

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 16 July 2018

Report Title: FACT22 – Impact Progress Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jos Saunders

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the impact and progress of FACT22. This is an acronym for Families Achieving Change Together, the service was previously known as Project Crewe. FACT22 was established through a successful joint bid with Catch22 for innovation funding from the Department for Education (DfE). It is currently commissioned by Cheshire East to offer intensive support to children in need and their families, using a solution focussed approach.
- 1.2. The service aims to achieve positive and sustainable change for children and families. It has been in place since 2015. Current research indicates that this approach has been successful, with evidence of a reduction in the rate of repeat referrals and escalations to child protection.
- 1.3. The intention of the innovation fund was to stimulate and support improvements in the delivery and structures of children's social care and to help spread proven innovations more rapidly. Due to the significant impact made to children and families in Cheshire East, Catch22 has again been awarded funding from the Innovation Fund to scale the model and good work in Cheshire East. They are currently working in partnership with Coventry City Council to replicate the service.
- 1.4. It has been agreed that between 1st August 2018 – 31st March 2019 FACT22 will replace one of the five social work teams in Crewe CIN/CP as part of a fully integrated and innovative approach to working with children in need. Further planning, informed by research findings will then take place to consider whether this approach should be commissioned on a longer term basis as part of the mainstream offer for children in need.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2. Consider identifying a member to undertake a frontline visit to FACT22.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. FACT22 is an innovative project supporting children in need. Early research findings are supportive of the positive impact the service is having in reducing repeat referrals and escalations to child protection. There is significant interest nationally in FACT22 and further research has been commissioned by the DfE to provide a longitudinal study.
- 3.2. FACT22 supports Council objectives 3 and 5, ensuring children grow in supportive family arrangements so they develop the life skills and get the education they need to thrive and above all that they live well and for longer. Children in need often have poorer outcomes in respect of their health, education and life chances.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Council has a statutory duty to protect children and young people from significant harm and to provide support so they can do well. If FACT22 or a similar service was not commissioned then the cohort of children identified as in need would be open cases to the Child in Need/Child Protection (Cin/CP) Service, creating additional pressures for Social Workers in this service.

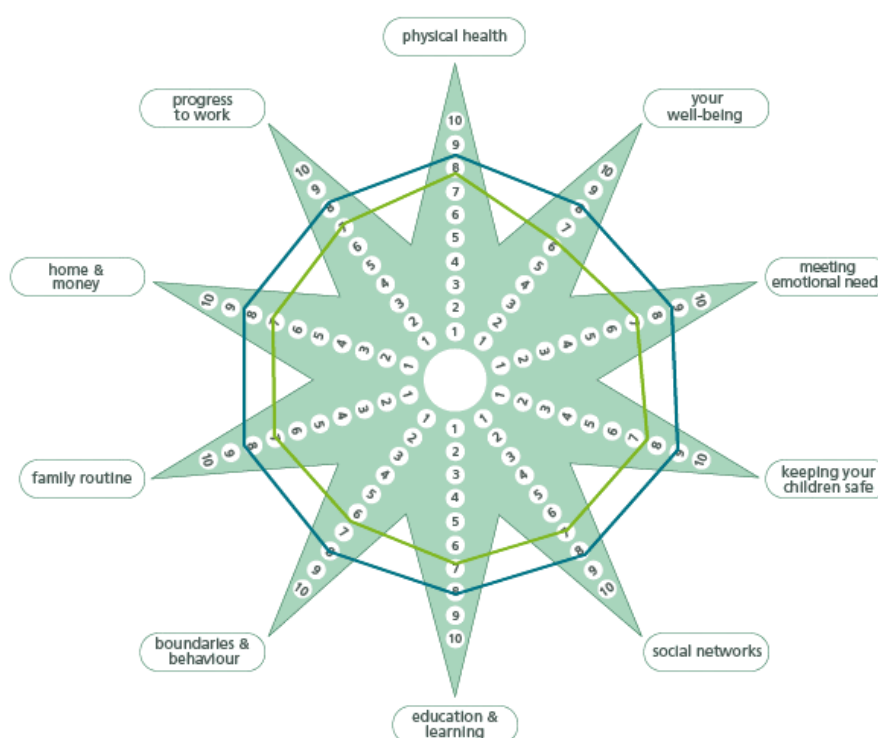
5. Background

- 5.1. The service strives to achieve positive sustainable outcomes for families with children aged 0 to 18 years old who are identified as children in need. Each team is led by a suitably qualified and experienced Social Work Consultant, who is responsible for supervising four Family Service Practitioners and ensuring that statutory requirements, such as visits and completion of child in need plans are met.
- 5.2. Families are provided with a holistic, whole family approach. Family Practitioners have protected caseloads and are able to offer an intensive offer to families.
- 5.3. The team is supported by a cohort of skilled and trained volunteers who are suitably matched to families and children. They can complement a current child in need plan(s) or provide support to families once their plans have closed.

- 5.4. FACT 22 was originally created to provide additional support to the Crewe Cin/CP Service, where there were approximately 1000 open cases. There were also challenges around recruitment and retention of social workers. The project commenced in July 2015 with five pods until March 2017. During this period open cases reduced by approximately 30%. Further funding of £385000 was provided by Cheshire East Council and the model was extended to cover the whole Cheshire East footprint with one pod based in Crewe Cin/CP and one pod based with Macclesfield Cin/CP funded until July 2017.

6. Impact of FACT22 Service

- 6.1. Since August 2015 the service has worked with 610 children from 270 families across Cheshire East. This includes the number of children and families currently open in Crewe and Macclesfield. Of those 610 children, 70% of the support has been successful and children's plans have closed or stepped down to support from early help or universal services.



- 6.2. Family Practitioners aim to complete a Family Star Plus assessment (see above) with all parents at various points during intervention; at the start; as an interim measure (every 3 months); then at closure. This cohort star includes the impact of all parents who have completed 2 or more stars. The Green line represents the average scaling of parents at the start of the intervention and the blue line represents the average scaling of parents at

the interim or end of any intervention. Consistently the service has seen more change in areas of “your wellbeing” and “boundaries and behaviour”.

7. Feedback

7.1. Fact22 capture feedback from children, families and professionals on a regular basis and use this to inform service delivery and change where needed. Some examples of the feedback the service has received are below:

7.2. Parents:

"I'm not looking forward to being transferred to another authority's social care because I've had such a good experience with Project Crewe and all the workers that I have met. Everyone at Project Crewe has a really friendly approach and I did not feel judged at all. They were all friendly and approachable."

"Excellent. Taught me invaluable tools. Provided a solid support system and was always available"

"Brilliant service! Down to earth, understanding, really helpful and approachable. Project Crewe is there to help, not judge. Social workers aren't scary!! Very supportive and helpful!"

7.3. Children:

"I feel like they've made us all as a family see the changes we needed to make. We all communicate a lot better with each other I just feel like I'm in a totally different place now and haven't got the weight of the world on my shoulders"

"I don't think I've ever heard so many positive things about myself"
"Mummy doesn't shout as much. Things at home are good."

7.4. Professionals:

"A father on the lifeline programme had said his Family Practitioner is lovely because she supports the whole family unlike social care who only seem to support the mother and this has really helped him."

I completely agree with him as I have been working with other Family Practitioners at Catch22 and she can see that they have a great approach."

Thanks. I have enjoyed working with you and the team too. A very positive outcome for this family, who have been in limbo for such a long time. Well done and thank you all very much for the hard work you all did to improve things so much for them all.

8. Repeat Referrals

- 8.1. FACT22 data shows a current re-referral rate of 12.7%. This is just under half of the national average. Cheshire East's current re-referral rate is 22%.
- 8.2. A further analysis of data was completed to look at any correlation between how many times children had been on Child In Need before FACT22 involvement and whether they were re-referred. FACT22 was found to have had more of an impact with families who are receiving intervention from services for the first or second time. With families in their first intervention 67% of them have remained sustained and not required any further support. Families where FACT22 is their second intervention has been even more successful - 76% of these families have sustained changes and not required any further support. Children whose families have received repeated intervention from services are less likely to sustain changes made with FACT22. This provides some valuable learning for the cases where FACT22 can have the most impact and a prompt for discussions in the partnership about how FACT22 can be best used.

9. Impact for Cheshire East Children's Social Care

- 9.1. During 2017-18 there was a reduction in referrals to children's social care of 8%. Repeat referrals have reduced from 25% to 22% and we are now in line with the national average. The average open caseload in Crewe CIN/CP has reduced from over 1000 to around 600 during the period that FACT22 has been in place. The cared for children population has risen during this period, similar to other local authority areas, however when it is necessary to make an application to court to safeguard a child, there is significant evidence to demonstrate that the family have been offered support to make the changes required to keep their child safe from the risk of significant harm.
- 9.2. The purpose of the innovation funding was to look at creative and innovative approaches to frontline social work practice with a view to projects ultimately becoming part of the mainstream offer for children and families rather than being based on additional funding. Over the last three years Macclesfield Cin/CP Service has continued to benefit from fully staffed social work teams. FACT22 provided additional capacity and has worked with approximately 105 children from April 2017 to July 2018. FACT22 has focussed on working with a smaller number of families that required intensive support to prevent escalation.
- 9.3. The cohort of children and families that the service works with across the footprint of Cheshire East varies considerably. In the Crewe area it is more likely that children and families will have increasingly complex needs with challenges in contextual safeguarding centred on Crewe town centre and an increasing number of Court cases with an international element.
- 9.4. Crewe Cin/CP Service has continued to experience challenges in respect of the recruitment and retention of social workers in line with the national

picture. This is due to a combination of factors including the geographical location of Crewe and social workers taking up promotions within Crewe Cin/CP Service and across Children's Social Care. The vacancies within the Crewe Cin/CP Service are the equivalent of a social work team of one team manager and six social workers. This has provided an opportunity to pilot FACT22 as part of our mainstream social work offer. From August 2018 to March 2019 there will be two pods based in Crewe Cin/CP with capacity to work with up to 96 children at any point in time. It is envisaged that this will support the workload of social workers in Crewe Cin/CP as this will be an increase in capacity to work with an additional 48 children. Social work case load numbers have increased because of the current vacancies and this additional capacity will ensure that social workers have sufficient capacity to undertake more complex work. FACT22 in Crewe Cin/CP will consist of two Social Work Consultants and 8 Family Practitioners. It will also ensure that there is less reliance on agency social workers. This will positively benefit children and families as they will experience less changes of worker and build stronger relationships in order to achieve better outcomes.

10. Learning from Coventry

- 10.1. Following the success in Cheshire East, Catch22 has been awarded a second round of Innovation Funding from the DfE to work in partnership with Coventry City Council to scale and spread the model addressing some issues of long term drift in their child in need cases. To aid optimum learning across the 2 services, Catch22 restructured their management lines and now the same service manager oversees both services. This means that successful processes can be shared and adopted across both services, where possible.
- 10.2. Coventry made a decision to second 2 members of staff to the team to diversify learning, help build and keep relationships between Catch22 and Coventry. This has proved successful and is something that will be replicated in the Cheshire East model moving forward.

11. Next Steps for Fact22

- 11.1. Due to the impact elicited above, Cheshire East is continuing to fund the service until March 2019 when a competitive tender process will be implemented for future delivery.
- 11.2. As the service in Coventry is currently funded by the Innovation Board of the DfE, the service manager is in monthly discussion with key members who continue to show interest in the model in Cheshire East
- 11.3. FACT22 (Project Crewe) is one of only 9 of the 50+ Round 1 Innovation Programme projects invited to take part in a longitudinal study. This follow up evaluation will track the outcomes for the families involved in the original Randomised Control Trial in order to assess sustained impact and will be a great opportunity for Catch22 and Cheshire East to showcase how their

continued partnership has impacted positively on the areas children and families.

- 11.4. Catch 22 and Cheshire East have also contributed to research conducted by Research in Practice, a national training and development resource that supports evidence informed practice with children and families. This research looks at best practice in effective Commissioner-Provider relationships when commissioning innovative services.

12. Areas for Further Improvement

- 12.1. Over the next six months FACT22 and the CIN/CP service will continue to fine tune the identification of suitable families that can be stepped across to the service.

13. Implications

13.1. Legal Implications

- 13.1.1. The Council has a statutory duty to work with children in need to promote and safeguard their welfare. Cheshire East has delegated its responsibility for children in need that are open to FACT22.

13.2. Finance Implications

- 13.2.1. The current service is being funded from the Children's Social Care budget as an alternative to an additional team of Social Workers. The cost of extending the service from 1st August – 31st March 2018 is £225,000. Whilst there are no savings expected at the current time from the provision of this service, it is expected that longer term savings could result from the reduction in escalations of children in need and a reduction in repeat referrals.

13.3. Equality Implications

- 13.3.1. Members may want to use the performance information to ensure that services are identifying the most vulnerable children, for example children with disabilities.

13.4. Human Resources Implications

- 13.4.1. The Council has a workforce strategy which is designed to recruit and retain qualified Social Workers and Managers. It is important that this is effective so that the Council retains the capacity to respond to children and young people at risk of significant harm. This service provides an innovative alternative to delivering statutory children's social work services with less Social Workers being needed to provide high quality child in need planning. This means that Social Workers can focus on

more complex work such as children subject to child protection planning and court work.

13.5. Risk Management Implications

13.5.1. There are risks associated with the delegation of authority to FACT22 to deliver some statutory services to children as Cheshire East was one of the first Councils to do this. There are clear performance measures in place, alongside a quality assurance framework. There is a joint working protocol that is regularly updated and has evolved over time. In order to mitigate the risk, Children's Social Care have consulted with Ofsted and invited the Chief Social Worker to visit the service.

13.6. Rural Communities Implications

13.6.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

13.7. Implications for Children & Young People

13.7.1. This report sets out the progress being made to reduce the impact of harm on children and young people.

13.8. Public Health Implications

13.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

13.9. Ward Members Affected

13.9.1. FACT22 is currently based across the Cheshire East footprint. Over the next eight months there will be an increased focus on provision of service within the Crewe area, although for specific families, identified as benefitting from the service there remains the potential to work with FACT22 wherever they reside.

13.10. Consultation & Engagement

13.10.1. The implementation of FACT22 has been scrutinised by the LSCB. Due to the service being innovative, there has been lots of consultation and engagement with partner agencies and the wider community through attendance at meetings and open days.

13.10.2. The development of the service takes place in consultation with children and families. FACT22 has recently recruited their first volunteer who was previously a parent with a child open to the service.

14. Access to Information

14.1. There is no information provided in addition to this report.

15. Contact Information

Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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