Dear Ms Grahame

Subject: Health and Sport Committee Inquiry into CAMHS

Further to your recent correspondence to our Chief Executive, Mary Pitcaithly, the following information is submitted regarding Falkirk Council’s contribution to implementation in the Council area of The Mental Health of Children and Young People: A Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care. This is provided in conjunction with the detailed response to the specific questions posed, which is being provided by colleagues in NHS Forth Valley and which will focus on activities within specialist CAMH Services.

Falkirk Council is involved in a wide range of activities which contribute to the delivery of services to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the Council area, as outlined in the Framework document.

In relation to both universal and targeted services for children and young people, Falkirk Children’s Commission, comprising senior representatives from the relevant Council Services, Central Scotland Police, NHS Forth Valley and the Voluntary Sector, forms the strategic partnership group which leads on the development of children’s services in this area. The second Falkirk Integrated Children’s Services Plan is currently being produced by the Children’s Commission and this, like its predecessor, includes headline commitments to improving outcomes for children and young people, the first of which is that “all Falkirk children will be happy and healthy and enabled to make positive decisions about their own health and well-being”. While the plan is for all children and young people in the Falkirk area, the Children’s Commission has recognised the importance of ensuring progress in relation to outcomes for our most vulnerable groups.
This Council continues to work with colleagues in NHS Forth Valley, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils in a “CAMHS Health Group”, to promote a partnership approach to developing and monitoring services to address the mental health needs of children and young people across the Forth Valley area, in line with the activities outlined in the Framework document. This longstanding group, which has evolved over time, started out with a specific remit to monitor the implementation of the Framework. One of the group’s key developments has been the creation, using both NHS and local authority funding streams, of a team of Primary Mental Health Workers. A PMHW post has been used to provide assessment of the mental health needs of children and young people as part of the health assessment offered when they become Looked After and Accommodated by the local authority.

Linked to both the Children’s Commission and to the Forth Valley wide CAMHS Health Group, a local multi agency group has been set up, led by the Director of Education Services, to develop an overarching wellbeing and mental health strategy and plan for the Falkirk area. The Children's Commission and its partners have collected a significant amount of evidence through audits and consultations about the views of children and their families in relation to services and also through the collation of existing multi-agency performance data and performance indicators. This has helped in the formation of a clear view of the broad priorities and the local group will focus on the particular aspects of wellbeing and mental health in order to draw out what are the key areas to be focused on in order to improve services.

This group will build on existing good practice in terms of providing support and training to universal and targeted service providers in relation to young people’s wellbeing and mental health issues and will do so within a clear strategic approach which prioritises and uses existing resources in a more effective and efficient way.

The activities described link with the Framework document and with a range of other national and local plans and strategies and are underpinned by a clear and continuing commitment to partnership working in order to promote the mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people in the Falkirk area.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Anderson
Acting Director of Social Work Services