



## Transforming Lives and Saving Millions

### Clackmannanshire Council

#### 1.0 Change in service design is needed for our most vulnerable citizens

Services for our most vulnerable citizens are experiencing a level of demand never seen before. This means that people in need of help must be in crisis before they can obtain support and the definition of crisis gets more extreme as demand continues to exceed resources. Whilst we may all agree that early intervention is better for the individual and has the potential to cost less, the question is how do you do it? Clackmannanshire Council has been on a journey to radically reduce poverty and improve outcomes for its most vulnerable citizens and this case study demonstrates how, with the support and help of key partners, it can be done.

Following the successful transformation of their Housing Service the leadership team wanted to understand if a similar whole-systems approach could transform services to vulnerable citizens.

They created STRIVE (Safeguarding Through Rapid Intervention). A multi-agency, public sector team consisting of housing, police, child services and money advice, to provide help and support to people on the cusp of statutory intervention. They hoped by intervening early, welfare concerns could be addressed before reaching crisis point.

#### 2.0 Did it work?

The results are impressive, however, achieving these results required a clear vision of purpose, strong commitment, leadership, resilience, and a willingness to try a different approach to the design and management of work. We found these characteristics within the STRIVE Project Board<sup>i</sup>.

Over the course of 14 months (February 2020 to March 2021) the STRIVE Team have supported 138 customers and their households.

The most common outcomes for customers were:

- Improved financial security;
- Prevention of homelessness;
- Reduction in police involvement ;
- Reduction in the use of drugs and/or alcohol; and
- Improvement in mental well-being.

Ultimately, the outcomes created different choices and pathways for STRIVE customers.



### **3.0 Did it save money?**

In recent years there have been numerous studies that have shown that early intervention leads to a reduction in cost over time. Three of these research studies were used to provide the baseline measures for potential savings for the STRIVE evaluation<sup>ii</sup>. Using an in-depth analysis of thirteen STRIVE case studies and extrapolating this figure to the overall population STRIVE is estimated to save **£66m**<sup>iii</sup>. The estimated saving figure is based on savings over the lifetime of the 138 STRIVE customers and assumes that some will go on to obtain jobs and live longer more productive lives due to the early intervention of the STRIVE team.

### **4.0 How did they do it?**

#### **4.1 Clarity of Purpose**

Following transformation of their Housing Service, the Clackmannanshire Leadership team believed that applying the same principles, based on systems thinking, would lead to significantly improved customer outcomes for vulnerable people and economic benefits. However, this time they would need collaboration from key agencies out with the Council. They knew from experience that many of their vulnerable citizens were known to the Police. A close working relationship with the Police was already in place so when approached to provide resources to a multi-agency team, leaders were quick to act.

#### **4.2 From Functionalisation to Collaboration**

The STRIVE Project Board understood that the current system was based on a functionalised work design. This meant that vulnerable citizens would deal with multiple different departments and agencies. Whilst each agency or department were achieving their purpose no-one was 'joining the dots' and information that would have been useful to ensure a more effective intervention was not shared across the system.

To address this issue the STRIVE Project Board created a co-located multi-agency, public sector team consisting of Housing, Police, Child Services and Money Advice. As the project continued, the STRIVE team expanded to work effectively with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, including the Transform Forth Valley Social Inclusion Project (SIP) and Wellbeing Scotland.

The ability of the STRIVE team to meet and discuss cases daily is key to the success of many of the interventions. Numerous STRIVE customers need immediate help ranging from having no food or heating to presenting an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others. By discussing the referrals as a team insight about individuals are discovered quickly; rather than deal with 'episodes' the team is able to take a 'holistic' approach to interventions.

#### **4.3 From a Reactive Service to a Proactive Service**

In the current system identification of vulnerable citizens relies on referrals, these are then assessed and action is prioritised based on severity of need. The STRIVE team wanted to intervene earlier and so members of the core STRIVE team were invited to identify citizens that they had concerns about but were not currently a priority. For example, numerous STRIVE customers are identified from the



Police's Vulnerable Person Database (VPD). At the STRIVE screening meeting these referrals are presented and where multiple services/agencies have concerns for an individual or family the STRIVE team take action to support them and their household to prevent them from reaching crisis point.

#### **4.4. From Referral to Action**

In many collaborative projects referring a customer on for an assessment or signposting them to a service is deemed as productive work. However, experience shows us that vulnerable customers requiring support fail to turn up for an assessment or are not able to self-refer. What is different about the STRIVE team is that rather than refer to services they invite services to their screening where they can explain the situation and agree an intervention plan. They will then continue to work with all agencies involved and with the customer to ensure the customer gets the relevant help.

The type of work carried out by STRIVE is wide and varied, including: preventing homelessness, arranging food, heating and basic furniture, accessing detox, stopping harm to customers and others, keeping families together, providing a home and financial assistance to those fleeing domestic violence, getting people with mental wellbeing needs the support they need, carrying out repairs, bereavement counselling and helping with household tasks.

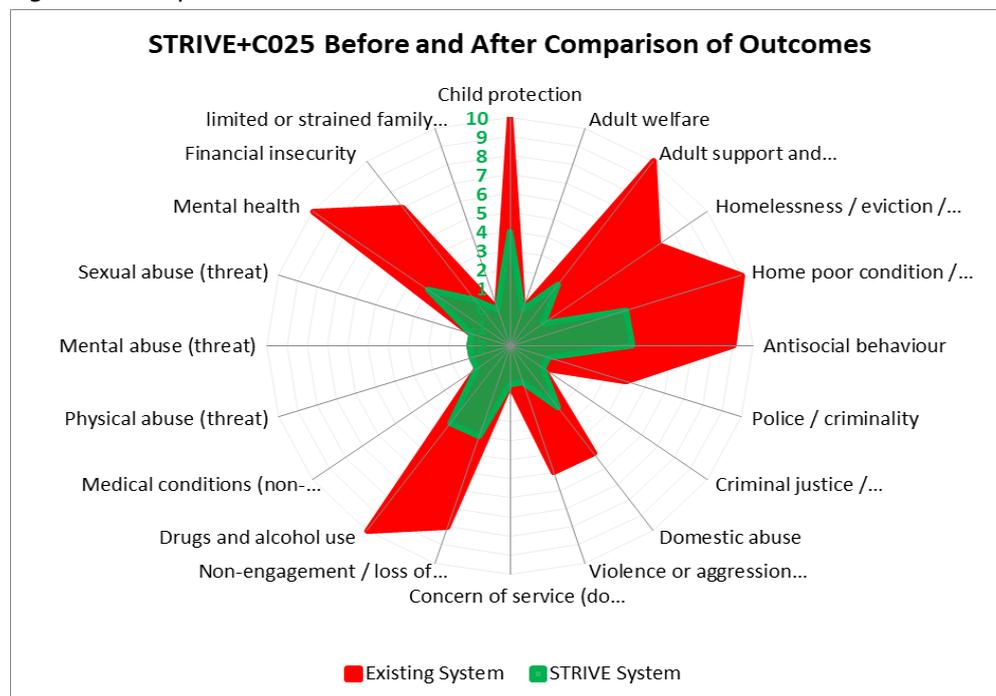
#### **4.5 Persistency Counts**

Many STRIVE customers are known to health and social care services, but because they failed to engage with public services their cases are closed. The STRIVE team make consistent and persistent effort to engage with customers. They phone them, knock on their doors, contact their family and friends, and track them down. They then offer a little help, perhaps a food parcel, help with a benefit claim, assistance to attend an appointment and over time the customers start to engage and confide with members of the STRIVE team. This then leads to them engaging with all relevant services.

#### **4.6 From measures based on productivity to measures centred on what matters to customers**

The STRIVE Project Board recognised that targets and measures based on productivity would have limited usefulness for understanding the benefits of STRIVE. Therefore, STRIVE charts were introduced to measure the well being of customers when they were referred to the system compared to when their case was closed. An example STRIVE chart is detailed overleaf.

Figure 1 Example STRIVE Chart



To create the STRIVE charts the STRIVE team scored out of ten the concerns they had for the customer at the point of referral. A high score meant more concern. These initial concerns are coloured red in the chart above. The chart shows that at the outset in this case the team were concerned about child protection, adult support and protection, the condition of the home, risk of homelessness, as well as concerns for drug and alcohol use, anti-social behaviour and mental health well being. The team then scored out of ten their concerns for the customer at the point the case was closed. When completing these final scores the team often checked with the customer’s housing officer or support worker to validate the scores. In the figure above we can see that the concerns of the team for the customer have significantly reduced.

**5.0 A word of caution**

As with all case studies the summary here does not reflect the commitment and courage of the STRIVE Project Board and staff. There were many challenges, not least of which the COVID pandemic. However, having achieved multiple benefits for their most vulnerable customers and demonstrated the potential economic benefits a small pilot can have, overcoming those challenges is well worth the effort. Making and sustaining change in the Public Sector is a complex business with staff and managers at all levels being pulled in numerous different directions. This case study demonstrates what value can be achieved for those who need it most by those with the courage and commitment to try.

In the words of a STRIVE customer:

*"After I came out of hospital, I felt worse than I ever have and didn't know what to do or where to go for help. The STRIVE pilot helped me so much and made me realise that there is*



*help out there...I still have a way to go, but I am getting help now for my mental health and with support from all of you I have been able to move to be closer to my mum. I don't think I would have been able to do that without the help I have had. I've stopped using alcohol to help me cope and I'm more confident now to ask for help." STRIVE +044*

### **Investigate What We Could Do for You**

If you would like information on the services that Vanguard Scotland offers, please visit our website at [www.systemsthinkingmethod.com](http://www.systemsthinkingmethod.com), email us at [office@vanguardscotland.co.uk](mailto:office@vanguardscotland.co.uk) or phone us on 0131 440 2600.

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<sup>i</sup> The project board members were: Lorraine Sanda (Project Sponsor and Chair), Strategic Director of People, Clackmannanshire Council, Fiona Grinly, (Strive Project Manager), Strategy and Performance Adviser, Clackmannanshire Council, Murray Sharp, Senior Manager Housing, Clackmannanshire Council, Margaret McIntyre, Children's Service Manager, Clackmannanshire Council, Lynda McDonald, Improving Outcomes Manager for Education, Audrey Marsh, Chief Inspector and Area Commander, Alloa Police Services, Dr James King, GP Clinical Lead and Locality Co-ordinator, NHS Forth Valley, and Jim Robb, Service Manager, Learning Disability/Mental Health, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership.

<sup>ii</sup> The studies used were: 1) SAMH What's it worth now? 2011. 2) Drug and alcohol services Scotland, Audit Scotland, Prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, March 2009. 3) Prevention of Homeless Guidance, The Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, June 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> Please note this figure provides an indication of potential savings. Due to the many variables to account for, the margin of error is wide.