

PROGRESS REPORT 3 April 2014

The following is taken from a number of evaluations and reports compiled by colleagues from Dundee University, Dundee Voluntary Action, Dundee City Council Renfrewshire Council and Avante Consulting

1.0 Introduction

The Lochee Ward Pathfinder was launched nearly 2 years ago using a Total Place approach to improve outcomes for parent and families in the Lochee multi member ward of Dundee. The aim is to test and develop integrated working between all services across the children and family spectrum with a particular focus on early years.

2.0 Background

2.1 Total Place

The Pathfinder was established as a pilot for the use of a total place approach in the implementation of the Scottish Government's 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) policy. The core aim was and remains to improve the outcomes for children and families in the Lochee Ward. The plan is that the approach, where successful, can be rolled out across the city. Other areas in Scotland are also interested in the approach and have been following progress in Dundee.

The total place approach means that all the resources and assets of the locality are assessed and pulled together in order to get the maximum value and impact for every pound spent and intervention made in that locality. Included in those assets are not just the finances and workers of services but the community themselves.

This approach not only requires people coming together around the table talking and working together but people being prepared to come and work in a different way, to move resources to other areas of work and to take new approaches to the concepts of collaboration and leadership.

One of the new ways of working is that organisations active in Lochee gave staff and volunteers permission to test new ways of working and innovative pieces of work. This approach allowed a collaborative leadership group to emerge who have supported tests of change and learning from this. This freedom to go and test pieces of work has been at the heart of the Lochee Pathfinder.

2.2 Why Lochee?

The Lochee Local Community Planning Partnership area was agreed as an appropriate site for the Pathfinder because:

- Lochee itself is a natural hub with a distinct identity for much of the population in that part of the city;
- There is potential within existing Dundee City Council, NHS and partners' premises for co-location of staff and by doing so establishing 'hubs' for activity across the community partnership area;
- Lochee has a range of services for children 0-5 in the area and a particularly strong presence from NHS practitioners;
- There is a strong sense of partnership and community spirit and the desire from the community to be more engaged in decision making.

2.3 Leading and Learning

One of the tests for the Pathfinder has been how to translate the collaborative leadership approach into a more distributive leadership approach where workers on the ground and local people take a leading role. These are the people at the coal face of change, those being actively encouraged to test fresh ways of working and to promote reflective practice that supports learning.

Testing new ways of working means there will be times when it works and times when it doesn't, what's important is to test in a culture that celebrates and supports effort and does not blame when things fail, but commits to learning from both.

2.4 The Change Team

It was recognised at an early stage that for the community involvement element of the Pathfinder to be supported there would need to be extra resource in the shape of a Change Team. Three community engagement officers, a manager and admin staff are now in place and taking new initiatives forward in partnership with communities and services.

Their role is to assist organisations to work together and develop services that will benefit communities and families; to work with those communities and families themselves to build their capacity to develop the services they require and to facilitate co-production between services and families. The team also have a role to test some of these changes and to measure their impact.

2.5 Priority Areas for Action

The priority areas for action agreed at the outset of the Pathfinder that have been the focus of activity were:

- Coordination, integration and networking between service providers;
- Communities shaping and delivering services;
- Play opportunities for children;
- Accessible and affordable leisure services;
- Financial and Housing support to families.

And this is being achieved by:

- Adopting the Dundee Hierarchy of Needs system which entitles all children at a point of need to a SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respects, included) assessment. Where necessary this can lead to a single Child's Plan, co-ordinated by a Lead Professional;
- Using the early year's indicators as a means to aid self-evaluation and measuring outcomes and the impact on the child and family;
- Considering how all the 0-5 related practitioners, services and agencies can more effectively work together to improve synergy and reduce any duplication of effort;
- Examining how existing locality based fora for planning and delivering services i.e. Joint Action Teams, Local Community Planning Partnership, Practitioners' Forums etc. can contribute to the GIRFEC approach;
- Commissioning Dundee University to formally evaluate the pathfinder and make any necessary recommendations for future development and potential city wide roll out.

2.6 Crucial Stage

The Pathfinder is at a crucial stage. The first two years has seen considerable work promoting and growing relationships between organisations and individuals to build a collaborative leadership approach. A great deal of effort has also gone into working with families in the Ward to establish their priorities, issues and the assets they can contribute and bring to the table. Several new approaches to service delivery have

been tested and learning from this as well as the formal evaluation, informs the next phase of work.

3.0 Interim Evaluation Findings

Sharon Jackson, Senior Lecturer at The University of Dundee has produced an interim evaluation, covering four strands:

- Analysis of the development and implementation of the Lochee Pathfinder, Eddie McGhee, University of Dundee and East Renfrewshire Council.
- Perspectives of the leadership collaborative on process and progress, Sharon Jackson, University of Dundee.
- The challenges for inter-professional collaboration and organisational change, Christine Lowden, University of Dundee and Dundee Voluntary Action.
- What Difference Does a Swim Make? Lochee children's experiences of Family Splash, Gill Simpson, University of Dundee and Dundee City Council and Sharon Jackson, University of Dundee.

3.1 The key points of learning and note from the evaluation are that:

1. The Lochee Pathfinder has benefited from commitment and support at Chief Executive and Senior Management level and that strong leadership from the Collaborative Group and others has been pivotal to development and implementation;
2. The Total Place approach facilitated the development of a shared value base within the leadership collaborative and provided the foundation for developing strong, productive and innovated collaborative working practices that are challenging existing ways of working;
3. Collaborative working practices are reducing duplication and developing practices that embed principles of integration and co-production;
4. There is evidence that the Lochee Pathfinder is a key mechanism for driving forward the GIRFEC agenda alongside the Government's wider Early Years agenda;
5. There is evidence that the Lochee Pathfinder through the adaption and refreshing of existing structures and initiatives and the development and introduction of new, bespoke initiatives is impacting positively on the lives of children and families in Lochee;
6. Initiatives connected to the Lochee Pathfinder have been positively evaluated and reviewed; including for example The Family Splash initiative, which has benefited from external research and has concluded that children's health and wellbeing is being enhanced through their participation in Family Splash;
7. The community engagement and capacity building team are now driving forward the work of the Lochee Pathfinder and have developed detailed plans for further community engagement;
8. The methodology of the Lochee Pathfinder is being rolled out within a Pilot area in East Renfrewshire. The decision to do so was based on external analysis of the Lochee Pathfinder which has concluded that the Lochee Pathfinder has developed successful structures and processes for driving forward the Scottish Government's Early Years agenda. This is a positive proxy indicator of the success of the Lochee Pathfinder to date.

3.2 Emerging Themes

The evaluation and a Pathfinder refresh event held in December 2013 have highlighted a considerable number of issues, some related to process and some to service development and delivery;

1. A pantheon of problems associated with the distribution and use of drugs with particular concerns around the impact of substance misuse on children and young people;
2. Concern at the extent to which the constant communications of the Collaborative were either not reaching or not being widely read, with the result that the profile of the Pathfinder and its work was significantly below where it needs to be;
3. The manner, attitude and behaviour of local agency staff has a strong impact on local people's willingness to engage with agencies whether as users of the service or as participants in collaborative activity (
4. The dearth of suitable, easily accessible local play area, with the example of wasted investment in a soft-play area sited cheek by jowl with an easily accessed local power station;
5. The need for affordable, local and suitable childcare;
6. The availability of suitable housing for those with young families;
7. The loss of services following acts of severe vandalism (e.g. the loss of a valued play area when burned down);
8. Unsuitable public transport to reach key services including for example the highly valued Woodlea Nursery;
9. The need to free up local buildings that stand closed or unused that could be developed as a community resource;
10. The need to make better use of local people with considerable local knowledge and networks;
11. The scale and impact of poverty is a major concern. There is a need to focus attention on jobs, transport, childcare, family support and benefit advice;
12. Many concerns around the standard and suitability of local housing;
13. The extent to which agencies work in silos and do not know about each other, share resources and information or sufficiently work together;
14. The extent to which language around professions acts as a barrier;
15. The desire of teenage mums to be accepted, to be treated fairly and equally and for professional workers to support their choices.

4.0 Conclusions

There are two main drivers that sit centre stage for the work in Lochee, the first is that it is a Pathfinder – a trailblazer for the Total Place approach; and the other is that this work centres on the government's GIRFEC policy with a specific focus within that on 0-5 years.

The Total Place approach is about whole systems, about dispersed leadership within agencies and within communities, about understanding the importance of relationships and building the same with partners and communities, about tackling wicked problems with fresh thinking, about making mistakes and learning from them, about understanding and responding to different organisational and community cultures, about listening to what's important for local people - enabling and empowering communities and about delivering value to the public.

The extent to which the Pathfinder has been able to address all of these areas is not yet clear. While the interim evaluation is positive and values the time spent on relationship-building, of the role of those in leadership positions and on the success of the Splash initiative, it also notes that there is a sense of impatience and for the

pace to pick up. This is echoed by event participants keen to see more action on the ground, particularly in engaging local people and in more tangible project development and outcome measurement.

The work of the Pathfinder is still largely unknown by both the community and agency partners and that while the basic principles of collaborative working are understood, the full detail of the Total Place approach is not sufficiently well known. The Change Team and the Collaborative Leadership Group will want to prioritise articulating the concept and securing buy-in and understanding about how people can contribute.

There is a clear and tangible commitment to fresh thinking, to collaborative working with communities and across agencies and evidence of beneficial support from those in senior leadership positions in key agencies. However, while many individual workers and community members have embraced the ideas, they are wary of middle managers who they perceive to be potential blockages to new ways of working. Those in leadership positions will want to focus attention in this area both in terms of real or perceived barriers.

Gaps remain in securing community engagement, empowerment and leadership. The plethora of issues facing the Lochee community could potentially dilute the emphasis on work with children 0-5 and their families and there will be a need to retain a focus in this area.

The original priority areas for action agreed remain valid, namely:

- Coordination, integration and networking between service providers;
- Communities shaping and delivering services;
- Play opportunities for children;
- Accessible and affordable leisure services;
- Financial and Housing support to families.

It is agreed that many of the key areas for action remain valid. However the new Children's Act must take precedence for all work focussing on children young people and their families.

It is important to remind those involved in the Pathfinder that the role of integrated assessment, the Named Person and Lead Professional as well as Team Around the Child and the Corporate Parent are paramount.

In this new legislative arena joint working arrangements are paramount and the need for collaborative working with demonstrable collaborative gain essential.

The Total Place approach will support this but must take a genuine whole system approach.

This is much more than working with communities, something the Pathfinder is still striving to get right. It is more than partners working together on joint assessment. It entails examination of budgets, of systems and processes and of relationships. Integrating the implementation of the Act with the use of Total Place approaches will bring challenges, but if achieved, these will reap rewards for children and their families and be of interest not only across the city of Dundee but much wider afield.

5.0 Next Steps

Key messages from the evaluation and the refresh event included the following priorities:

1. Communicating the concept of Total Place and the work of the Pathfinder to a much wider audience;

2. Achieving dispersed leadership and tackling any barriers at middle management level;
3. Securing greater community engagement and empowerment;
4. Listening to the very real concerns about substance misuse and how services respond more flexibly to the mixed needs in relation to these issues;
5. Working with partners on the manner and behaviour of agency staff;
6. Providing accessible and suitable local play and nursery facilities;
7. Improving transport and housing facilities;
8. Ensuring Plain English around all work;
9. Improving information-sharing;
10. Replicating that which is known to work;
11. Exploring co-location and local hubs;
12. Improving the use of vacant buildings for new initiatives;
13. Promoting a culture of change, of chance and of learning from mistakes;
14. Supporting integrated assessments and widespread understanding of the use of SHANARRI and the TATC approach;
15. Using early years indicators to aid self-evaluation and measuring outcomes and the impact on the child and family;
16. Simplifying and rationalising joint working forums to minimise duplication and ensure value;
17. Articulating the concept of collaborative gain, promoting and measuring the same;
18. Promoting and celebrating success.

6.0 Summary

The Lochee Pathfinder has made considerable progress since its launch. The success of the work to date has been largely realised through the time and effort invested in developing strong structures and mechanisms. This has been possible due the level of support and commitment at a senior level.

- A strong leadership collaborative is at the heart of the success of the Pathfinder. There have been frustrations at the pace of progress however, given that the Lochee Pathfinder is still within the early stages of a change process, the progress that has been achieved is notable.
- Collaborative working practices have been considerably enhanced and new, innovative ways of working that transcend agency boundaries are being realised and developed.
- Initiatives connected to the Lochee Pathfinder have been positively reviewed and there is evidence that they are making a positive difference to the lives of children and families in Lochee.
- The roll out of the Lochee Pathfinder methodology provides a strong indicator of the success of the model.

Bert Sandeman
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