

## ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2002  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 22 JANUARY 2002

## THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUT OF SCHOOL CARE IN ANGUS

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

**ABSTRACT**

This report draws the attention of the Committees to the findings of research by the Angus Childcare Partnership to evaluate the sustainability of parent-led out of school care clubs in Angus, as providers of high quality, affordable childcare.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committees are asked only to note the findings of research into the sustainability of out of school care provision in Angus at this stage. The executive summary of the research is attached as Appendix 1. A more detailed report will be brought forward following consideration of the Scottish Executive's letter of 19 December on the subject of Out-of-School Care Services (Clubs). A copy of the letter from the Scottish Executive is attached as Appendix 2.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 There are 15 out of school care clubs in Angus providing after school and holiday childcare to children of primary school age. Of these, 14 operate as voluntary organisations with management committees formed from the parents who make use of this service. In addition to the existing established clubs, parents in a number of other areas of Angus are exploring the potential for developing new provision.
- 2.2 In recent years, it has become apparent that Clubs experience difficulty in forming viable management committees and dealing with the volume of administrative work involved in being a registered provider of childcare.
- 2.3 Since October 2000, the Angus Childcare Partnership has funded the employment of a Development Worker to provide organisational support to the out of school care clubs. Despite this additional support, it is clear that significant organisational difficulties remain and further action will be required if the long term sustainability of provision is to be ensured.
- 2.4 In February 2001, the Childcare Partnership commissioned Northern College to undertake research to "evaluate the sustainability of parent-led out of school care clubs, as providers of high quality, affordable childcare."

The research explored:

- Levels of parental involvement
- The knowledge and skill base of parents currently serving on management committees
- The support needs of clubs and individual parent members
- The extent to which volunteers can uphold the volume of work required
- Alternative models of provision.

Fieldwork took place between February and June 2000 and included desk research, meetings with focus groups, individual interviews and questionnaires.

2.5 The main findings of the research were that:

- There is considerable benefit accruing from parental involvement in club management because parents know what children want and need
- The parent-led model of out of school care provision firmly anchors provision in the community
- Parents gain new knowledge and skills, self-confidence and social links through their involvement in management committees
- All clubs experience significant difficulties in involving parents in the running of the clubs
- The amount of work involved is considerable and places considerable pressure on committee members
- The work is demanding and committees frequently do not have the range of knowledge and skills required
- The recruitment and retention of staff is difficult and this places additional pressure and time demands on management committee members.

Taken together, these findings points to serious questions about the long-term sustainability of parent-led out of school care unless new forms of organisation can be identified or additional support can be provided resulting in a significantly reduced workload for parent volunteers.

2.6 A working group involving representatives of the Childcare Partnership and club management committees has been formed to address these questions and develop proposals for future development. This group will report to the Childcare Partnership before the end of March 2002.

2.7 Also, members will wish to note that on 19 December 2001 the Scottish Executive announced plans to set up a working group to discuss and reach conclusions on a number of issues affecting the delivery of out of school care. This soon-to-be established national working group will consider a range of issues including:

- Use of school assets for out of school care
- Charging practice across Scotland for the use of premises
- Joint planning of care and learning and links with PE and sport
- The need for dissemination of good practice on business planning within clubs.

2.8 It is evident that the research and actions taken by the Angus Childcare Partnership to date have been helpful in developing and supporting services across Angus and this approach should allow Angus to make a significant contribution to the national discussion on the development of out of school care. Angus Council and its partners should take satisfaction from their pro-active approach to this area of childcare and education which remains high on the Scottish Ministers' agenda.

### **3 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report

### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law & Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Social Work.

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DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**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 any material extent in preparing the above report.

## **APPENDICES**