Due to the holiday period and sickness I have not been able to ascertain the views of many people. Hopefully the following will be helpful to you. We will not be reporting to Committee on this matter.

The City of Edinburgh Council is working on a number of strategies in regard to the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Issues will be identified within schools, Early Years service and Social Work services, particularly local teams, foster care and residential care services. There is some good work ongoing in relation to the identification of problems within schools and the Growing Confidence Project is showing some signs of improving children’s situations.

Within the area of looked after children there is a strategy in place to ensure that all staff and carers working in this area are aware of difficulties, how they should be dealt with and if referral is required to specialist services how this would take place.

The approach is to ensure that all staff working with children and young people are aware of the issues affecting children and their families, how to address them and, if specialist service intervention is required, referrals made. It is clear that specialist services cannot meet all need and waiting lists exist for instance in regard to CAMHS services in the Lothian area. Multi agency work is the only effective way of dealing with prevention. The obstacles, therefore, relate to the growing need in some areas, i.e. ADHD, autism and children affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

We do have in Edinburgh some CAMHS nursing specialists linked to SEBD schools and Youth Justice. This approach, if resources were available, would be beneficial to the staff and young people in these services. The Edinburgh Connect service funded through the Children's Change Fund has proved to be an effective model in ensuring that staff are made aware of issues, are able to deal with lower level problems and only refer on if this is required. At times there is a lack of in-patient service available to particular groups of young people and in particular those who exhibit challenging behaviour and whether there is an underlying mental health issue.

In regard to facilitating early intervention, there is a need to look at the particular needs of children with learning disabilities. There is currently no early intervention input in this area which does not therefore assist staff working with them or indeed parents who are caring for them, identify problems and look at strategies to deal with the particular problems.

The GIRFEC agenda is being progressed within Edinburgh and the area of early intervention and indeed how children and families are supported which will include CAMHS is being progressed but is at an
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early stage at this time. The situation could be improved if there was capacity to ensure that link specialist staff were available to schools and services in order to support staff and deal with cases where specialist intervention was required. There is also a need to look at out of hours cover.

There is also an issue in regard to the availability of specialist staff and whether there is enough to cover the needs but also to look at the specific issues around children with learning difficulties and other areas.

In regard to the problems around transition into adult mental health services, young people are transferred to adult services at the age of 16 from the CAMHS learning disability services. However adult services do not work with young people whose IQ is less than 70. This causes a particular issue in regard to children and young people exhibiting challenging behaviour. Clearer pathways between children and adult services needs to take place but they also need to take into account the needs of particular groups of children and young people who may still be in school at age 18, and may be looked after and accommodated. There is also a need to ensure that good planning is in place when it is recognised that young people will have ongoing problems into adulthood.

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