

CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES UPDATE

Joint Report of the Head of Commissioning, Children's Services and Head of Public Health Nursing

1. Background

- 1.1 This report is an update on the performance of the Children's Centre services delivery, the changes that have been implemented to deliver a targeted service and the opportunities being explored for integrated working with Public health Nursing Service.
- 1.2 Action for Children attended Children's Scrutiny Committee in June 2018 to present to elected Members how the first few months of the new targeted contract was progressing. At that time concerns had been raised by the public about the reduction of universal services and the potential impact it may have for their families.
- 1.3 A robust transition plan was put in place to mitigate against the risk of universal activities stopping in areas where no community activities were taking place. Elected members used their locality budgets to support some groups where a small number of parents identified that the changes in services would have a detrimental impact. The aim of the short-term funding was to give families and local communities time to develop or increase activities that were easily accessible to all.
- 1.4 It was also recognised that it would take some time to develop the new offer to children 5-8 years of age and their families, but consultation with schools was taking place and the new offer would be starting from September 2018.

2. Impact of Changes in Year One

- 2.1 Over the past 12 months no concerns have been raised by members of the public regarding the termination of Children's Centre universal groups. Universal group activities and services delivered by GROW have been extended over the past year and can now be accessed in most areas in Devon.
- 2.2 The annual contract performance meeting took place in June and it was noted that the difficult decision by elected members to commission a targeted service has enabled Action for Children to target evidenced based interventions to ensure children and families receive the right support, at the right time, and in the right place.

3. Performance Management Data: April 18 – March 19

- 3.1 The number of Early Help Assessments entered onto Right for Children 18% increase: **Data Source Right for Children Data Base**

- 3.2 The numbers of children aged 8 years classified as a Child in Need or having a Child Protection Plan decreased by 23%: **Data Source Care First**
- 3.3 Total number of targeted contacts to carers increased from **21,824 to 22,034**
- 3.4 Families who access 1:1 targeted support show an overall improvement at the end of a targeted intervention 80.9%: **Data Source Outcome Star**
- 3.5 Reduction in Child Poverty/Contract with Citizens Advice

County Wide Income Gain £558,581
 Debts Written off £29,965
 Re-imburement Over Payments £14,757

4. Service Development, and integrated working with Public Health Nursing next steps

- 4.1 Work to explore how integrated working could be developed between the in-house Public Health Nursing Service (PHNS) and Action for Children (AfC) Children's Centre's is underway. This builds upon a previous series of four-way meetings between the same parties which helped co-ordinate the changes in service delivery by PHNS and Children's Centre's during 2018/19.

The initial areas for action identified were:

- Integration - staff review and engagement.
 - Accommodation review: to maximise best use of Children's Centres (CCs) and Public Health Nursing Service (PHNS) buildings/locations; to explore savings to be made and better planning of future accommodation needs (e.g. clinics)
 - Current joint activity review: to establish a baseline of where and how CCs and PHNS are already working together and identify where there are continuing gaps or overlaps.
 - Identify and promote joint training opportunities between PHNS and CCs.
 - Consistent shared outcome measures
- 4.2 A questionnaire has been circulated to all staff to gain views on how we can integrate and work better together, there were seventy -nine responses which are currently being collated.
 - 4.3 The underpinning principle is to move together to integrate the teams and deliver from one space where at possible. The aim is to maximize the use of all the Children's Centre Buildings. This vision is not just about co-location but about integrating teams. We recognise where this has been successful that the teams communicate regularly and therefore can respond to children's needs more rapidly and more comprehensively.
 - 4.4 We aim to develop a clearer understanding of the service offers and ensure that the child and family receive the right service from the right professional at the right time. PHN are exploring the use of Outcome Star tool which the Children's Centres currently use, it measures distance travelled and supports change when working with families.
 - 4.5 Both services are exploring joint training opportunities to enable teams to train alongside each other

- 4.6 Senior Managers from AfC and PHN have compiled a report based on the areas identified for action providing a set of recommendations to begin a process of integrating services for children aged 0 – 8 with the aim of seamless transitions and needs led support.
- 4.7 In addition, work has begun to strengthen the pathway between Public Health Nursing and Early Years and the Complex Needs Service (Portage) for children with speech, language and communication and neuro developmental needs.
- 4.8 Action for Children have increased their range of group activities for Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities linked to gaps identified in the SEND Written Statement of Action. They are developing their capacity to respond to the needs of families with children eight years and under pre and post diagnosed with a neuro disability.
- 4.9 They are facilitating engagement sessions for parents and carers of disabled children and young people that will be led by the Children's Commissioning team for Short Break services.
- 4.10 They have trained and recruited Community Thrive Champions across the county; the training enhances individuals within communities to understand more about the emotional wellbeing of young children's development.

Electoral Divisions: - All

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: - Councillor James McInnes

Head of Commissioning, Children's Services: Fiona Fleming
Head of Public Health Nursing: Kate Stephens

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