

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TO:	ADULT, CHILDRENS SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	7 NOVEMBER 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	NEXT GENERATION CHILDREN'S SERVICES- PROGRAMME UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JAN GAVIN	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN & FAMILIES
SERVICE:	EDUCATION, HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The 'Next Generation' programme was introduced to address a number of national reports research documents and reviews that related to the way in which children's social care is provided. A programme Board was introduced to enable the monitoring of progress and shape of the various strands of the programme and oversee the modernisation of services to improve outcomes for children.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the progress being made in developing the key themes identified at the time of the last report to members in the autumn of 2012.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the progress made to date with the implementation of the Next Generation Children's Services programme

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1. When the Next Generation of Children's Social Care Strategy was first agreed it was in the context of a large number of national reviews, reports and research documents having been produced that have focused on the way and the context within which the children's workforce provided services to the most vulnerable children in our community. Much of it has focused on child protection specifically although the key messages still relate to the most vulnerable children in need and children looked after.

- 3.2. It has been for the children's workforce to try and digest the key messages of these reports and to identify how they can adapt and change what they do and how they do it to improve outcomes for children and make best use of the resources that are available. The need for this critical reflection has specifically been required of staff working in children's social work and related children's social care provision.
- 3.3. The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report; the Governments response to the Munro review; and Safeguarding in the 21st Century have been of particular interest to the children's social care in Reading. Alongside this reflection and exploration the service had also been studying some of the good practice examples and case studies provided in the reports.
- 3.4. The content of the strategy was applicable to wider areas than just children's social care and its core themes impacted on other services provided for children in Reading Borough Council.

4. ACTIVITY

- 4.1. It had been intended that an overarching work or strategy group would not be required to co-ordinate the programme and that the children's social care management group could monitor and drive through the work in its routine management meetings. However it soon become clear that due to the synergies between projects, shared benefits and impact on partner agencies, a programme board would be necessary to monitor the work.
- 4.2. Hence a formal Board was set up, tasked with monitoring the progress and shape of the various strands of the programme and overseeing the modernisation of services to improve outcomes for children.
- 4.3. The report attached highlights the core elements/areas of activity of the programme and the progress being made in each of these areas. Members are being asked to scrutinise the progress made to date and identify any areas where further development, change in policy or progress needs to be undertaken.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Strategy and its adoption will specifically contribute the Councils aims by promoting equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The original strategy was developed using the reviews and research documents and these fully engaged and involved children, young people and adults that were using the services.
- 6.2 Staff at all levels were involved in a series of workshops, meetings and conferences over the summer and autumn of 2011 to explore, debate and direct the work around this strategy and plan. These were very well attended, involved all managers and social care staff as well as peers and service partners from

across the Council and other agencies. The thoughts and professional views of social workers are well reflected in the content of the strategy and staff have been fully engaged in the work of the programme board over the past year. A service user experience process is also be developed to further enhance the work of the programme.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The work of the programme will ensure that children's social care are able to exercise its functions, and will enable it to better provide for services that—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
 - will advance equality of opportunity between persons particular the most vulnerable children in need within Reading;
 - and better enable good relations between families and communities in Reading
- 7.2 The work will have a differential impact on children some of whom will be amongst the most vulnerable of Readings citizens and will require a targeted and specialist service from social care.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications inherent in the report, although the programmes implementation will enable the service to better fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- there are none inherent in this report itself

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report
- The Governments response to the Munro review 'A child-centred system'

Next Generation of Children's Services Programme update - August 2013

Introduction

The Next Generation of Children's Services Programme was set up in July 2012 to address a number of reviews, reports and research documents about the way in which Children's Services is provided in relation to the most vulnerable children in need, in need of protection and children who are looked after.

In particular the Munro Review was used to inform the work of the Programme, as well as the findings from the broader Reading area Children's Services Inspection conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in February 2012 and the following Ofsted Inspection of Child Protection & Early Help in March 2013

There is no blue print for the model of Children's Services and therefore the Programme was set up to address and meet the needs of the local community with the resources available to Reading Borough Council. It had a number of key themes to address:

- improving social work practice
- improving the children's social care /case recording system
- workforce development
- revision of policies and procedures
- further development of partnership working
- maximising the use of resources.

Programme Board

It had been intended that an overarching work or strategy group would not be required to co-ordinate the programme and that the children's social care management group could monitor and drive through the work in its routine management meetings. However it soon become clear that due to the synergies between key elements of work/projects, shared benefits and impact on partner agencies, a programme board would be necessary to monitor the work.

Hence a formal Board was set up, tasked with monitoring the progress and shape of the various strands of the programme and overseeing the modernisation of services to improve outcomes for children.

The Board has been made up of senior strategic partners from across the field and the project or work-stream lead has attended. Wider projects and work streams relating to children's services were also brought under this umbrella to enable a streamlining of activity.

The Board members and Projects that come under the Programme are as follows:

Next Generation of Children's Services Programme Board

Board Members:

Karen Reeve (Chair) Sarah Gee (Vice Chair), Fiona Slevin- Brown,
Gabriel Amahwe, Ben Cross, Matt Healey, Clare Bright, Avril Wilson (Obs),
Kevin McDaniel, Julie Pett

Work Stream Leads:

Jean Ash, Phil Bullingham, Kirsten Carr, Chris Hollingshead,
Kate Jahangard, Averil Kathan, Pat LeRoy

Edge of Care Strategy

Think Families - Turnaround Families



<p>Think Family- Turnaround Families Implementation</p> <p>Lead - Kirsten Carr</p>	<p>ESCR Working Group</p> <p>Lead - Kate Jahangard</p>	<p>Children's Centres Development Group</p> <p>Lead - Sarah Gee</p>
<p>Family Justice Review Work Group</p> <p>Lead - Averil Kathan</p>	<p>Signs of Safety</p> <p>Lead - Pat LeRoy</p>	<p>MASH Project Board (Closed)</p> <p>Lead - Kate Jahangard</p>
<p>Working Together Working Group (Closed)</p> <p>Lead - Averil Kathan</p>	<p>Think Family- Future Families</p> <p>Leads - Averil Kathan/ Julie Pett</p>	<p>Edge of Care Service Workgroup</p> <p>Lead - Phil Bullingham</p>
<p>Fostering & Adoption Implementation Group</p> <p>Lead - Jean Ash</p>	<p>Review of Parenting</p> <p>Lead - Chris Hollingshead</p>	<p>Residential Units and Family Link Review</p> <p>Lead - Jean Ash</p>



Views of Children, Young People and Families to be considered

A Benefits Plan has been drafted to support the Programme that monitors a range of key Performance Indicators that show whether collectively, the projects under the programme, are making a difference to Children, Young People and Families.

This document forms part of the annual review of the Programme and includes an update on each of the projects that have come under the Programme, progress made and benefits and business outcomes achieved or expected.

Projects Progress Report

1. Think Family - Turnaround Families Implementation

Lead: Kirsten Carr

Project Description The Turnaround Families programme is Reading's implementation of the Government's Troubled Families programme which aims to ensure that 120,000 troubled families in England are 'turned around' by 2015. The eligibility criteria for the programme is linked to the following areas:

- Youth crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the family
- Education (non-attendance and/ or exclusions)
- Worklessness (in receipt of benefits)
- Locally defined criteria

The Council has committed to identifying and working with 345 families by 2015 as part of the programme. However, approaches and systems developed through the Turnaround Families programme will be applied across all preventative services to better meet the needs of families with multiple needs - regardless of whether they meet the Government criteria.

Progress to date **Families working with:** Reading had started to work with 126 families by the end of July 2013. A further cohort of families eligible for support will be identified and allocated to key workers during September/October 2013. The target is to have started working with 230 families by March 2014. The work with families is being phased in so many families have only been worked with for a few weeks or months.

Workforce Development: 61 front-line staff across housing, health, adult and children's services have attended key-worker workshops to further develop skills and share and review good practice in coordinating support packages for families with multiple needs. A competency framework and training and development plan for key workers is being developed.

Outcomes Performance Framework: A new framework for Turnaround Families and Early Help services is being implemented that will measure a wide range of outcomes for families with additional needs, and the impact of early help services.

Pathways: A number of strands of work to simplify pathways for agencies and families into and through Early Help services are in

progress to improve early identification, timely access to appropriate support and to reduce pressure on Children's Social Care.
Family Enablement Panel: A multi-agency panel is meeting fortnightly to bring creative approaches and solutions to working with families where there is non-engagement or their support plan is not working effectively.

**Expected/
Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes**

The national TF programme outcomes for which results claims can be made are:

- Each child will have fewer than 3 fixed term exclusions and less than 15% unauthorised absences in the last 3 terms; and will have reduced youth offending by 33%, and a 60% reduction in ASB across a family;
- An adult achieves progress to work
- An adult moves into continuous employment

By July 2013, 44 families had achieved 45 of the national programme outcomes.

The Performance Framework being implemented will enable the measurement of progress against a wider range of outcomes for families, including:

- Reduced number of children coming into care.
 - Reduced drug and alcohol misuse.
 - Reduced domestic violence.
 - Improved mental health in the family.
 - Reduced adult criminal behaviour in the family.
 - Reduced number of housing enforcement actions/housing issues.
 - 'Softer' outcomes such as improved parenting and budgeting skills.
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2. Electronic Social Care Record Working Group

Lead: Kate Jahangard

**Project
Description**

Replacement of the current Electronic Social Care Record system (RAISE) with Corelogic's Frameworki application. This is a workflow based social services case management system.

**Progress to
date**

Go live date is planned for October 2013

At the time of writing this report the project was at a crucial stage of the implementation process.

Key areas of activity include:

- Training - this includes e-learning and classroom training
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which must be completed by all staff before the go live date and to date we have got virtually full compliance and attendance at planned training

- Configuration and sign off of forms is complete
 - Cleaning up data on the old system (RAISE) prior to migrating data over to the new system is a significant challenge- staff have been able to 'clean' large amounts of data to date.
 - Data migration of all cases that need to be held on the system is underway but is causing considerable challenges given the old systems configuration.
 - Testing of the configuration and data migrated from the old system is due to occur as this report was written
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Expected/
Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes

Benefits cannot be realised until Reading Borough Council is live with the new system. Expected Benefits include:

1. Consistent recording of information in one place rather than having to enter the same information in multiple places
 2. Reports and information generated from the ESCR meets recognised standards and new initiatives
 3. Workers can use the system more efficiently and because of this they have more time for Direct Work
 4. There is an easy to understand overview of cases through the use of chronologies and genograms which helps improve the auditing of cases
 5. All relevant information relating to a Child, Young Person, or Family can be found in one database which minimises the risk that a vital piece of information may be missed because it is sitting outside of the ESCR system.
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3. Children's Centres Development Lead Sarah Gee

Project
Description

This project focuses on the implementation of a new operating model to deliver a more consistent service provision across all Children's Centres. This will also include improving access to support through the development of some centres as 'Family Hubs', for families with children from 0-19 years old to access to a wider range of support services.

Other strands of this project include:

- Further strengthening partnership working with Health services, exploring options for co-location of staff and greater integration.
 - Working with JobCentre Plus, New Directions and Housing to provide improved support for parents around debt, housing, employment and learning.
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- Ensuring that families most in need of support are identified as early as possible and that Children’s Centres engage with them through increased outreach work.
- Improved accountability of children’s centres through a more robust performance management framework and more active parental involvement in developing service provision.
- Improving the way that feedback and parents/carers is recorded, and involving more parents/carers in developing and delivering services.

Progress to date **New Operating Model:** Five children’s centre cluster managers have been appointed, with remaining positions filled as part of the transition to a more consistent staff structure during Summer and Autumn 2013.

Health Integration: meetings with senior managers across health services and children’s centre visits by both GP Clinical Commissioning Groups have identified opportunities for improved joint working, reported to the September Health & Wellbeing Board and being further developed.

Families in Greatest Need: Children’s centre staff are building on existing good practice, such as working with expectant mothers identified for pre-birth support by midwives through the Maternity Pathway.

Support for parents: Jobcentre Plus advisors and children’s centre staff have worked in partnership to interview lone parents and understand their views about services to support them. This research will help to improve targeted support for lone parents looking to return to work and gain qualifications and skills.

Expected / Achieved Benefits and Outcomes

- Improved consistency across children’s centres so that parents experience a common core programme of services and activities
- Increased outreach so those families most in need receive support at the earliest stage possible and before needs escalate.
- Strengthened integration with health services to more effective support to families and earlier identification of needs.
- Increased participation at children’s centres, especially from those parents most in need of support
- Improved access to advice and support for parents around debt, housing and employment.

4. Family Justice Review

Lead: Averil Kathan

Project Description	<p>To work with key partner agencies within the Berkshire Family Justice Review Board to meet the target imposed by the judiciary of average children's Care case duration to 26 weeks (from 52 weeks) by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Monitoring successful implementation of the Legal Tracking Framework and Legal Planning Process▪ Identify specific reasons for delays in proceedings and take action▪ Implement an action plan to improve the management and social work practice of all child care proceedings through clear guidance, protocols and practice training▪ Develop a Public Law Outline pack for managers and practitioners▪ Develop effective joint work with Key stakeholders - JLT, Cafcass, HMCTS, Family Solicitors.
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Progress to date	<p>Action plan adopted by the Berkshire Local Family Justice Board and by other Berks unitary authorities on how to meet the requirement. Joint Legal Team implementing a Legal Tracker and score card for quarterly reporting.</p> <p>The average case duration has already moved from 52 weeks to below 40 weeks.</p> <p>Practice improvement action being implemented, including improved supervision, management oversight, training of key staff.</p> <p>Review of business map for Legal planning completed.</p> <p>Review of practice guidance and practice tools revised in line with national best practice models and disseminated.</p> <p>Quarterly networking meetings with legal and equivalent Service Manager's across the 6 Berkshire authorities is happening that shares and develops practice further</p> <p>Practice guidelines have been published by the judiciary, as much information as possible is being circulated to the teams</p> <p>Training programme for all partners is being rolled out - Team Managers and Social workers have been trained first.</p> <p>New threshold statement and care plans have been designed and was be made available in Reading at the beginning of July. These documents will be embedded in the Frameworki ESCR system</p> <p>Practice workshops held related to improving assessments and analysis, and developing Court skills.</p>
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Expected/Achieved Benefits and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RBC meets the national maximum average for care case duration of 26 weeks, which will considerably improve the speed with which children can be adopted or have permanency• Improved social work practice in care applications and care plans leading to less delays• Parents are better able to understand what is required of
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them by when to enable speedier decisions in care proceedings

- Working relationships and partnerships becoming more positive and collaborative
 - Improved adoption outcomes for children
 - Reduction in care costs to the local authority
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5. Signs of Safety Framework

Lead; Pat LeRoy

Project Description The Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Framework is a Child Protection framework to determine:

- What supports are needed for children to remain in the care of their families
- Whether there is sufficient safety for the child to remain within the family
- Whether the situation is so dangerous that the child must be removed
- If the child is in the care system, whether there is enough safety for the child to return home

The project aims to embed the Signs of Safety framework in practice throughout the social care system including looked after children and early intervention work.

Progress to date Initial training programme has been completed including the training of Social Workers and Partner agencies. The one day familiarisation course is now being delivered by a trainer in Workforce development, and arrangements are being made to commission the 2 day training course.

Working groups have been set up to address areas of the implementation for example learning from success and embedding into practice.

Child Protection Conferences are now run using the Signs of Safety Framework, practitioners and parents are reporting positive benefits.

Work to embed Signs of Safety into Practice is continuing, for example a pilot is about to commence on using Signs of Safety in Core Group meetings.

Work has been done to ensure that there is a common language and understanding when using the Framework, e.g. a Glossary of Terms. Anecdotally staff are reporting they are able to have better quality conversations with parents about what is required of them.

Briefings have taken place with partners (e.g. Health and Schools) to ensure that they are aware of how Signs of safety will affect them who are reporting positively to date

Expected/ • Social Work and partner agency professionals have been

**Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes**

- Signs of Safety principles are being used in Case Supervision and some audits are showing positive evidence of this approach
- Signs of Safety is used when working with Children and Young people to gain their perspective of
 - What's working well
 - What he or she is worried about
 - What needs to change in that Child/Young person's life
- This information can be used in assessments, or to identify if there is a problem that needs to be reported to Children's Social Care
- When workers attend a meeting which involves assessing the needs of a Child/Young Person and Planning what needs to happen, it is run using the Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Framework.
- When an assessment for a Child/Young person is completed, it is written using the Signs of Safety language and framework. All relevant forms on Frameworki include Signs of Safety questions.

6. MASH

Lead Kate Jahangard

Project Description The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings together representatives from Children's Social Care and Health, with information sharing arrangements set up for Police and Schools. The MASH shares information relating to safeguarding concerns raised by the public and professionals. The aim is to make a better informed decision for the child as quickly as possible by sharing information early in the safeguarding assessment process.

Progress to date MASH went live on 20th August 2012. All safeguarding enquiries are now directed to the MASH who collect & collate information from RBC services and partner agencies (Health and the Police) to determine what the most appropriate course of action is. The enquiry may be:

- Passed to Children's Social Care and the Police for Child Protection Enquiries.
- Passed to Children's Social Care for an Initial Assessment
- Passed back to referrer (professional) to complete a CAF.
- Passed back to referrer with signposting to other services.
- Passed back to referrer with advice of no further action.

Since June 2013 a worker from Health has been permanently staffed with the MASH team at the Civic Offices which has improved information sharing and collaborative working

The Police are as yet to commit to the MASH in Reading but

discussions are underway.

The MASH project is now closed and is operating as 'business as usual'

**Expected/
Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes**

- Referrals and the number of Initial Assessments (IA's) have yet to decrease. However, on liaison with other MASHs it may take some time to prevent inappropriate activity to cease. It is not possible to draw a definitive conclusion to this, and the referral rate will be influenced by other factors including projects under the Next Generation of Children's Services Programme, therefore, further monitoring will be needed.
 - The number of enquiries dealt with by Access and Assessment has dropped by over 80% since the MASH deals with most of them. The only area that will not have dropped is dealing with "walk ins" to the Civic Offices, which are dealt with by Access and Assessment.
 - A review of cases has demonstrated where decision making would have been different had the MASH information gathering process not been in place. The number of cases where a decision would have been different prior to the MASH averaged at about 70%, however this will need further monitoring particularly through the analysis of cases and the use of case studies.
 - MASH staff have also reported the benefits of building up relationships with other professionals as a result of the MASH, this trust helps with information sharing and decision making.
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7. Working Together

Lead: Averil Kathan

Project Description This project co-ordinated the response to the consultation process for the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance and the dissemination of the new statutory guidance once it had been published by the Department of Education.

Progress to date

1. A Short-term task and finish group to co-ordinate the response to the consultation process for Reading Borough Council on three statutory guidance documents was set up:
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - Managing Cases
 - Statutory Guidance on Learning and Improvement
2. Information on the new statutory guidance published by the Department of Education was disseminated within RBC

3. Implementation of the new Guidance was co-ordinated across RBC and key stakeholder organisations such as the LSCB
4. The single assessment framework has been ratified
The Working Together Project is now closed

Expected/ Achieved Benefits and Outcomes	<p>All RBC and multi agency practice in Reading meets the requirements of the new statutory guidance.</p> <p>Some areas of reduced bureaucracy in the delivery of safeguarding services.</p> <p>A single assessment framework has been developed and will be introduced when the new ESCR system is up and running, this will simplify some elements of the current bureaucratic system and will need to be carefully monitored in terms of time taken, quality of analysis and effectiveness of interventions.</p>
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8. Think Family - Future Families

Leads: Averil Kathan / Julie Pett

Project Description	<p>The purpose of this project is to reduce the number of children taken into care from households where children have previously been removed.</p> <p>The Think Family 'Future Families' project was initiated by Reading in mid 2010 when research confirmed that a sizeable proportion of babies removed at birth were not the first child to be removed of a particular mother.</p> <p>In order to consider the complex situations and needs of both parents, a multi-agency working group was drawn together from both Adults and Children's Social Care, health partners including named nurses, health visitors and midwives, mental health teams and housing. Together they identified that they need to work more closely in order to deliver effective packages of support across multiple services. As such two responses have been defined in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the number of unplanned births where the child is likely to be taken into care - Effective Contraception ▪ Improve the life opportunities for future children born to parents who have previously been unable to sustain a family life - Effective Parenting
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Progress to date	<p>The project is now in the implementation phase, the working group is now an implementation group.</p> <p>Evaluation remains quantitative and a more qualitative approach is being developed. Looking at quantifiables like reducing of newborns</p>
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coming in to care and we are contemplating using the Outcomes Star as a qualitative tool.

There have been increases of referrals to the care pathway but these are still not high enough, so work continues to address this. There have been 5 more referrals this quarter which is higher than the same time last year.

The Legal Planning Tracking referral to LARK nurse system is working well- this is the aspect of the plan whereby women are supported in using long acting reversible contraceptive until such time as they are better able to parent.

The sexual outreach nurses have rebranded themselves the LARK service.

The criteria for referrals to the care pathway are broader now than just women who have had one child removed.

Brighton and Hove, and Hackney Councils have been in touch with Reading to learn from the project. Essex University are doing a long term research project and will be involving Reading in the study.

**Expected/
Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes**

The project is in its early stages and the benefits in real terms are unlikely to be seen for 2-3 years. However adult services are reporting positively on the women engaging in the Care Pathway.

- A reduction in the number of children being born to families who are not able to safely support them.
 - Less 'pull' on safeguarding provision across multiple agencies.
 - A reduction in the emotional upheaval for parents whose children are removed
 - A real reduction in cost due to fewer children being placed in care.
 - The take up of effective contraception for mothers who are at risk of having a child removed from their care.
 - Effective engagement between Adults services and Children's services to ensure that Adults are appropriately supported.
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9. Edge of Care Service

Lead: Phil Bullingham

**Project
Description**

The purpose of the project is to provide for an Edge of Care service that focuses on reducing the high numbers and cost of Looked After Children in Reading by;

- preventing children becoming looked after by providing targeted help
 - improving services when they are looked after
 - addressing the increasing costs through good commissioning and improved care planning
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**Progress to
date**

The Edge of Care team is being actively referred to from within Children's Social Care. In the main, cases with developing and ongoing complexities are focussed on - such as cases requiring legal planning or children being subject to child protection plans. This work equates to

over 65% of the teams activity; with an aim to increase this so as to reach as many complex children's cases in Reading as possible. All other work relates to supporting families develop sustainable arrangements - including children at risk of coming into and returning from care.

The Edge of Care service is already making a difference and overall numbers of children coming into care and being subject to a child protection plan are slowly reducing. Performance measures have been developed and are reported; where further work is ongoing to qualify the impact Edge of Care has, as clearly the resource is complimentary to other influential services.

The team has recruited to all available posts and is developing its capacity to take on more work - including complex child in need cases and cases requiring specialist parenting assessments. This work will become of greater focus through September and October as we re-establish our criteria range to reach more children.

Expected/Achieved Benefits and Outcomes

- Support cases where the Local Authority are considering legal intervention to safeguard a child and where additional support / assessment will assist in the context of the Public Law Outline.
 - Support Families who have a long history of involvement with CSC whose capacity to safeguard and parent their children is assessed to be at risk from unstable housing, offending behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, poor school attendance, mental health etc increasing the likelihood of the children becoming looked after.
 - Support Families with children who have been placed into foster care who have a reintegration plan to return home.
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**10. Fostering and Adoption -New regulation/legislation
Lead Jean Ash**

Project Description

New regulation and legislation has been issued by Government in both the fostering and adoption fields. This has required considerable speed to address and much was issued with little consultation and little or no notice.

Progress to date

Fostering

The fostering fortnight was in May - initial enquiries were down from last year but were good when compared with the other Berkshire LA's. Joint work between Fostering, Children's Social Work teams, Foster carers etc:

- Improving relationships and communication
 - Planning for permanence via Adoption
 - Foster carers competencies for progression
 - Signs of Safety
 - Input from Foster Carers for Social Worker induction
 - Results from Service user surveys are being incorporated into
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future priorities and foster carer recruitment and retention strategy.

- Process for Foster Carer annual reviews
- The development of the supported lodgings scheme for 16 to 24 year olds will commence as of the beginning of October.

Adoption

Reading is participating in the working party planning the introduction of a Berkshire wide adoption recruitment team and family finding service, operational by the end of March 2014. Berkshire wide processes have been drafted for the new assessment process initiated by the Government as of 1st July 2013.

**Expected/
Achieved
Benefits
and
Outcomes**

- Increased recruitment and improved retention of Foster Carers
 - Increased number of adopters living outside of Reading
 - Joint Commissioning Specialist Adoption Agencies across other Berkshire Local Authorities for the children with complex needs for whom placements not otherwise found e.g. Adoption Plus
 - Greater awareness amongst colleagues and general public about the need to report private fostering arrangements
 - Robust permanency planning
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11. Review of Parenting Lead: Chris Hollingshead

**Project
Description**

A parenting review across the local authority focussed on 5 key areas: referral process and pathways; delivery; use of volunteers; quality assurance and evaluation; and marketing. The review was undertaken by "task and finish" groups involving a range of partners.

The current model of delivery was reviewed to assess if it was fit for purpose and making a difference to parents and changing outcomes for children in Reading. The outcomes of this review will build on evidence from the Parenting Needs Analysis completed in 2010/2011.

The aims of the review were to deliver:

- An improved referral pathway with effective screening and assessment to target the parents most at need
 - The further development and enhancement of volunteer programmes to support families
 - A Quality Assurance framework that ensures fidelity to parenting programmes
 - A comprehensive audit of trained parenting staff, and review to ensure the most effective model of delivery and resource utilisation
 - More effective monitoring and evaluation tools & trained practitioners who are confident to use them
 - Methods for sustaining parenting confidence and skills beyond course completion
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Progress to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting Review completed to timescale and recommendations presented to senior managers.• Workstreams established to further develop the recommended model of delivery
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Expected/Achieved Benefits and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More efficient delivery of parenting programmes to offer an increasingly consistent, high-quality level of support to parents.• A more timely offer of support leading to a higher percentage of parents referred taking-up and completing parenting courses• Improved targeting of early intervention programmes to provide support as early as possible.• Increased work with the voluntary sector and development of peer support to help parents to sustain changes long-term.• Improved use of parent feedback and evaluations to measure impact and shape service delivery.
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12. Residential Units and Family Link Review

Lead: Jean Ash

Project Description	The purpose of this project was to undertake a service appraisal of the Residential Units and Family Link service. This was to ensure the services were 'fit for purpose' and providing what parents wanted, whilst at the same time seeking efficiencies if possible
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Progress to date	<p>The review has been conducted, involving staff, service users and other professionals engaged and linked with the services.</p> <p>It confirmed that the Residential units were providing a good quality of care although there were some areas of efficiencies in the way short breaks in particular were organised. This can be done without overall reduction in services; indeed there can be an increase in children able to access Cressingham in particular. The staffing structure for family based respite provision has been reviewed to increase cost efficiency and so support sustainability for this intensive service provided to children with high needs. Looking at a start date for this service of 1st October 2013.</p> <p>Work is underway to make the identified changes in the next 2 months.</p>
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Expected/Achieved Benefits and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that services offered match demand - Review of demand either to decide Pincroft's future client group and children and young people with complex needs or provision for young people on the autistic spectrum• Consultation with service users• Expansion of the residential respite service in Cressingham• Develop staff's skills base and offer the long term residential unit's 5th bed for sale to other local authorities
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