

**Argyll and Bute Choose Life Initiative
Report for Period April 2003- March 2006**

1. Introduction

The Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership, which has twenty four members, is ultimately responsible for the implementation of Choose Life locally. This means that a broad range of stakeholders have made a commitment to support the implementation of our local action plan. This responsibility has been devolved to the Choose Life Sub Group, which monitors progress and feeds back to the Partnership. On a day to day basis implementation of the local action plan has been delegated to the Choose Life Co-ordinator and Choose Life Project Worker who came in to post in May 2004.

It is vital that we get across the message that the successful implementation of our local action plan depends on us developing a shared vision and a shared sense of responsibility for its implementation. The action planning seminars (see further details below) along with our informal discussions with individuals and groups have helped us to begin this process.

2. Development and Review of our Local Choose Life Action Plan

The Choose Life Sub Group (membership Appendix 1) meets on a quarterly basis to review progress against our local action plan and agree any future developments.

Action-planning seminars were held on the 9th of September 2004 in Inveraray (attended by 75 people) and on the 29th November 2005 in Tarbert (attended by 45 people).

The aims of these seminars were to:

- increase awareness about Choose Life
- identify gaps and priorities for development
- inform our local action plan
- identify people who would be willing to be involved in the implementation and review of our action plan

The seminars also heard from recipients of our Choose Life Local Action Fund (See Appendix 2), and from Avante Consulting who were commissioned to carry out our Suicide Prevention Strategy Review.

3. Achievements (May 2004 – March 2006)

Training

- 176 people have attended ASIST
- 6 ASIST Instructors in place
- 19 People attended Mental Health First Aid
- 14 people attended Promoting Mental Health Training for Trainers
- 26 People attended Dealing with Self Harm Training for Trainers
- 112 people attended Dealing with Self Harm Training

Awareness Raising

- Tour with PACE Theatre to 8 schools and 9 community venues – dvd produced for use in training/awareness raising
- Action planning seminars – 75 people in 2004 and 45 people in 2005 from a broad range of organisations
- Ongoing awareness raising – Suicide TALK (10 people recruited to deliver these) and self-harm awareness raising
- Regular articles in local press
- Wide circulation of newsletter - 800+

Information

- Basic leaflets on suicide and self-harm produced and distributed
- Our website is now available at www.chooselifeinargyllandbute.org.uk
- Our quarterly newsletter is distributed to 800+ organisations and individuals
- We receive regular requests for information and advice

Co-ordination

- Argyll and Clyde wide Alcohol and Suicide Seminar – September 2005
- Review/Audit completed by Avante Consulting January 2006
- Action Planning Seminars (see details above)
- Input to relevant local planning events/groups
- Local Choose Life events including;
 - Self-harm awareness raising and planning sessions in Cowal and Bute
 - Joint events with Breathing Space in Oban and Mull

Coping with Suicidal behaviour

- Carers booklet being developed
- Egroup being established for families/friends
- Egroups in place for people who have attended ASIST or Self-harm training courses

Self-help

'Overcoming Depression' – Supported Self-help pilots in Helensburgh, Campbeltown, Islay, Bute

Choose Life Local Action Fund

£50,897 was invested in 2005/6 in the following local initiatives. See Appendix 2 for further details of each initiative

- Lifelines Advocacy Project
- Lorn Counselling Service
- Bute Healthy Living Initiative
- Helensburgh Addictions Rehabilitation Team
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Argyll and Bute Couple Counselling
- Dunoon Stress Project
- Kintyre Choose Life Project

Sustainability/Integration

- Local Choose Life funded initiatives will be evaluated at the end of their initial funding period (late 2006), and will be considered for re-funding through Choose Life, or appropriate funding streams, dependant on outcomes of the evaluation.
- Choose Life initiatives, and suicide prevention work, is being mainstreamed through the Integrated Children's Planning process, and as part of the planning processes of partnership organisations including the local authority and the NHS.

Actions in Mental Health Care and Treatment Services (health and social care)

Close links are being fostered between Health & Social Care and local suicide prevention activities, including joint working, inter-agency protocols, referral procedures and post discharge care. Local areas can also do this by ensuring that mainstream Health & Social Care services are prioritising suicide prevention as part of wider health improvements as part of the Joint Health Improvement Planning process of local public health networks.

Substance Misuse

An audit of staff in substance misuse services will be carried out to identify those who have completed ASIST training. A target has been included in the substance misuse action plan of ensuring that every service has at least one member of staff trained in ASIST.

Action Plan for 2006/8

Argyll and Bute Choose Life Action Plan 2006-08

Choose Life activity is a collective responsibility of all Community Planning Partners.

The Choose Life sub group of the Health and Wellbeing theme group has had responsibility to date for progressing Choose Life in Argyll and Bute. In order to achieve sustainability and to mainstream Choose Life activities, more work needs to be done at strategic levels to develop activities across partnerships. The role and remit of the Sub group has therefore been redefined, placing more onus on Sub group members to pursue and take forward the Choose Life agenda through relevant strategic plans and processes within their own, and partnership, organisations. This will help to achieve more collective ownership and activity, and long term sustainability.

In terms of national aims and objectives, it is proposed to focus on the areas where Choose Life locally can have maximum impact. Taking into account Choose Life work in Argyll and Bute to date, these areas would be the following priorities from national Choose Life objectives.

- 1 Promoting Greater Public Awareness and Encouraging People to seek help early**
 - Publicity- eg quarterly newsletter, leaflets, library carriers
 - Media articles- advertising/promoting local services
 - Presentations/talks to existing local groups, employees, schools eg Safe Kids roadshow and events utilising ASSIST trained staff
 - Preparation of information/resources pack for distribution to groups

- 2 Supporting the Improved coordination of efforts by local agencies to develop and implement local suicide prevention action plans**
 - Sub Group members to further integrate Choose Life actions into existing planning processes

- Develop local networks through locality events to identify gaps, improve coordination, local pathways
- Identify local champions to link into local public health networks/multi agency groups to generate Choose Life actions for inclusion in JHIP local action plans which will enable access to HIF funding
- Produce local leaflets- distribute widely

3 Early Prevention and Intervention

- Target training towards frontline workers eg GPs, A&E staff, Home Helps, community support workers .Develop focused, targeted, brief training programmes for delivery to identified groups, key elements to be recognition, response and signposting. From these brief training events, identify individuals keen to go through and implement further training eg ASIST
- Develop and circulate database of locally trained staff (with their approval) and resources
- Support trained staff to utilise their training
- Evaluate effectiveness/impact of training already conducted as part of a needs assessment to inform future training programme
- Link future Choose Life training with psychological therapies tiered approach eg CD roms in Primary care, night classes, Living Life to Full website
- Explore potential for rolling out peer support for young people and other specific groups eg elderly- links with healthy Communities Collaborative

4 Encouraging and supporting (more) innovative local voluntary services, community based and self help initiatives

- Evaluate existing Choose Life funded projects, identifying good practices to be rolled out
- Identify existing voluntary and community groups that could be supported and expanded, exploring options with them in relation to their role and contribution to mental health and wellbeing/Choose Life agenda

It is proposed that the action plan be reviewed and updated in 2007, with activities clearly focused on exit strategies and sustainability.

Appendix 1. Choose Life Sub Group Members.

1. Ann Campbell, (Chair), Public Health Practitioner, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership
2. David Bertin, Project Lead, Mental Health, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership
3. Shirley MacLeod, Health Development officer, Argyll and Bute Council
4. Maureen Beaton, Service Officer, Mental Health, Argyll and Bute Council
5. Jan Henderson, Senior Health Promotion Officer, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
6. Marlene Baillie, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Strathclyde Police
7. Peter Minshall, Chief Executive, Argyll CVS
8. Sheila Walker, Education Support Officer, Health Promoting Schools, Argyll and Bute Council.
9. Gordon Higgins, Area Integration Manager, Children's Services, Argyll and Bute Council

Appendix 2. Choose Life Action Fund Recipients.

- Lifelines Advocacy Project £8,000
- Lorn Counselling Service £8,000
- Bute Healthy Living Initiative £2,000
- Helensburgh Addictions Rehabilitation Team £8,000
- Citizens Advice Bureau £5,662
- Argyll and Bute Couple Counselling £4,435
- Dunoon Stress Project £6,800
- Kintyre Choose Life Project £8,000