

ANGUS COUNCIL

FAMILY, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE – 15 AUGUST 2024

TAYSIDE BAIRNS' HOOSE PATHFINDER PROGRAMME

UPDATE REPORT BY KIRSTY LEE, INTERIM DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND JUSTICE

1. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to provide members with updated information as requested by members at the Family, Education, and Justice Committee on 20th February 2024 ([report 43/24](#)) relating to the planning and development of the Bairns' Hoose pathfinder programme in Tayside following the successful bid submitted to Scottish Government by Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, and Police Scotland. The Tayside Bairns' Hoose pathfinder is one of six areas selected in Scotland to pilot and test specific trauma responsive approaches to supporting children and families involved in the child protection system. The Tayside programme will explore specific Bairns' Hoose standards to inform the Bairns' Hoose Blueprint for Scotland with full national implementation from 2027 onwards.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder programme relates to and contributes to the following priorities:

Caring for our People

We will protect those in our communities who are at risk of or have experienced significant harm.

Improve physical, mental health and wellbeing.

Caring for our Place

Make our local services accessible.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Family, Education and Justice Committee:

- (i) Have due regard to the content of the report and progress towards designing and testing trauma informed supports and services for children, young people and families involved in child protection in line with the National Standards for Bairns' Hoose; and
- (ii) Have due regard to the extension of the pathfinder stage for a further two years.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In June 2023, the Scottish Government published '[Bairns' Hoose - Scottish Barnahus: vision, values and approach](#)'. Bairns' Hoose is based on the well evaluated model first developed in Iceland, Barnahus, which ensures there is a child-centred and welcoming place for children, young people and families involved in child protection.
- 4.2 Bairns' Hoose is a transformational, whole-system approach to delivering child protection, justice, health and recovery services to child victims and witnesses of abuse and harm. The overall vision of a Bairns' Hoose in Scotland is that all children who have been victims of or have been witness to abuse or violence; as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, will have access to trauma informed recovery, support and

justice coordinated in one place. The Bairns' Hoose is there to uphold children's rights and ensure the best interests of the child is the primary consideration in all actions concerning them.

- 4.3 Ministers have agreed that these overarching principles are essential, underpinned by national Bairns' Hoose Standards, which provide a framework for a Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland.
- 4.4 Phase 1 of the National implementation is the pathfinder phase which invited applications for local areas to become Bairns' Hoose pathfinders. A Pathfinder is a test site, that will act as a proof of concept by testing the application of the Bairns' Hoose Standards in practice in the Scottish context. Using a series of tests of change, it forms part of a quality improvement and service design process.
- 4.5 Pathfinder applicants were obliged to meet the following criteria:
 - Be a Pathfinder Partnership from 2023 – 2025.
 - Work towards becoming a Bairns' Hoose and to apply the Standards.
 - Test Standards in current context and conduct GAP analysis on application of the Standards and report on findings.
 - Comprise of a collaboration across all three statutory partners (Health, Social Work, Police) with demonstrable links with third sector and education partners.
 - Meaningfully involve children and young people with lived experience of child protection and justice processes in the design and delivery of the Pathfinder work.
 - Develop trauma responsive approaches across the Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder partner organisations, systems, and workforces in line with "Creating Trauma-Informed Change: What, Why and How A Quality Improvement Framework for Trauma-Informed Organisations, Systems and Workforces in Scotland."
 - Gather, analyse, and share relevant data for learning and monitoring at regular intervals.
 - Share information and learning openly and honestly.
- 4.6 Building on strong collaborative work in child protection across Tayside, partners from the three local authorities met with Police Scotland and NHS Tayside and agreed that Tayside were well placed to submit a joint application. As a 'pathfinder,' local areas will influence and evaluate the design of the Scottish Bairns' Hoose model, identify barriers and enablers in the local context and access funds to support targeted activity.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 A Tayside bid was submitted and accepted for 2024/25 totalling £500,000. Partners had been unable to utilise all of the capital spend for 2023/24 due to the short timescales. Consequently, the capital spend will come from the 2024/25 budget and proposed spending on other areas has been reduced so that the proposed full time Bairns' Hoose co-ordinator post has been reduced to a 0.4 full time equivalent and the advanced Nurse Practitioner post reduced to 0.8 full time.
- 5.2 We have established a governance structure whereby there are three local Bairns' Hoose groups and a Health group reporting to a Tayside Delivery Group which in turn reports to a Strategic Oversight Group. (see appendix 1).
- 5.3 We have been advised by Scottish Government that the pathfinder has now been extended for another two years, so that the pilot will conclude in April 2027. We await confirmation of the funding arrangements for this period.
- 5.4 An exercise is currently underway to procure a commissioned service to provide additional support to families impacted by Child Protection issues. The intention remains that the successful service will provide support on a voluntary basis to families both pre and post Child Protection investigation particularly when there is no requirement for ongoing Social Work involvement but there are identified needs. We recognise that the Child Protection process can be very difficult for families and there is a need to support families both during the investigation and beyond. The process is hampered by lack of clarity regarding funding arrangements for the next two years.
- 5.5 The reconfiguration and refurbishment of facilities at Bellevue House in Arbroath has commenced using trauma informed principles and taking account of lived experience of children, young people and families who have been involved in child protection processes and has already brought significant improvements to Bellevue House to deliver access to supports and services in line with the Bairns' Hoose standards. It is anticipated that these developments along with the

replacement of the roof will be concluded imminently. Officers will be happy to facilitate site visit to members if they wish to see the enhanced premises on completion.

- 5.6 The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) was introduced in May 2024 across Tayside and there are two Social Workers and two Police Officers trained in Angus. The introduction of SCIM is intended to eliminate the need for children to attend Court and improve the quality and experience of interviews for children and young people. Considerably more planning is required and there are significant reporting requirements for SCIM interviews and consideration may need to be given to the allocation of resources within the current structure. As part of the SCIM process there is an enhanced support role for those who know the child best such as their schoolteacher.
- 5.7 Significant progress towards implementing the Bairns Hoose Tayside Pathfinder Programme is being made locally and across Tayside and will continue through this year and on to 2027.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is no requirement for any addition to the Corporate Risk Register.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

A screening assessment was undertaken at the time of the original report and a full Equality Impact Assessment completed.

10. CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance and the Director of Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted on the terms of the Report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: Bairns Hoose schematic (appendix 1)