

Name of meeting: Children's Scrutiny Panel

Date: 10th September 2018

Title of report: Strategy for Partnership Working - Early Support

Purpose of Report

To update scrutiny on development of the Early Support Strategy, the Family Support Service and provide information on the 3 programmes (Family Group Conferences, Multi Systemic Therapy and the Family Mental Health Service) funded through the Department for Education Innovation Fund to generate discussion and help councillors decide whether to investigate issues, debate issues and hold the executive to account.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No The projects are DfE funded to March 2019
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Jo-Anne Sanders 31.08.2018
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Viv Kendrick Councillor Masood Ahmed

Electoral wards affected:

Ward councillors consulted:

Public or private: Public

1. Background

The new Early Support Service was implemented from April 2018 and the new Head of Service Michelle Attmere has been in post since 2nd July 2018. The service offers non statutory services to children, young people and their families in line with the Kirklees Partners and Early Support Strategy. The entitlement will include Family Support, Parenting Group Work, Family Group Conferences, Multi Systemic Therapy and the Family Mental Health Service.

Early Support for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Even if early support cannot stop problems escalating, targeted and evidence based interventions for those at most risk can still make a difference and reduce the need for the high costs of social care involvement and taking children into care. These kinds of services are better for children and families but are also important to ensure that the local safeguarding system is sustainable. Without enough early support and targeted support pressures on social work can become too high, reducing the quality of decision making and practice and raising costs. Thus, in summary, effective early support is better for children, better for the local safeguarding system and better for the public purse.

The 2016 Ofsted inspection highlighted that Kirklees needed to develop edge of care services and ensure that timely support is available in a crisis.

Many of the issues raised by Ofsted and the problems identified in Kirklees have related to the effectiveness of partnership working in recent years. There is a strong commitment by partners and a key aim of the Improvement Plan is to make best use of this to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Success and change in children's services relies on strong and effective partnership working and this has been the primary focus of work around early support in Kirklees.

Partnership Engagement

The primary focus of the work on early support has been around strengthening the early support partnership through a number of consultation events. These events included discussing and agreeing values and principles around early support and the shared understanding that early support is not a single council service but that it is everyone's responsibility. The engagement events discussed the importance of shared language and as part of this it was agreed that the partnership preferred the use of the word 'support' rather than 'help' as it was felt to be more positive and restorative, this was reflected in the strategy document and the approach is now to be referred to as 'Early Support'.

Early Support Strategy

The early support strategy is completed and has been presented to the Improvement Board. The strategy has been developed working with partners and has ownership across the whole partnership rather than being council led or including a small number of agencies and outlines the approach to be taken which is relationship based and emphasises the importance of conversations and working together to achieve positive outcomes for children, young people and families in Kirklees. The strategy

reinforces that early support is everyone's responsibility and therefore the best person to be 'lead professional' is often the person who has built up the relationship with the family and not always a council officer, it has been recognised that additional support is required to build this capacity across the partnership and this has been reflected in recent recruitment to roles within the family support service.

The partnership particularly requested outcome based accountability (OBA) measures as it is recognised that across the partnership there could be priority outcomes that could vary so it is important to identify common quantitative and qualitative outcomes with agreed and identified measures. Some early outcome based accountability (OBA) measures have been identified at this stage and though they require further work once agreed this will allow the partnership to measure the success of the approach.

The strategy has been developed with strong links to the restorative practice approach developing a focus on "Working with...." Regular partner engagement and listening to has resulted in an increased understanding of shared responsibility and appetite to work together to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people.

Early Support and the Front Door

Work continues to be undertaken to develop relationship between key partners and agencies around the front door. This work seeks to embed the research undertaken by David Thorpe. There is evidence to suggest that the rates of referral to the front door are starting to reduce.

Stability and increased capacity within the internal Family Support Service

At the beginning of the Kirklees and Leeds partnership it was identified that there were issues within the existing 'early intervention and targeted support service'. A service review had taken place and there were a number of staff for whom an outcome had not been agreed and there was general instability in the service.

The primary focus of work was resolving outstanding HR issues and improving morale within the service. Regular staff engagement sessions took place to listen to their concerns and suggestions for the service going forward. The Key Worker role was reviewed and listening to feedback from staff was renamed as 'Family Support Worker' the post was also regraded to a more appropriate pay grade to reflect the level of skill required to carry out the role.

There was a strong feeling from staff that the service name should be changed to the 'Family Support Service' as they felt that this accurately reflected what they offer and makes clear to families they are working with what they offer. The change of name also distinguishes them from Early Help/Support which is the partnership approach and not a single council service.

Stability in the service has led to recruitment to additional posts to increase capacity in the service. Response to the recruitment has been positive and a large number of applications was received indicating that this is a service that people are now wanting to work in which is a positive step going forward.

Development of New Teams

Ofsted recommendations 17 states that Kirklees should:

'Develop edge of care services and ensure that timely support is available in a crisis'

In response to this Kirklees received Department for Education (DfE) Innovation Funding to April 2019 for improvement and innovation to invest and adapt programmes for edge of care and early support. This was to develop and deliver Family Group Conferences, Multi Systemic Therapy and a Family Mental Health Service.

Family Group Conferences (FGC's)

Family Group Conferences (FGC's) originally emerged from New Zealand and are voluntary decision making meetings to help families find their own solutions to problems.

FGC is a restorative approach and the process empowers a family and their network to draw on their strengths and resources to make a safe plan for their children. FGC's ensure the family network have a chance to hear and discuss the concerns. They also give an opportunity for everyone to be listened to including the child and young person(s). It can be an opportunity to be informed of any resources that could help them improve family life. Further information about FGCs can be found on the [Family Rights Group website](#).

Kirklees has currently been offering FGCs to a low number of families in both early support services and children's social care, however plans are now in place to expand FGCs through the innovation funding. The team has now been recruited and completed training and has expanded from 3 to 12 officers which will allow for up to 320 FGCs to be facilitated in a 12 month period.

The entitlement for Kirklees families for an FGC is still under development; however it is recognised that the service needs to engage with families at the earliest opportunity and on edge of care or those whose needs may otherwise escalate to a point where accommodation is necessary.

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST)

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family and community based intervention for children and young people aged 11-17, where young people are at risk of out of home placement in either care or custody due to their offending or having severe behavior problems.

The key goals of MST are to break the cycle of anti-social behaviors by keeping young people safely at home, in school, and out of trouble. Further information on MST can be found on their website <http://www.mstuk.org/>.

Kirklees does not currently have any family and evidence-based preventative services seeking to cumulatively address the risks of young people entering the care and custody systems. The large population of young people in Kirklees, linked with the statistics show a relatively high proportion of those entering the care and criminal

justice systems, with a current lack of evidence-based programmes seeking to specifically target these areas highlights a significant need for Kirklees to invest in preventative interventions such as MST.

There is clear alignment between the desired outcomes of MST and the local authority, with the need to reduce the numbers of looked after children as a key priority for Kirklees and the innovation funding will support development and implementation of the programme.

Recruitment to the Kirklees MST team will take place in September and will include a supervisor, 4 therapists and business support. The therapists will receive 5 days of MST model training during November/December.

An event about Multisystemic Therapy has been planned for 2nd October to learn about the project and how it is implemented and the outcomes that can be achieved for young people and families in Kirklees.

Family Mental Health Service (FMH)

The Family Mental Health service coordinate appropriate early support for parents who have mental health difficulties and share information relevant to the welfare of their children, with a focus on managing risk, increasing resilience, building strength and encouraging independence and reducing long term need for services. The service works restoratively and use a whole family approach to identify and explore the impact of parental mental health upon families, lifespan and intergenerational issues.

Kirklees has a long established FMH team with three workers with a fourth worker joining the team from Stronger Families in December 2017. The focus has been working across Children's Social Care and Adult Mental Health to reduce the barriers between services and enhance practice in order to improve direct work with families. The results of this have been positive but additional resources were identified to be required to expand the service to support significant improvements in front line practice.

Recruitment has taken place and there will be a Team Manager and 5 consultants in place by 10th September 2018. Adverts have gone out to appoint a Senior Practitioner and 2 Social Workers to the team, with interviews taking place on 6th September 2018 to complete the team. The team is now up and running and from September onwards the FMH service will be in a position to increase the capacity of the team.

Key successes from all of the above have included:

- Ongoing partnership engagement – positive feedback received on the collaborative approach to developing the strategy and working with...
- Clearer understanding and recognition of partnership approach, understanding that early support is not one council service but an approach from a number of agencies

- More stable and settled internal Family Support Service – increased staff morale due to regular engagement and the resolution of a number of issues relating to the previous review.
- Recruitment to additional posts within the service to increase internal capacity to deliver services to families in Kirklees,
- Recruitment to Head of Early Support providing stable leadership going forward

1.2 Options

The three innovation programmes are funded by the DfE for 1 year with a view that they will form part of mainstream early support services in the long-term. Consideration is being given to future budgets and the processes to be put in place to measure the effectiveness of these teams.

1.3 Cost Breakdown

The total estimated costs for the three programmes is £1,166,409.00 per year broken down into the individual costs as follows:

- FGC - £408,000.00
- MST - £382,831.00
- FMH - £375,578.00

1.4 Timescales

Department for Education funding ends on 31st March 2019

1.5 Expected impact/outcomes and benefits

- Better outcomes for vulnerable children.
- As many children as possible staying with their families.
- Children making good progress and achieving the best outcomes and improved life chances for everyone.
- Protection of public's health through education, support and interventions.
- Reduced pressure on children's social care.
- Culture of innovation and evidence informed improvements.
- Cases are appropriately dealt with at an early stage
- Cases avoid unnecessary escalation to statutory services
- Cases can be de-escalated safely and appropriately

1.6 Expected risks

The expected risks are that if there is no funding or re investment from savings identified to support the programmes post April 2019 once the DfE funding has finished then there would not be an opportunity to embed the programmes as part of an early support entitlement to children and families in Kirklees to reduce the number of children entering care. This is currently been considered as part of future budget considerations.

1.7 Evaluation

Kirklees will be required to submit evaluation to the Department for Education for the innovation funding received for the three programmes.

1.8 Sustainability

Funding would need to be identified from the Early Support budget or savings re invested to sustain and mainstream the programmes which currently been considered.

2. Implications for the Council

2.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

Effective early intervention and prevention services working together reduces the number of children requiring social care services and becoming looked after and therefore as many children as possible staying with their families.

2.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

Working closely with communities and our partners ensures local support for families that builds on their strengths and that brings back and keeps our children living in Kirklees.

2.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

Early support and edge of care services that are targeted and evidence based interventions for those at most risk can make a difference and therefore reduce the need for taking children in to care and staying with their families.

2.4 Reducing demand of services

All 3 projects support edge of care and early support for children and families which is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems escalate therefore reducing the high costs of social care involvement and taking children into care and high placement costs.

2.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

The projects are funded through the DfE innovation funding until the end of March 2019 and it then proposed that the services will be mainstreamed; however this would require financial investment of £1,166,283.00 to sustain the services.

3 Consultees and Their Opinions

The Improvement Board's Kirklees Children's 10 Point Improvement plan identifies the need to rebalance the safeguarding system through redeveloping better early support and preventative services by creating an improvement and innovation fund for edge of care and early support initiatives. This also includes the Kirklees

Partnership to develop and agree priorities, financing and an investment plan for MST, FGC and FMH.

This is jointly owned alongside the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board.

4 Next steps

- Work with the Kirklees Communications Team to produce a plan on page style early support strategy.
- Work with the Safeguarding Board to develop a launch/communications plan for the finalised. Early Support Service (promoting the concept of "working with...")
- Work with the Safeguarding board to launch the Framework for making safeguarding decisions in Kirklees.
- Continue ongoing dialogue to develop 4 distinct but consistent/tailored offers across the four areas (unified not uniform).
- Develop outcome measures and identify demands & pressures within each local area
- Embed the 'early support' approach across the partnership, promoting the concept of 'working with...'
- Work with partners to develop a new Early Support Assessment.
- Consolidate and embed an effective partnership approach to providing early support across the four localities.
- Ensuring that there is a joined up and well defined local offer for families which includes Health, Community Hubs and the council's Family Support Service
- Parents and agencies have a clear understanding of how to access support & advice as part of the local offer
- Improve links with the Social Work teams now they are based in localities

5. Officer Recommendations and Reasons

Not applicable

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's Recommendations

Not applicable

7. Contact Officer

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8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The three programmes are identified in the Kirklees Children's 10 Point Improvement Plan as part of Priority 3: Early Support and Edge of Care and will also support the outcomes in the Kirklees Council's Corporate Plan 2018/20 and the Kirklees Partners and Early Support Strategy as outlined in 2.5 of this report.

9. Service Director Responsible

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