

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2011

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**ABSTRACT:**

This report brings to the attention of the Education Committee the commitment of the Education Service to develop and implement 'Restorative Approaches' across all establishments and services.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) note the terms of this report
- (ii) note the work underway to develop Restorative Approaches as a key strategy in improving relationships and behaviour in our schools
- (iii) note and approve the proposals set out in Section 4 of this report

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In June 2008, HMIE published a report on the approaches taken by a sample of primary and secondary schools which had been successful in raising the achievement in literacy and numeracy of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils. The report concluded that:

*'Of all the features identified by pupils, teachers and senior managers as key to improving the odds, the most important was the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school or department. The characteristics of high quality relationships were mutual respect and trust, high expectations and aspirations, and self-belief: a shared 'can do' attitude.'*

- 2.2 In Angus, we believe that all relationships within a school community should be based on mutual respect and that a positive school ethos is essential to the creation of an anti-bullying culture. In addition, we believe that children and young people in Angus should have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self esteem to the fullest potential. Improving relationships in schools is key in narrowing the achievement gap. We are committed to realising the potential of all children, young people, communities and staff by ensuring that restorative approaches are embedded in the day to day interactions and relationships between children, young people and staff.

- 2.3 The development of restorative approaches in our schools and communities will contribute positively to improving the quality of relationships and behaviour of children and young people who are most vulnerable and at risk of being excluded from school, and from their families and communities.

*'The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including parents, whether for young people in school or those not in school.'* (Curriculum for Excellence: Building The Curriculum 3 – 2008)

- 2.4 **Restorative Approaches – Key principles:** Restorative approaches are defined as restoring good relationships when there has been conflict or harm, and developing a school ethos, and policies and procedures which reduce the possibility of such conflict and harm arising. This is an approach which acknowledges that school life is complex and which recognises the increasingly wider demands placed on schools in a diverse and changing world, where the work of teachers and support staff is both challenging and stressful.

- 2.5 The underpinning principles of restorative approaches emphasise the importance of:
- fostering positive social relationships in a school community
  - taking responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others
  - respecting other people, their views and feelings
  - empathy with the feelings of others affected by one's own actions
  - fairness
  - the commitment to an equitable process
  - the active involvement of everyone in school in making decisions about their own lives
  - a willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff.
- 2.6 The effectiveness of restorative approaches is well acknowledged within the youth justice system. In a school setting, small scale pilot studies in the UK and larger initiatives in countries including Australia provide convincing evidence of the benefits, in terms of successfully resolving conflicts, preventing victimisation and developing young people's communication and empathy skills. The approach offers the opportunity to enhance teachers' behaviour management skills beyond traditional 'control' techniques. Studies (Final Report of the Evaluation of the first two years of the Pilot Projects 2004-2006: A Collaborative Evaluation funded by the Scottish Executive, 2007) have shown that restorative approaches offer a potentially powerful and effective approach to improving relationships and behaviour in schools. However, the research also recognises that restorative approaches take time and commitment to introduce. Key success factors include commitment, enthusiasm, leadership and significant staff development along with a willingness to reflect on practice and engage with change.
- 2.7 **Restorative approaches in other local authorities across Scotland** - In Scotland a national Restorative Practice in schools pilot took place during 2004-2006 and involved 18 schools in 3 local authority areas (Fife, North Lanarkshire and Highland). The overall aim of the pilot was to learn more about Restorative Practices in school settings and to look at whether there could be a distinctive Scottish approach. The findings of the evaluation were very positive with most schools, and in particular primary schools, making significant progress in key areas of school discipline and staff and pupil relationships (Final Report of the Evaluation of the first two years of the Pilot Projects 2004-2006: A Collaborative Evaluation funded by the Scottish Executive, 2007)
- 2.8 in November 2008 the research team which evaluated the pilot schools was asked to review the key findings and outcomes of the pilot and of work in other Scottish schools, where significant progress had been made since 2006 (Restorative Practice Pilots and Approaches in Scotland – Follow Up: Lloyd, G and McCluskey, G University of Edinburgh, for the Scottish Government – unpublished) . The three pilot Local Authorities, having recognised the value of Restorative Practice, now have well-established programmes to extend the approach to other schools. Falkirk Council, after piloting a two-year development programme (led by Sacro), have also decided to extend Restorative Practice to all its schools. Restorative Practice development work was also examined in East Ayrshire, Glasgow, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.
- 2.9 Drawing on Scottish research and other evidence, the following observations and conclusions can be drawn:
- the provision of high quality initial training/expertise/experience and support is important for school development, but less effective if senior managers do not assume responsibility for the process. Continued training and on-going support has been key to continuing progress, both in primary and secondary schools.
  - evidence indicates that, at least for larger schools (including most secondary schools), the implementation of Restorative Approaches is likely to require 3-5 years development.
  - there has been an increased focus of effort at the level of school cluster groups to develop Restorative Approaches across both primary and secondary school sectors, recognising the need for a critical mass of trained and supportive key staff in schools.
  - there has been an increase in the use of Restorative Practices to resolve conflict between staff members as well as between pupils and pupils and staff.

- in some schools, mainly primary, restorative practices have largely replaced more formal punitive responses such as punishment exercises and exclusion. In other schools staff felt strongly that they still needed more formal, punitive responses; however, in some, these 'traditional' approaches had been considerably reduced.

### 3. CURRENT POSITION - RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN ANGUS

3.1 Work to raise awareness and develop skills and knowledge of Restorative Approaches has already begun in Angus.

3.2 The Scottish Government 'Positive Behaviour' team have provided training and ongoing support. Work to date has included:

- a 3 Day 'Training for Trainers' event. Twenty One members of Education Department Staff have been trained to deliver 'Restorative Approaches' training to others. This group includes DHTs from the 8 Secondary Schools who are responsible for Pupil Care and Support, 3 Behaviour Support Teachers, and members of the Angus Council Education Department 'Anti Bullying' training sub-group
- the involvement of Carnoustie High School and Forfar Academy staff in initial awareness-raising and groups of teachers in more extensive training
- training for staff working within Extended Support for Pupils Provision
- training delivered to 40 Support for Learning Assistants

### 4. PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed that Restorative Approaches be developed and implemented across all establishments and services on the basis described in the following paragraphs.

4.2 **Staff Development** – Starting in August 2011, the Core Training Group in Angus will deliver an initial 'Training for Trainers' programme in one of the 8 Secondary School Clusters with the intention of rolling the training out across all Clusters. The training, comprising 3 full days, will utilise a multi-agency model to include the following staff within each cluster:

- Secondary Schools – 3 staff (includes the Head Teacher)
- large Primary Schools- 2 members of staff from each (could include Support for Learning Assistants, Primary School Assistants or Secondary School Assistants)
- smaller Primary Schools – 1 member of teaching staff from each
- School Health Professional
- School and Family Support Worker
- Educational Psychology Service
- 'Support to Families Team' Worker
- Cluster Quality Improvement Officer
- Cluster Principal Teachers (Additional Support Needs)

There is scope to include other local staff, for example, community liaison police officers, active sports co-ordinators or workers from voluntary sector organisations. Discussions are ongoing with other agencies about related possibilities.

4.3 Trainers trained as part of this programme will take forward training across schools and support services within their clusters, through twilight and school in-service events. The core training group will facilitate the co-ordination of the programme and provide additional support and guidance. There is also a commitment from the Scottish Government's 'Positive Behaviour' team to provide trainers with ongoing learning, support and network opportunities.

4.4 The use of language is key. The terms, 'restorative approaches' and 'restorative practices' are used throughout this report. In Angus, we have opted for the use of the term 'restorative approaches'; this is an overarching approach that covers anti-bullying, positive behaviour management, conflict resolution, and mediation strategies. The move away from the use of the terms 'discipline' and 'sanctions' signals a move towards promoting a recognition of 'consequences' and the adoption of more solution-focused approaches in responding to troublesome and problematic pupil behaviour.

- 4.5 The roll out of restorative approaches is a key service priority framed within the 2011/2012 Education Service Plan.
- 4.6 Guidance on Restorative Approaches will feature as a key section of the new 'Meeting Needs: Getting It Right For Every Child in Angus' Policy, currently under development.
- 4.7 The impact of this major development will be monitored and evaluated by the core training group, supported by the Educational Psychology Service.
- 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 5.1 The development of Restorative Approaches can be achieved within existing resources.
- 6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**
- There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.
- 7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**
- The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.
- 8. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**
- 8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Single Outcome Agreement:
- Children and young people in Angus will have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem to the fullest potential (National Outcome 4)
  - Children and young people in Angus will live within a supportive family setting with additional assistance if required, or where this is not possible, within another care setting ensuring a positive and rewarding experience (National Outcome 5)
  - Children and young people in Angus and their carers will have access to high quality services and be assisted to overcome the social, educational, physical environmental; and economic barriers that create inequality (National Outcome 7)
- 9. CONSULTATION**
- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 10. CONCLUSION**
- 10.1 Curriculum for Excellence has a strong focus on developing the Health and Wellbeing of all young people. It is the responsibility of all staff to support children and young people in their learning and development. The implementation of Restorative Approaches across Angus is likely to enhance the service's commitment to provide positive and supportive learning environments for Angus children and young people.

**NEIL LOGUE  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as defined 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.

**ED/NL/SRD**