

## **Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** 27 January 2020

**Report Title:** Family Focus (Troubled Families) Recovery report

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

**Senior Officer:** Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director People

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. This report describes the continued improvement journey for the Council and its partners in delivering the National Troubled Families Programme. The Troubled Families programme is a UK Government scheme that was launched in 2011 under the Department for Communities and Local Government. The aim is to help troubled families turn their lives around. Troubled families are defined as those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. In Cheshire East the programme is called Family Focus.
- 1.2. This report describes our improvement position to deliver positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To note and scrutinise the improvement journey and progress of the programme to date.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is well placed to scrutinise the Family Focus programme delivered by Cheshire East Council.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. It is important that the Family Focus programme within Cheshire East is scrutinised.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council joined the expanded National Troubled Families Programme in April 2015. The name was changed in Cheshire East from Troubled Families to Family Focus, as it was felt this would cause less stigma to the families and reduce barriers to effective working.
- 5.2. The programme remains focused on trying to change the lives of families who face multiple difficulties and will continue to include families affected by:
- poor school attendance
  - youth crime and anti-social behaviour
  - unemployment
- 5.3. The programme now also includes families with a broader range of problems, including those affected by domestic violence and abuse, younger children who need help, where crime and anti social problems may become inter-generational and with a range of physical and mental health problems.
- 5.4. The programme continues to operate on a Payment by Results (PbR) basis to the Local Authority, and each Local Authority has been given a number of families for which results may be able to be claimed; in Cheshire East this is 1900 over the 5 years.
- 5.5. We are now beginning the fifth year of phase 2 of the programme, which first launched in 2015. The key focus from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been transformation of local services to secure sustainable, high quality services for families after the programme ends in March 2020.
- 5.6. There are six Headline Phase 2 Criteria with 39 eligibility indicators within them:
- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
  - Children who have not been attending school regularly;
  - Children who need help: children of all ages who need help are identified as in need or subject to a Child Protection Plan;
  - Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, or young people at risk of worklessness;
  - Families affected by domestic violence and abuse; and

- Parents and children with a range of health problems.
- 5.7. Additionally, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have specified that the following also needs to be evidenced in all cases in order for a successful claim to be submitted:
- There must be an assessment that takes into account the needs of the whole family
  - An action plan that takes account of all (relevant) family members;
  - A lead worker for the family
  - The objectives in the family action plan must be aligned to those in the local Family Focus outcomes plan.
- 5.8. The programme funding primarily comes from three streams and funding for 2019-20 was allocated as follows:
- Attachment Fees : £95,000
  - Payment by Results: £483,200
  - Service Transformation Grant : £200,000
- 5.9. These three funding streams are currently funding a range of interventions to directly support the families and upskill the workforce. One such example includes the training and delivery of Triple P parenting. Funding is also being used to employ a wide range of staff to deliver, manage and evaluate the programme. Roles include a dedicated manager, Family Service Workers, Locality Support Officers to offer guidance to all partners supporting families, roles within our front door, Early Help Brokerage, Employment Advisors from Department for Work and Pensions, Information officers and Business Support Assistants from the Business Intelligence Service.
- 5.10 In Phase 2, we need to work with 1900 families and therefore need to work with/attach approximately twice as many families to the programme as we did in Phase 1. Each will need to be provided with an appropriate intervention, an assessment and an action plan, with evidence of measurable outcomes.
- 5.11 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked all Boroughs to conduct a self-assessment around their Troubled Families Service Transformation. Transformation of local services is a key objective of the Troubled Families Agenda. This will secure sustainable, high quality services for families after the programme ends. Workshops were held with all partners to identify where services needed to develop further to be considered 'mature' against the six strands for Service Transformation. As a result, the Early Help Strategy and the Service Transformation Action Plan

have been updated to reflect the self-assessment outcome, which describes Cheshire East as a 'maturing' service at this time.

## Impact

- 5.12 The latest intelligence that tracks the cohort of families being targeted indicates that up to September 2019, there have been 3700 families that have received an intervention that meets the criteria of the programme across the two phases.

## Payment by Results

- 5.13 Local Authorities and partners have been asked to measure success in two ways:

1. Given the family's complex needs, they have managed to achieve "significant and sustained progress". This is measured from the point of closure for 6 months.
2. An adult in the family has moved off benefits and into continuous employment.

- 5.14 As of September 2019, there have been 1540 claims for our work with families under Phase 2 of the project. 46 of these claims were for continuous employment and the remaining 1494 for significant and sustained progress. This equates to 81% of claims being submitted to date and we are on track to hit target for the full cohort.

- 5.15 What our families said:

*"I feel that this time round my family support worker is listening to me and helping me work towards a happy home".*

*"Gives us all our own chance to give different perspectives on the same situation".*

*"The worker has been working with myself and my daughter. She has made a big improvement to our lives helping me to go on courses to better understand my daughter's behaviour and how to manage it; she has also helped my daughter with her confidence and self-worth. The worker has been conscientious, thoughtful, always listened to my concerns and my extended family's worries about my daughter. Just like to say thank you for everything, I'm seeing a massive improvement and our family is stronger than ever".*

## Case Studies

- 5.16 The Early Help Plan (EHP) has supported mum for over a year. The support offered has helped mum to move house closer to her support network which includes gran, mum's cousin and the local school. This network has helped to support mum in times of need such as getting the children to school, supporting when she ran out of money, helping with debt collectors and emergencies, including the time mum flooded her flat. This support is able to help mum in the future if she has any emotional or physical issues, which in turn ensures that her children's needs are met, such as attending school, having play opportunities, being fed and clothed appropriately.
- 5.17 Family Support Workers have helped mum with language and communication difficulties, referrals to relevant agencies such as Troubled Families Employment Advisers who sorted out benefits problems, job seeking support, debt management support and applications to 3C's which is an organisation for people with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health challenges. All of the support managed through the Early Help Plan has ensured that mum is financially better off so can meet the girls immediate needs, ensured that she is engaged within the local community Mum is also aware of how to manage the break up with the children's father, and ensure that the girls needs are met moving forward. Most importantly, mum has got a robust support network around her to offer her good, sound advice. This will reduce her reliance of services moving forwards.
- 5.18 For the next year of the programme, we further aim to embed the principles of Service Transformation through the revised and updated Early Help Strategy that builds on the existing work already being delivered in Cheshire East.
- 5.19 At the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in December 2018, it was agreed to refocus our work at a locality level to tight, shared geographical boundaries. This will be the key direction of the future shaping of our services moving forward for the People Directorate, including commissioned services specifically our 0-19 Health Service and schools clustering model.
- 5.19 Building upon the NHS Place based commissioning hubs for integrated care, we would like to align this structure for children and families services to ensure we have a much-improved synergy and integrated operational model that can maximise available delivery space and potential for joint assessment, planning and team around the family working.
- 5.20 This refreshed refocus of our resources will enable us to mainstream our whole family working approach and offer us a sustainable delivery model as

developed through the Family Focus Service Transformation Grant, bringing services closer to those families who present the greatest challenge to the public sectors and Voluntary Community Sector partners.

- 5.21 Appropriate scrutiny and challenge of the performance of Family Focus at Cheshire East will further improve our reputation for improved performance with MHCLG for the next year of the programme. The funding has now been announced and the Programme will therefore continue for a further year.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. No legal implications. All claims will continue to be audited.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1. The funding received for the Troubled Families Programme is held in an earmarked reserve. This is used to meet costs of the programme in the current year and allow for the programme to continue when the Government funding ceases. The balance on the reserve as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 is £985,000.

### **6.3. Policy Implications**

- 6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications at this stage.

### **6.4. Equality Implications**

- 6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

### **6.5. Human Resources Implications**

- 6.5.1. There is a risk to the programme not continuing as key roles that support our most vulnerable families including roles within our front door Early Help Brokerage team, are funded by the programme.

### **6.6. Risk Management Implications**

- 6.6.1. All current risks associated with the programme are mitigated and signed off via the MHCLG spot check in September 2019.

### **6.7. Rural Communities Implications**

- 6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities as referrals come from every area of the Cheshire East Council area.

## **6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

6.8.1. Children and families across the borough will have been positively impacted by the intervention provided which will be evidenced by the outcome indicators in the corporate plan relating to children.

## **6.9. Public Health Implications**

6.9.1. Children and families across the borough will have been positively impacted by the intervention provided which will be evidenced by the public health indicators that relate to children and families.

## **6.10. Climate Change Implications**

6.10.1. This proposal has a positive impact on climate change by delivering services more locally for families and by reducing duplication of multiple agencies trying to work with them.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. This is a borough-wide programme, so all wards impacted.

## **8. Access to Information**

8.1 All data and information collected on families as a requirement for the programme is done on the basis of gaining consent from parents and carers. All published data is anonymised in line with GDPR regulation.

## **9. Contact Information**

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

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