

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Date: Monday, 23rd November, 2020

Time: 1.30 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

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The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

For requests for further information

Contact Helen Davies

Tel: 01270 685705

E-Mail: helen.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda

5. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers.

Members of the public wishing to make a statement should provide at notice in writing at least three clear working days before the meeting takes place.

6. **Child / Young Person's Story**

7. **Covid-19 Update** (Pages 11 - 20)

To consider the committee's standing update report on Covid-19 in relation to Children's Services.

8. **Children's Services Performance Scorecard - Quarter 2, 2020/21** (Pages 21 - 30)

To consider the performance data for Children's Services from Quarter 2 of 2020/21.

9. **Covid-19 and Children's Mental Health Support** (Pages 31 - 38)

To consider a report on the approach taken by the council and partners to support children and young people's mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic.

10. **Domestic Abuse** (Pages 39 - 56)

To consider an update on domestic abuse and how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on it.

11. **NEET Summit and Action Plan** (Pages 57 - 62)

To consider an update on the NEET Problem Solving Summit and the approach being taken by the council to support post-16 skills development.

12. **High Needs Funding** (Pages 63 - 70)

To consider an update on the work being carried out through the Schools Forum to develop a proposed new model for allocating High Needs top-up funding, along with details of planned next steps for this work.

13. **Forward Plan** (Pages 71 - 84)

To give consideration to the areas of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee.

14. **Work Programme** (Pages 85 - 94)

To give consideration to the work programme.

Membership: Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, D Brown, J Buckley, C Bulman (Vice-Chairman), P Butterill, S Handley, A Moran, J Saunders (Chairman), L Smith and N Wylie

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
held on Monday, 28th September, 2020 at Virtual Meeting

PRESENT

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, D Brown, J Buckley, P Butterill, S Handley, A Moran, L Smith and N Wylie

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor K Flavell, Portfolio for Children and Families

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Madeleine Lowry, Associate Director of Operations, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Steve Nevitt, Service Manager for Resources*
Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director of People
Jacquie Sims, Director of Children's Social Care
Alison Stathers-Tracey, Director of Early Help and Prevention
Jamilia Tausif, Associate Director of Commissioning (NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group)

* Attended for Minute No. 26 only

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 August 2020, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

24 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of a party whip were made.

25 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Councillor A Critchley spoke to the committee about the nature of Ofsted inspections – which are usually completed through three separate types of inspections – and whether the new, single inspection arrangement put in place following the Covid-19 outbreak, could be continued hereafter instead of returning to the more resource-intensive, three inspection arrangements.

Councillor A Critchley also talked to the committee about how schools had been managing Covid-related staff shortages, following a communication he had received about a school in his local ward regarding a shortage of catering staff and the responsive measures they had put in to manage this. He queried whether this was a local issue that had been resolved, or if it was indicative of a problem being experienced by schools across the borough.

The Chairman then spoke about Covid-19 and the impacts that it had had on school attendance across the borough. requested officers provide clarity on attendance at Cheshire East schools and how the overall levels had been impacted by Covid-19. Members raised other queries such as how infection rates in Cheshire East compared to other regions, and how Cheshire East schools had interpreted government guidance about what parents/carers should do at school drop-off and pick-up times.

RESOLVED –

- 1 Officers provided assurance that Cheshire East had not experienced a significant, widespread shortage of school catering staff, and that this particular instance was specific to the local school.
- 2 Members thanked Councillor A Critchley for attending the meeting and making his statements.
- 3 That the update on Covid-19 be received and noted.
- 4 That officers be asked to provide a written answer in response to members' query regarding how Cheshire East schools had interpreted government guidance.

26 CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

A case study was outlined to the committee about a young person who had recently moved back into a local Cheshire East children's home, after a lengthy adoption process that only saw him be officially adopted at age 11. After being brought into Cheshire East care at 13, this young person

had been supported to deal with the complexities of their upbringing. They were now due to start at a local college in September 2020.

Members discussed the issue of adoption breakdown and its common causes, and noted that the cause of such a breakdown is not always related to the child, but can stem from other types of abuse or negative behaviour from the adoptive families.

RESOLVED –

That the young person's story be noted.

27 SPOTLIGHT REVIEW ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Chairman presented to the committee the proposed final report of the committee's spotlight review on Children's Mental Health Services, undertaken on 24 February 2020.

Members discussed the pertinence of such a report in the current climate of Covid-19 and the reported impacts that lockdowns and restrictions have had on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Officers from the council and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (the main provider of young people's mental health services in Cheshire East) attended this item and talked about how the two organisations, amongst other partners, had worked to ensure that there was additional funding and support available to meet these needs.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the report be agreed, endorsed and passed on to Cabinet to consider and respond to its conclusions and recommendations.
- 2 That officers be asked to provide a focused update to the committee at its next meeting on 23 November, 2020 on the mental health and wellbeing impacts caused by Covid-19, and the work undertaken by the council and partners to ensure the right support was available.

28 UPDATE ON KICKSTART AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The committee considered a verbal update on the Kickstart scheme – launched on 18 September, 2020 – which aimed to get 16-24 year old NEETs (people not in education, employment or training) into robust, effective work placements.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to:

- how many kickstart placements the council would be able to offer across its service areas, and

- the particular challenge faced by cared-for children seeking to gain these placements and/or employment, and the how the council was specifically supporting these children.

RESOLVED –

That the update be noted.

29 UPDATE ON OFSTED INSPECTIONS

The committee considered an update on the interim arrangements for inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Inspections, following a pause to inspections due to Covid-19.

Members queried how the forthcoming ILACS inspections would take into account the impacts of Covid-19 and how this took certain things out of the council's control, for example, the availability of the local police service.

RESOLVED –

That the update be noted.

30 VISION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The committee considered a report that outlined the council's overarching vision for what it wants to achieve for children and young people in Cheshire East, which would be used to ensure that there was a shared aim and clear expectation that all work should be done together with children, young people and families.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- whether this was a realistic ambition in light of the current and future impacts that will be caused by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- if any adjustments had been planned for; and
- that more referrals would have been expected.

The committee was advised about the Comprehensive Spending Review by Directors of Children's Services, which had set out in detail the general challenges and financial challenges faced by children's services.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the Vision for Children and Young People in Cheshire East be endorsed and adopted.
- 2 That the Comprehensive Spending Review by Directors of Children's Services be circulated to committee members outside of the meeting.

31 PROGRESS AGAINST OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee considered an update on progress the council had made against the recommendations put by Ofsted following its standard Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in November 2019.

Members asked questions in relation to;

- the employment of quality social care workers and whether the council was able to appoint people from a student level and support them in their training;
- how many Cheshire East cared-for children were in out-of-borough placements, and how many of these could potentially be able to return to Cheshire East, subject to the right support systems being put in place; and
- how many foster carers the council had, and how this compared to other local authority areas.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the update be noted.
- 2 That officers be asked to provide a response in writing to the question regarding the number of cared-for children in out-of-borough placements.

32 UPDATE ON SEND

The committee considered an update on the progress the council has made against the recommendations put to Cabinet in the SEND Reforms Task and Finish Group report (date), and an update following agreement of the Written Statement of Action.

Members sought assurances that, after an issue was identified regarding the capacity of people working in the team, additional funding would remain ongoing so that jobs/roles do not get cut and the important support services remain in place for those that need them.

RESOLVED –

That the update be noted.

Councillor A Moran took the position of Vice-Chairman in the Chair, whilst the Chairman resolved connectivity issues.

33 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD - QUARTER 1, 2020/21

Members considered the performance data from the council's Children's Services directorate for the period of Quarter 1, 2020/21.

RESOLVED –

That the report and update be noted.

Councillor J Saunders resumed the Chair.

34 FORWARD PLAN

The committee reviewed the council's Forward Plan of key decisions.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

35 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee reviewed its work programme and discussed how best to programme its business into the remaining three meetings of the year.

RESOLVED –

That the following updates be made to the work programme;

- a Covid-19 update be added as a standing item to be received at the top of forthcoming meeting agendas;
- a follow-up update on progress made against the recommendations in the spotlight review on Children's Mental Health Services be added to the agenda for March 2021; and
- a further review of the Kickstart scheme be brought for consideration by the committee in January 2021.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 4.38 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)



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Key Decision N

Date First
Published: N/A

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: Children's Services' Response to COVID-19

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

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director of People

1. Report summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the work of Children's Services in response to the current national and international public health emergency on COVID-19.
- 1.2. These are unprecedented times for the Council, and for our children, young people and families.
- 1.3. We have many challenges ahead. COVID-19 is and will continue to have a significant impact on our children, young people and families. The strain of COVID-19 and lockdown has increased pressures for families, with some facing redundancy. The mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and families has been affected. Children and young people have missed out on education. Lockdown has reduced the visibility of children, allowing harm to remain hidden. The likely economic recession that will follow as a result of COVID-19 will increase the number of children living in poverty and will exacerbate the current inequalities. The legacy of this will be an increased demand for services over the next year but also in the longer term, with an increased cost to the Council and the partnership.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1 Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note:
- The progress to date,
 - The issues outlined in this report
 - And the impact of the pandemic on children and young people.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. To enable members to scrutinise arrangements for children to ensure we have the right support in place to help children achieve the best outcomes. To put on public record a summary of our response to date. To explain the financial implications and the ongoing pressures due to COVID-19.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Children's Services' Response to COVID-19

Children's Social Care

- 5.1 We are now seeing the rise in contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care that we predicted as a result of Covid-19. This is resulting in social workers' caseloads being higher than we would want them to be, although we do have a clear plan in place to reduce this. We have asked the safeguarding partnership to support with this by partner agencies leading cases that are able to step down to prevention and early help, to prevent families experiencing statutory intervention for longer than they need to. We are working closely with the partnership to ensure that key services are maintained should stricter restrictions be implemented, to ensure that children, young people and their parents/ carers can still access the support they need, and to avoid the increase in need we have seen as a result of the initial lockdown. We will be continuing to conduct face to face visits to family homes to ensure we are effectively safeguarding children and young people.
- 5.2 We expect to receive an inspection of local authority Children's Services (ILACS) very soon and are preparing for this new type of

inspection, which will focus on the quality and impact of decision making for children and young people during the pandemic.

- 5.3 We launched our new fostering brand on 1 October – Together for Fostering. Less than two weeks since the launch, we had already received 12 enquiries which is very positive. A direct maildrop will be carried out to all households in Cheshire East – residents will receive a postcard on fostering and what to do if you want to become a foster carer. 12 potential carers are currently in assessment. New foster carers will enable us to meet more children and young people's needs closer to home, so they can stay connected with the people who are important to them and their communities. We would like everyone to promote our campaign and spread the word to the people they know who would make great carers for our children and young people.
- 5.4 We are really proud to share that My CWA, a partnership formed with Cheshire East Council which tackles domestic abuse in our borough, have won a national award for their fantastic work from the centre of social justice.

Early Help and Prevention

- 5.5 As reported previously we are continuing to see the needs of families increasing, alongside an increase in referrals. We are bringing in additional capacity to support the Family Service to meet this increase in demand on a temporary basis to ensure children and young people are safe, and where possible prevent families from needing to escalate into a statutory social care service. We are continuing to monitor this closely as we move forward with increased evidence of poor mental health, neglect and pressurised households emerging in terms of needs.
- 5.6 We have now achieved 99% of our early years settings opening after the initial lockdown period and 96% of Childminders open for business. However, there have been positive Covid cases within our early years settings (mainly relating to staff), and for some this has meant they have needed to close for the two week isolation period. A dedicated email support line and follow up calls are in place providing specific Public Health advice to effected settings which is working well.
- 5.7 We have provided e-vouchers for children and young people who are eligible for free school meals over half term where needed to ensure we have supported our most vulnerable.

- 5.8 We continue to be concerned about the opportunities for our young people as they move into adulthood. We ran a Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) summit at the end of September where training providers, colleges and young people who are NEET informed the development of our NEET offer going forward. Alongside a range of other actions, we agreed that services and providers will meet regularly to problem solve issues for complex cases and individual young people, which will support effective sharing of options available to move into training and employment – including kick start opportunities. We will also be working together with the Job Centre to hold a virtual job fair for NEET young people in January.

Education and Skills

- 5.9 Over 53,319 pupils (88%) are now attending our schools (as at 15 October). Our attendance has remained high and is above national, statistical neighbours, and the North West average, which demonstrates that the preparations we have made have been effective in gaining parental confidence. This is despite an increasing number of pupils isolating due to positive Covid test results in schools. We currently have 3,392 pupils not attending schools as they are isolating either due to Covid symptoms, testing positive for Covid or having been in close contact with a person who has tested positive. Attendance of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan and pupils with a social worker also remains good at 87% and 88% respectively.
- 5.10 We have seen an increase in parents expressing an interest in electively home educating their child which we expected and is being seen nationally. We have received 111 applications, which is high compared with previous years, but currently only 16 parents have deregistered following meetings with the school and local authority to understand what is expected if they home educate. This is compared with 18 applications last year when all 18 deregistered. A clear process is in place to ensure parents and carers are supported and the decision to electively home educate is in the best interest of the child or young person.
- 5.11 We are continuing to provide intensive support to schools around how to implement the DfE guidance to ensure we have a consistent and safe approach across all schools, including around the new changes as a result of the tier system.

- 5.12 We have worked with Public Health to produce guidance to support schools when children or staff develop Covid-19 symptoms, including additional guidance on school bubbles to keep the number of pupils required to isolate to a minimum. We have created a dedicated Education Covid Response Team which came into effect at the end of September. This Team runs a helpline from 8am to 8pm on weekdays and during the weekend and responds to reports from schools on positive cases, and offers advice and guidance on the appropriate measures and pupil isolation. This is ensuring we are both supporting schools and have a consistent approach across Cheshire East. The helpline has received very positive feedback from schools. Workers within other services, such as Children's Social Care, the Family Service, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, are being notified when pupils are isolating so they are aware and can support families.
- 5.13 Since the beginning of September the Education Covid Response team has supported 111 settings with positive cases in 72 settings.
- 5.14 We are providing daily reports on cases to the DfE. As at 13 October, there were 44 settings with positive cases, affecting 3,392 pupils and 142 staff. We are tracking the Covid cases in schools. To date, transmissions have not been linked to schools and are linked to home or social mixing outside of school.
- 5.15 To increase safety for pupils, drivers and staff, we have now made wearing a face covering compulsory for all pupils aged 11 and over, and drivers, on school transport. We are also encouraging schools to ask parents and carers to wear face coverings when dropping off or collecting pupils from school to help to reduce transmission where there are larger numbers of people gathering. As we have moved into a High Local Covid Alert Level, DfE guidance has been updated for high schools that adults and pupils should wear face coverings when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.
- 5.16 The Department of Health and Social Care will be providing free PPE for education settings up to March 2021. We have organised the distribution of this to schools.
- 5.17 From 22 October, schools must provide immediate access to remote learning to any pupils who can't attend school due to Covid-19. This includes where a class, group or a small number of pupils need to

self-isolate, or local restrictions require pupils to remain at home. The DfE has put funding in place to support schools to access and set up a digital online platform through Microsoft or Google. These platforms can help to connect teachers and pupils when access to face-to-face education is disrupted. We have circulated a summary of all learning and training opportunities on remote learning to schools.

- 5.18 Ed Tech have been commissioned by the DfE to support schools in use of technology. We have arranged briefings for our schools delivered by Ed Tech which took place on the week of 19 October. We have been offered to be part of a first wave of schools in receiving a wide range of support to use google or Microsoft platforms to assist in remote learning which we are currently working with schools to establish.
- 5.19 We have 22 schools who are eligible to access academic mentors to support vulnerable children. We organised training for these schools week commencing 12 October. The schools have now registered and will be allocated mentors through Teach First. Teach First deliver this programme on behalf of the DfE. In addition, we are about to launch a programme to support 40 schools focused of supporting disadvantaged pupils.
- 5.20 A meeting has been held to map the support needed for Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils to ensure good attendance at school.
- 5.21 On 12 October, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the summer exam series will be delayed by three weeks, giving students more time to prepare for their exams. Exams will begin on 7 June and end on 2 July for almost all A and AS Levels and GCSE's. Further details are expected to be published later in autumn.
- 5.22 Ofsted commenced visits to schools (not inspections) from 28 September. The visits will usually last for one day. Ofsted are planning to visit 5% of schools this term. We organised two sessions for schools ran by Ofsted in September to explain the arrangements and scope for these visits, which over 90 schools attended. A number of schools in Cheshire East have now received a visit and have shared their experience with our other settings.
- 5.23 We are launching our Wellbeing in Education Programme which will start in November. Each school will receive two training sessions which aim to empower key staff with knowledge, understanding and clear strategies, so that they can use these to influence school/college

policy, procedures and responses in regard to supporting and enhancing wellbeing and resilience for all. This is a national training programme which we have tailored to meet our local needs.

- 5.24 We have sent a thank you letter before half term from the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Families as a public thank you to leaders, teachers, college and school staff for all that they are doing to keep our children and young people safe and to ensure their education continues during the current crisis.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 New legislation has been enacted and guidance has been released in relation to coronavirus.
- 6.1.2 We have liaised with our Legal Services colleagues throughout the last few months, to assist with and support our understanding and implementation of all legislation and guidance that affects our services to children and families. We will continue to do so, as appropriate, as we move into the recovery phase.

6.2. Financial Implications

- 6.2.1 We are now seeing the expected rise in demand to Children's Services as a result of Covid-19 which will increase costs to the Council.

6.3. Equality Implications

- 6.3.1 Care leavers are especially vulnerable and may be disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of housing and employment options as a result of Covid-19. They are also more likely to be living alone so have been at risk of being socially isolated during increased restrictions.
- 6.3.2 We have seen an increase in mental health issues, both for children and young people and parents and carers.
- 6.3.3 Some people we work with are at higher risk from Covid-19, for example pregnant women, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with underlying health conditions such

as some of our children with special educational needs and disabilities.

- 6.3.4 Some children with additional needs, for example those with autism, could find the change in routine at school and at home particularly challenging and may need additional support to help them through the changes.

6.4. Human Resources Implications

- 6.4.1 There have been HR implications to staff working in different ways. HR and Public Health have been supportive of officers in ensuring that robust risk assessments are in place and available to staff in undertaking their duties, for example in carrying out face to face visits to families.
- 6.4.2 Changing to an organisation that predominantly works remotely has been a huge challenge but is working well and there have been many success stories. Staff have shown enormous flexibility and resilience. They have done a great job. Families have been very positive about our new offer and virtual contact with them, and there will some ways of working we will continue with in the long term.
- 6.4.3 There has been regular communication with staff, including regular Children and Families staff newsletters sharing good practice and the latest guidance, and good co-operation with the Trade Unions. We have had a strong emphasis on recognising and celebrating the hard work and achievements of our teams.
- 6.4.4 We are now seeing an increase in staff becoming infected or needing to self-isolate as a result of Covid-19.
- 6.4.5 We are conscious of the sustained emergency response that has been required by our staff, and the impact this has, and we are continuing to remind staff that they need to prioritise their wellbeing in order to maintain their resilience.

6.5. Risk Management Implications

- 6.5.1 We have developed specific COVID-19 risk registers for Children's Services. The Children and Families Leadership team are continuing to meet on a regular basis to share information and ensure there is a joint approach to our response and risks are anticipated and mitigated.

6.6. Rural Communities Implications

6.6.1 There are no direct rural communities' implications of this report.

6.7. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.7.1 The contents of this report have outlined the implications for our children and young people.

6.8. Public Health Implications

6.8.1 Covid-19 is a global pandemic and public health emergency. Public Health advice has been sought to ensure Children's Services are complying with Public Health guidelines and are providing safe services for families and our staff.

6.9. Climate Change Implications

6.9.1 The increase in people working from home, and reduced travel, has had a positive impact on climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1 All members.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. Our Youth Council has continued to meet (virtually), and we continue to consult with the Parent Carer Forum and other groups. Feedback from families and partners on our support during Covid-19 has overall been very positive. Frontline staff have been involved in planning for recovery.

9. Access to Information

9.1. None.

10. Contact Information

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

Name: Mark Palethorpe
Job Title: Executive Director of People

Email: Mark.Palethorpe@cheshireeast.gov.uk



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Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: Performance Update – Quarter 2 2020-21

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe – Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the impact of Covid-19 on performance and gives an overview of performance across the Children and Families service for quarter 2 of 2020-21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the performance of Children's Services for quarter 2.
 - 2.1.2. Provide support and challenge in relation to performance for children and young people.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to highlight areas of poor performance and to scrutinise the effectiveness of plans in place to improve services. Overview and Scrutiny has an important role to play in the performance management systems of the local authority.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Background

5.1. This quarterly report provides the Committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report relates to quarter 2 of 2020-21 (1 July 2020 – 30 September 2020).

5.2. It also sets out the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance and the arrangements that have been in place during this time. As a result of the pandemic, the ability to deliver the standard Children and Families scorecard and indicators has been heavily impacted for a number of reasons including:

- Contacts and referrals to the front door have shown some unusual trends due to school closures which makes quarter on quarter analysis more complex.
- Delivery of frontline services, especially in terms of face to face visiting and routine reviews, have been adapted to reflect the various isolation requirements to protect both workers and the families we work with.
- School attendance data in the previous reportable format was suspended due to school closures and continues to be collected in a different way following re-opening in September.
- Attendance at Childrens Centres and Youth Support work been has severely impacted in the previously reportable format.
- Work around Education and Health Care (EHC) Plans – especially when assessing children in their “school environment” and “routine” has been increasingly complex and difficult.

5.3 However, senior leaders and managers have remained sighted on service performance and impact on children and young people through the following:

- A weekly core data set provided to CEMART which includes key measures for Children's Services.
- A weekly social care and safeguarding data set from the beginning of February 2020 comparing core data sets with the same week in 2019/20.
- Weekly attendance at early years settings Department for Education (DfE) dashboard.
- Northwest regional core social care data set submitted on a weekly basis on a Monday with a dashboard available for summary
- National local authority data set submitted to the DfE on a fortnightly basis commencing in May 2020
- Daily dashboard data around school attendance with weekly national comparator data and summary

- More recently a National SEND local authority data set submitted to the DfE.

5.4 This report contains the indicator set and summary commentary around any areas of concern together with highlighting any different provision/ support that has been put in place during this time.

Children's Social Care

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 2 2019/20
Number of referrals	2546	539	677	732
Percentage of repeat referrals	16%	18%	14%	14%
Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	86%	77%	67%	85%
Percentage of children with a second or subsequent child protection (CP) plan (rolling yr)	21.7%	21%	25%	23%
Number of children in need	1689	1830	1935	1837
Number of children with a child protection plan	253	274	259	230
% of children on CP plans reviewed within	89.6%	100%	99%	93%
Number of cared for children	534	544	537	517
% of cared for children reviewed within timescales	88%	99%	98%	93%
% of cared for children in internal foster care (including friends and family placements)	37%	30%	30%	37%
% of children living in external foster homes	28%	28%	27%	28%
% of children living in residential homes	8%	7%	7%	8%
% of cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	29%	29%	28%	27%
% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	55%	48%	45%	44%
% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation	95%	97%	96%	97%
Total number of children with a court endorsed plan of adoption (snapshot figure)	38	53	54	32
Number of children adopted (YTD)	17	0	2	10
Average caseload of social workers	25	24	25	22

5.5 Compared to quarter 2 (Q2) last year we are approximately 7.5% down on referrals to the front door albeit we have seen a 26% rise compared to Q1. This is in part due to the opening of schools in July and September with their percentage of referrals represented at 10% in Q2 compared to 14% for the same period last year. Whilst lower than last year, the conversion rate from contact to referral has risen from 25% in Q1 to 31% in Q2, suggesting that services continue to recognise safeguarding issues and refer in despite the change in circumstances.

5.6 The re-referral rate continues to remain at lower levels which, potentially, is a positive indication that the families we have previously worked with are managing sustained positive change throughout this period. Equally

though we are conscious that as schools have been closed there may be need that hasn't been as visible to services which may emerge as schools continue to operate.

- 5.7 Q2 and the relaxation of some of the tighter contact measures has enabled more direct visits to homes, together with some Child Protection conferences taking place face to face within the offices. Virtual visit case note options were added to the electronic recording system part way through Q2 to enable a better understanding of the nature of contact. Having the flexibility to undertake visits and contacts both face to face and virtually has benefited a number of families and young people and offered more bespoke and innovative ways to interact. Optimising technology will remain a feature moving forward.
- 5.8 The percentage of repeat child protection plans remains higher than desired and this is closely scrutinised at performance sessions and through audit to understand reasons for re-escalation. Positively, the percentage that have had a repeat plan within two years is less than 10% suggesting that more recent practice is resulting in sustained change within families.
- 5.9 Delays in care proceedings and additional financial support for foster carers continue to have an adverse impact both in terms of achieving timely permanency for children and also budget implications. Positively we have now had two children adopted together with children successfully transitioning to their next destination, planned returns home and placement with prospective adopters.
- 5.10 More recently we have also identified pressures as a result of adjournments in crown court proceedings. Whilst fortunately very rare for our young people, a recent delay of around 4 months for a young person remaining on remand as a cared for child will mean additional pressures and uncertainty for the wellbeing of the individual. From a financial perspective this will result in overall costs in the region of £88k to support this one individual. Alongside our colleagues in Youth Justice this has been escalated.

Education and Skills

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 2 2019/20
Percentage good or outstanding primary schools	92%	Not available	Not available	92%
Percentage good or outstanding secondary schools	80%	Not available	Not available	80%
Percentage good or outstanding special schools	80%	Not available	Not available	80%
Percentage attendance for primary pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	96%
Percentage attendance for secondary pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	93%
Percentage attendance for special school pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	90%
Number of permanent exclusions from Cheshire East Schools (latest half term available)	Not available	Not available	Not available	10
Current Number of pupils educated at home	392	345	351	372
Current number of children missing from education.	45	25	98	59
Percentage of Good/ Outstanding PEPs	87%	76%	Not available	2424
Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)	2533	2722	2827	2424
% of requests for Educational Psychologists (EP) advice completed within 6 weeks	43%	27%	42%	56%
Special Educational Needs – Education, Health and Care Plans completion within 20 weeks including exceptions (cumulative yr)	42%	38%	34%	46%
Average number of weeks for EHC Plans to be issued (snap shot at quarter end to which it relates)	21.6	23.5	24.4	15.8
% EHCP annual review completed in timescales	72%	65%	63%	70%

- 5.11 At the start of lockdown the DfE announced the cessation of all inspections and as such there is no updated data available. This remains the same for Q2 which also includes the summer break.
- 5.12 Likewise, comparable percentage attendance data sets will not be available as a differing mechanism for reporting attendance at school has been in place since the end of March 2020.
- 5.13 At the end of September, Cheshire East compared favourably in terms of overall pupil attendance at fully and partially opened schools. Whilst

nationally attendance was reported at 89% and regionally at 85%, Cheshire East were reporting 92% attendance.

- 5.14 There are a small number of schools that are unable to report currently to the DfE and the schools team remains in close contact with them to ensure that pupils are attending and any additional support required identified.
- 5.15 Pleasingly, the number of electively home educated (EHE) children has reduced compared to the same period last year. Work remains ongoing with families to ensure they understand the implications and consequences of making the choice to electively home education and to enable where appropriate a move back to a school/ settings placement.
- 5.16 Although there is an increase in the number of children reported missing from education this is not an immediate cause for concern. Most of these are where, due to delays in schools opening or being partially opened, it has taken longer to establish where pupils have moved to specifically around the reception and year 7 cohort. The team is working closely with the families and schools concerned to establish where individuals have enrolled.
- 5.17 At the end of September overall 87% of children and young people with an EHC plan were reported to be attending school. Crucially at the primary school age this was 93%. For those not attending, the teams clearly understood the reasons why and additional support was being provided.
- 5.18 Likewise, overall there was almost 90% of children with a social worker reported as attending the schools in Cheshire East during the last week of September. At the primary school level this was around 97%. This provides additional comfort that our most vulnerable children are now being regularly seen by a range of professionals.
- 5.19 Whilst there has been a small drop in the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans being completed this is due to a significant increase in needs assessment requests received and challenges in undertaking assessments during lockdown and phased reopening of schools. The priority had been to ensure that those moving settings have had the appropriate plans in place despite the very difficult circumstances of not being able to assess individuals for a number of months in a classroom setting. The work to increase the availability of Educational Psychologists (EP) has resulted in substantially increased percentage of requests for

advice being completed in 6 weeks. Given the pressures facing services and the difficulties they are facing these improvements are impressive.

Prevention and Early Help

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 2 2019/20
Current number of open Early Help Assessments/ plans	1100	1070	1142	1106
% of all open Early Help Assessments led by Cheshire East Prevention service staff	61%	61%	64%	75%
% 0-2 yrs engaged at children centres (most vulnerable i.e. CIN/CP/LAC that have attended 3 or more times in the last 12 months)	28%	Not available	24%	25%
% eligible children taking up 2 year old offer (termly figure only)	79%	Not available	75%	68%
% children taking up 3 and 4 year old offer (termly figure only)	97%-98%	Not available	95%	97%-99%
Number of Families meeting the family focus criteria where outcomes have been successfully concluded (quarterly fig)	700 in yr (1900 target met)	80	81	158 (1540 cumulative)
Number of young people accessing the youth support service	1,228	Not available	1,266	1,464
Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	199	210	90	105
% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	2.8%	2.9%	1.2%	1.5%

- 5.20 Once again a number of the core indicators normally provided are unavailable due to schools and settings closing, together with some regular activities being provided by Children Centres and Youth Support being required to cancel. The offer may not have been the same as pre-Covid but a number of key activities have continued or started including contacting all families open to social care with an under two year old, contacting all new parents, delivering garden, home and virtual video visits and undertaking the summer activity programme in outdoor spaces across the full age range.

- 5.21 Throughout Q2 the detached targeted youth work in conjunction with PCSO's and other partner agencies has continued across the borough. The teams were out over 19 evenings in July alone, often visiting as many as 4 or 5 different locations each evening. Most evenings this resulted in engagement with 20-30 individuals over locations rising to as many as 150 in one evening.
- 5.22 Despite the difficulties services are facing, compared to the same point last year we are supporting more families and young people with an early help assessment. This means that individuals are getting support as soon as possible and we can target help and equip individuals with tools and techniques before issues escalate. Longer term this will hopefully contribute to reduced numbers of individuals requiring specialist interventions and services.
- 5.23 The number of assessments being lead by Cheshire East Prevention Services is also lower than the same point last year. This means that our partners are increasingly taking the lead when they are the most appropriate agency. Given the pressures that all the agencies are facing currently the importance of this should not be underestimated.
- 5.24 A programme of preventative summer activities was provided between 21st July – 27th August with sessions for up to 18 individuals (in line with agreed Government guidelines) available across all three localities. This included the development of a virtual parenting journey and the "50 things to do before you're 5" which had over 1700 hits. In total 368 children plus parents accessed activities.
- 5.25 Overall due to the extensive range of activities, detached work and individual sessions, 1,266 individuals accessed youth support services. Given the restrictions imposed this is extremely impressive and a testament to the innovation and flexibility of the service.
- 5.26 546 households where babies had been born in April and May were visited and provided with a Book Start Baby pack and the opportunity to register at their local Childrens Centre. Other events such weekly Buggy walks attracted 67 parents and children.
- 5.27 The Family Focus work has continued following a further 12 month extension to the programme with a 2020/21 target of 318 payment by results. As at Q2 we are still on target with successful outcomes for 161 families achieved.

- 5.28 The Family Service supported the summer reading challenge with 200 packs delivered and 250 free books provided.
- 5.29 The not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures are currently very low and showing at 1.2%, however we still have a number of individuals where their placement/ status was still to be finalised as at the end of September.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. There are no direct legal implications.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. Although there are no direct financial implications related to this report, performance measures may be used as an indicator of where more or less funding is needed at a service level.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. Members may want to use the information from the performance indicators to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. There are no direct human resource implications.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. There are risks associated with some performance measures, e.g. increases in demand and timeliness of services.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

- 6.8.1. Performance reports enable members to identify areas of good performance and areas for improvement in relation to children and young people, including cared for children.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. This report does not impact on climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. The performance measures relate to all ward areas.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Access to Information

9.1. There is no additional information.

10. Contact Information

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

Name: Mark Palethorpe

Job Title: Executive Director of People

Email: Mark.Palethorpe@cheshireeast.gov.uk



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: Support to children and young people's emotional and mental health during Covid to date

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kathryn Flavell Portfolio Holder - Children & Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe – Executive Director People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 It seems obvious to state but recent national health study papers contain emerging evidence from previous studies carried out into pandemics and social isolation quarantine that point to increased demand for children and young people's mental health services.
- 1.2 Figures show that children and young people were five times more likely to require mental health services, following a pandemic and/ or social isolation or quarantine. Our provider of Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) and other Children's Services have planned for and reacted to the anticipated increase in overall demand for mental health support.
- 1.3 Emerging data collated in June 2020 shows an increase in children and younger people in almost every risk domain i.e. abuse, family relationships, sleeping difficulties, worries about returning to school or handling education virtually, increase in suicidal thoughts, loneliness, gender issues, health anxiety and eating issues.
- 1.4 This report summarises the approach taken across the Council and its partners to support children and young people's mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.5 It is just as important in a time of crisis that our actions to support children and young people are steered directly and indirectly by their feedback. Every attempt has been made to maintain links with children and young

people and their parents/ carers during the current pandemic in order to shape our emotional and mental health support appropriately.

- 1.6 A strong Council officer and partner presence has been maintained at the Parent Carer Forum steering group meetings and mental health concerns have been raised, listened to and acted upon. Our teams across Children's Services are constantly mindful throughout the pandemic of the priority to identify and support children and young people's mental health.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Notes the content of this update report and scrutinises the support in place for children and young people.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To keep all interested parties up to date on the steps being taken to support children and young people's emotional and mental health, and ensure we have a strong offer in place to support children and young people.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background

- 5.1 The following sections provide the main areas where the Council and its partners have strengthened and adapted their support in response to Covid-19 putting an added strain on children and young people's emotional and mental health:

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP) Specialist Community CAMHS

- The service is continuing to deliver face to face care from existing bases across Cheshire (including Elm House, Mill Street, Hawthorn Centre and Marsden House) via a base rota. All other team members are working effectively from home, delivering therapy, interventions and assessments via other methods including video consultation.
- All teams are utilising MS teams to deliver groups and therapy, video consultations and telephone consultations to young people on caseloads. Referrals are being processed as normal, with initial assessments being undertaken via telephone/ video consultation, unless a face to face appointment is clinically indicated.
- A 24/7 All Age Crisis line has been in place since 3 April 2020.
- Face to face risk assessments continue to be undertaken at acute trusts/ paediatric wards.

- Teams continue with their contribution to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and are aware of the legislation change regarding EHCP reasonable endeavours.
- CWP are delivering an interim crisis place based offer over weekends including risk assessments at paediatric wards, home visits, telephone support calls.
- The trust is using Attend Anywhere and MS Teams software for teams to use for delivery of groups, including timid to tiger, coping cat, DBT etc.

CWP Learning Disability CAMHS

- The service is delivering face to face care from Elm House, Mill Street, Hawthorn Centre and Marsden House via a base rota. All other team members working effectively from home.
- All teams are utilising MS teams to deliver groups and therapy, video consultations and telephone consultations. Referrals are being processed as normal. Initial assessments being undertaken via telephone/ video consultation, unless a face to face appointment is clinically indicated.
- A 24/7 All Age Crisis line has been in place since 3 April 2020.
- The service continues to work with young people on team caseloads. This is being delivered via telephone consultations and/ or video consultations. Face to face appointments being offered and undertaken as clinically indicated.
- Teams continue with their contribution to EHCPs are aware of the legislation change regarding EHCP reasonable endeavors.

CWP Autism and ADHD team

- ADHD monitoring clinic: The service continues to work with young people on team caseloads. This is being delivered via telephone consultations and/ or video consultations. Face to face appointments being offered and undertaken as clinically indicated.
- ADHD and Autism assessments: The assessments and feedback sessions are being partially undertaken via telephone/ video consultation. Referrals being processed as normal and added to waiting list
- Face to face appointments being offered and undertaken as clinically indicated.
- ADOS assessments are not currently taking place. We are reviewing the partial assessments undertaken to determine those that require an ADOS to complete the assessment process as not all will. For those who do require an ADOS we are exploring how this part of the assessment can be undertaken safely.

Cheshire CCG

- Visyon and Just Drop are two local charitable organisations that support the emotional wellbeing of Cheshire East children and young people and are currently commissioned by Cheshire East Council as part of the Emotionally Healthy Child Programme and also by Cheshire CCG. The Cheshire CCG commission has been increased by 35 sessions per week to support the anticipated surge in demand due to Covid-19. The additional sessions continue to include:
 - One to one therapy
 - Therapeutic group work
 - Family support work
 - Therapeutic play
 - Creative activities
 - Mentoring
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
 - Solution-focused brief therapy
 - Parent support groups.
- The new Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) working across Crewe schools started their work in September 2020 and provide the following:
 - Evidence based interventions for children, young people and parents using a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) informed approach
 - Psycho-education workshops for children, young people, parents and/or staff
 - Training and support for staff
 - Working with mild – moderate mental health difficulties with recent onset
 - Additional support for school – “as well as” not “instead of”
 - Supporting schools with adapting a ‘whole school approach’ to mental health
 - Liaising with other services and help to signpost if not an appropriate MHST referral.
- Additional investment into KOOTH, please see below as linked to Cheshire East Council’s early help commissioning.

Cheshire East Council

- The Council’s Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People (EHCYP) programme commissions CWP alongside Visyon, Just Drop In, South Cheshire Clasp and KOOTH (online support). Most services are being delivered via telephone consultations and/ or video consultations. Face to

face appointments were resumed as soon as government guidance allowed and being offered and undertaken as clinically indicated. The EHCYP offer is working closely with schools and Early Years Settings to support teaching staff and children and young people during any transition back to school/ settings.

- KOOTH is an online early help counselling and support service for children and younger people aged 11-19 for emerging mental health problems. The service is currently provided via the Early Help and Prevention contract held by Cheshire East Council and also commissioned by Cheshire CCG. There has been an increase of approximately one third of children and young people seeking support via KOOTH during the Covid outbreak to date and the CCG has increased investment in order to meet the surge in demand and ensure that children and young people in Cheshire are able to access early help.
- Data for May 2020 indicates a 50% increase in users presenting with suicidal thoughts, a 171% increase in eating disorder issues and a 200% increase in autism spectrum condition issues. Log ins to KOOTH are up by one third and there has been a sharp increase in issues such as bereavement, abuse and sadness. KOOTH online staff are fully qualified to deal with all these issues and bring new content, forums and activities.
- Evidence shows that nationally and locally, numbers of children and young people accessing support has fallen. This is concerning and not an indication of need, rather due to the inability to access face to face services in light of Covid restrictions.
- In response to this, we have deployed our Youth Workers to undertake street-based patrols supported by local Police Community Support Officers to engage with young people who were struggling to stay at home and were out meeting their friends, not always following guidance on social distancing. The outreach work enabled us to signpost young people to all of the support services available to support their mental wellbeing. This is in addition to the consistent casework and one to one support for children through the Early Help Family Support service and Integrated Youth Support workers which has seen a surge in demand for young people, particularly those who are struggling with their own wellbeing. We captured the issues that have affected young people in order that we can retrain our workers with a new programme of mental health response support in the context of Covid and lockdown.
- NHS England and the Department of Health have given a clear steer that Commissioners should prioritise the development of online services in light of ensuring that we can still support younger people in a timely and safe way.
- At the start of the UK lockdown, Children and Families Services commenced a People Helping People (C&F PHP) rapid response for our most vulnerable children, families and young people, who are known to

services and may experience difficulties during the lockdown. The majority of requests for support came through our children and family's teams who know the circumstances of our families and young people and remained connected to them at this difficult time. We also liaised closely with the Communities PHP and Shielding programme to take some requests that have a focus on supporting our vulnerable families. During the 17 weeks of the C&F PHP operation from 06 April until 30 July 2020, 1,773 families and individuals received support. The vast majority required support with food parcels, but a number also required a wellbeing call. The team delivering the C&F PHP initiative received a number of positive comments from families that the calls and deliveries helped with emotional health and wellbeing.

- The project was widened to incorporate some commissioned services (My Cheshire Without Abuse, Young Carers, Substance Misuse Services) from the end of April, to provide direct support to some of the most vulnerable within the Borough. The activity packs provided by My Cheshire Without Abuse were referenced by families as a real positive for their wellbeing.
- The government's Wellbeing for Education Return seeks to better equip schools and colleges to promote children and young people's wellbeing, resilience, and recovery in response to Covid-19. As well as strengthening and building wellbeing and resilience, this aims to prevent the onset of mental health problems and ensure those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support. There are two elements to the project:
 - a new national training package providing guidance and resources for education staff on responding to the impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of their students and pupils.
 - funding to local authorities to help put local experts in place to work with partners to adapt this training, deliver it to nominated staff in education settings, and provide ongoing advice and support until March 2021.
- Cheshire East Council were already planning its support to schools and directly to children and young people in order to promote a safe, healthy and effective transition back to school. A partnership approach (Back to School TOGETHER) was taken, which included Cheshire East Council Education leads, Commissioners, Cheshire CCG, CWP, voluntary sector, and input from the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum. In September we recruited a co-ordinator who will directly support and guide schools to recognise and respond to children's emotional wellbeing and mental health in regard to Covid. Officers have also created a comprehensive children's mental health service directory covering all partners. This directory is a working document that will be updated regularly to ensure it is relevant, it gives an oversight of the provision and referral pathway for each listed organisation.

- During the early part of the pandemic Cheshire East Council's Live Well site was refreshed and resources added in support of children's mental health.
- A short programme of targeted Summer Activities were delivered through the Early Prevention and Intervention teams in July and August 2020 in order to support our most vulnerable families with their emotional and mental health.
- The Youth Support Service has been undertaking detached sessions in various hot spot areas where young people have been gathering during the pandemic. One of the aims of the detached youth work is to information and advice to support young people's mental health.
- Teams across Children's Services and our Schools are all focused and vigilant on children's emotional and mental health as they undertake their day to day work.
- Our Children with Disabilities Short breaks commissioned services have been adapting their resources to support the emotional wellbeing of our families with children with a disability whilst the usual face to face groups / activities were unable to be delivered.
- Our 0–19+ service has been enhanced to put in place mental health specialist health visitors and school nurses. This change in service delivery is expected to be implemented before Christmas.

Other grant opportunities

- The Council's Covid-19 Community Response & Recovery Fund has ensured that a wide range of partners, and in particular organisations from the voluntary and community sector, have received small amounts of financial support to help children and families manage the strains on emotional and mental health. Appendix 1 attached provides a summary of the projects that have been funded to date during the pandemic.

5.2 The Council and its partners will continue to be agile in support of children's emotional and mental health as the course of the pandemic continues to unfold.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

6.1.1. No legal implications.

6.2 Finance Implications

6.2.1 No finance implications.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 There are no policy implications to this report.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1. There are no equality implications to this report.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

6.5.1 There are no human resource implications to this report.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 There are no risk management implications

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1 No rural communities' impacts are expected.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/ Cared for Children

6.8.1 It is clear that during a pandemic, such as Covid, the emotional and mental health of children and young people can start to deteriorate. The response of the Council and its key partners in adjusting and enhancing support to children and young people and their families during this unprecedented time is vital.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1 Supporting children's emotional and mental health during the pandemic is key to maintaining good public health outcomes.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 There are no direct implications for climate change.

7 Ward Members Affected

7.1 All wards

8 Consultation & Engagement

8.1 This is an update report for information.

9 Access to Information

9.1 Nothing at this point in the development.

10 Contact Information

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

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Working for a brighter future together

Version
Number: 1

Key Decision N

Date First
Published:

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: Covid Impact Report - Domestic Abuse

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director for People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. During the pandemic, there was local concern that the nationally imposed restrictions would have an adverse impact on those living in abusive relationships. The fear was that not only were the risks to victims heightened and the pressures on relationships magnified, but that also there would be limited access to support from both social networks and professional services.
- 1.2. The action taken in Cheshire East Council, and across the Partnership has been effective, swift, responsive to changes in demand and proactive in preventing further harm.
- 1.3. The data and more importantly the stories from victims and those who harm have illustrated that whilst we have not experienced the surge in demand expected after lockdown restrictions were lifted, we have seen that the level of abuse experienced has been more severe (an increase of 20% for IDVA services) and we have seen victims who present with multiple issues (mental health, substance misuse) rise, although this was also a feature before the pandemic. On the positive side we have also seen that the inventiveness and creativity that has been necessary, has resulted in some changes which have had real benefit and which we will seek to sustain.

1.4. This report will set out for Members

- The action taken to minimise impact and the additional activity and delivery model during this period
- The evidence of impact and domestic abuse profile
- The gains that we want to take into the future
- The current position and resilience if we face a further period of restrictions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and provide scrutiny of the response to help and protect children, families and individuals affected by domestic abuse.
- 2.2. It is extremely positive that the Committee have shown their interest and support for the work we do in responding to domestic and sexual abuse. It is hoped that members continue to support the ambitions we have for further development and innovation of the service to provide an effective whole family response to domestic abuse that keeps victims and children safe and recovered from trauma, and offers an opportunity to perpetrators to change their behaviours.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Children and adults affected by domestic and sexual abuse need:
- To be safe – physically and emotionally
 - To know it's ok to talk
 - To know domestic abuse is never ok
 - To have a safety network and plan
 - To process what's happened and recover
 - To be helped with their own behaviour if needed
 - For children to have adults who are able to prioritise their needs
- 3.2 This will mean something different for each child and adult, depending on the length and severity of the abuse and their social network and resilience, but it is vital that provision is offered as early as possible and in a way that wraps around families, addressing both the effects and the cause of the abuse. Our priority is always safety, but people also need to recover from and/ or to change harmful behaviour. For this reason, we always adopt a whole family approach.
- 3.3. In order to be successful, we require a strong partnership that can respond together to the whole person within their family and community context irrespective of complexity.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The options for delivery of the service are managed through the commissioning process. Partners and service users inform the priorities for the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Strategy and the options for areas of service development come from statistical data, feedback, local practice issues and national legislative changes.

5. Background

- 5.1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update report on domestic abuse so they can understand and be assured about the arrangements to respond to those whose lives are affected by domestic abuse during the period of the pandemic.
- 5.2. In the response to domestic and sexual abuse there are two things that are critical. These are: the strength of the partnership to respond, and the feedback from clients to inform what we do well and what we need to do better. We have evidence of both of these in **Appendix 1**. It would be true to say that the increase in the severity and level of risk, together with the inevitable rise in mental health needs have characterised the impact for clients during the last 6 months
- 5.3. Cheshire East Council specialist domestic abuse provision comprises of:
- 24/7 immediate point of help, referral, information, consultation – **Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub** which sits within the Council's Integrated Front Door to children's services, Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS).
 - Council based provision within the **Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit** to respond to the highest risk victims and their families: this is through **Independent Domestic Violence Advocates** (IDVAs) and the multi-agency process **MARAC** (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing).
 - Council commissioned services, provided by **MyCWA**, delivering whole family recovery and change work for adults and children as well as accommodation, peer support and practical help.
- 5.4 Partnership work is critical to effective work and was already strong prior to the pandemic. Most recently, families had benefited from a significant increase and improvement in our joint work with police, partly through their co-ordination of a new way of doing MARAC electronically (eMARAC) and their introduction of specialist domestic abuse officers based in Macclesfield and Crewe. This has been critical in maintaining a strong offer

to those whose lives are affected by domestic abuse in Cheshire East during this period.

6. Briefing Information

6.1. At the point where it became clear that there would be a national 'lockdown' in March 2020, it was necessary to consider how we would continue to operate domestic abuse services differently. The information below sets out what action has been taken and the impact of that.

6.2. Immediate actions:

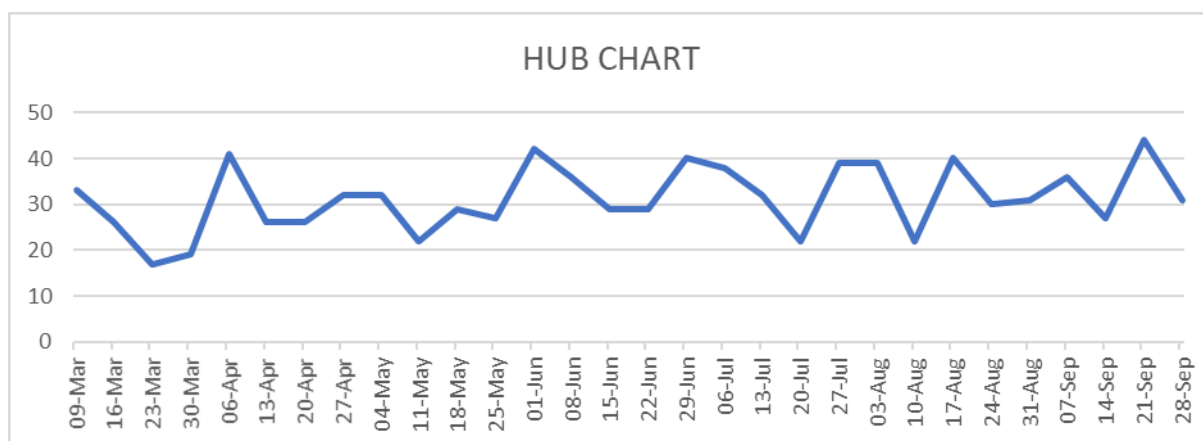
- All staff were required to work from home and enabled and supported to do this with appropriate IT.
- The continued operation of the Domestic Abuse Hub was critical as this is the single point of contact for all support in respect of domestic abuse, so we mobilised the response at home. We then front-loaded our response by moving staff to respond and developed an initial intervention approach, which has been well received by service users and will inform our approach going forward.
- We reviewed our accommodation offer to ensure that we could respond quickly to those who needed to flee to a safe place, but ring fenced this for Cheshire East residents as a priority.
- We reviewed our offer, priorities and how this would be delivered and communicated this with partners and the public.
- As the restrictions continued, we worked to get resources transferred to a virtual medium, so they were accessible for the community, victims, those that harm and professionals.
- We have worked on a sub-regional basis to make application for additional funding and to work with the police to support their 'live' phone-in.

6.3 **Impact:**

DATA

6.4 We are aware that calls to national helplines have been reported to have increased significantly during lockdown. There is limited information as to what this escalation represents in terms of service demand as it has been reported that the increase was related to agency calls to helplines rather than service users.

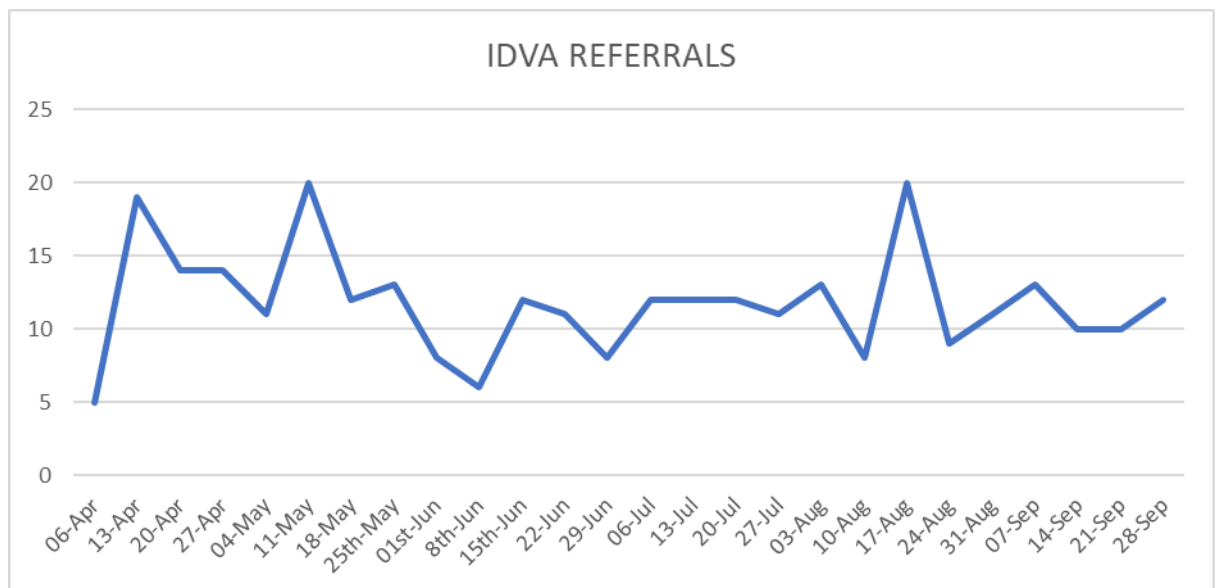
- 6.5 In Cheshire East, we have not seen the nationally reported increase in referrals over the last 6 months, although we are aware that victims and their children may still be 'hidden'. In normal conditions we would average 30 calls a week over the year and prior to the pandemic, demand had been greater than average. Demand then dropped in the first two weeks of Covid restrictions in March before escalating again to more expected figures. The trend has been for an undulating pattern of demand but no overall increase. As you might expect, the biggest change was in referrals from agencies who were not offering a service, or a reduced service during the lockdown period.



- 6.6 In anticipation of a potential increase in demand following a lifting in the restrictions we 'front-loaded' the resource at the HUB with qualified specialist domestic abuse staff who were able to offer a initial intervention to meet immediate need. This was well received by service users.
- 6.7 Overleaf is a chart showing referrals to high risk services – IDVA and MARAC. Normally we average 10 referrals per week. Initially we had been below average numbers but saw a spike around the Easter period and a further spike in August. It needs to be recognised that these are small numbers, but over the 6 month period represented below we had a rise of an average of 12 referrals a week, a 20% increase. There is a likelihood that within this cohort there will also be an increase in the level of repeats. The data would suggest that we have experienced a 25%+ increase in the number of contacts needed by existing clients.
- 6.8 There are a range of possibilities for understanding this. One is that the level of abuse that is being reported is of a higher risk, or that the level of abuse is the same but the restrictions have removed the safety nets that victims may normally have (relatives/ friends etc) and so their risk increases, or that the police have been very proactive (which they have in Cheshire East) in checking on victims (sometimes daily) and monitoring the activities of perpetrators and this had led to greater visibility, trust and

consequently, reporting. The evidence is hard to unpick, and it is probably a combination of all three. The impact on service is that the MARAC and eMARAC process has continued to function as normal but it has created additional stress on an already over-stretched IDVA service. There is also evidence that IDVAs are responding to victims with greater complexity, and multiple needs which again impacts on the length of time support is required and the pace at which change and safety can be achieved. There has been an increase in clients attempting suicide or identifying suicidal ideation e.g. the last three weekends has seen six clients struggling with mental health crisis. This has been difficult for staff who are working in a more isolated and concentrated way at home.

- 6.9 This is exacerbated with partner agencies having a reduced offer to clients, although all have continued to be engaged with the MARAC process. With the increase in IDVA demand and increased complexity, there is a risk that we may have delay in response although we are monitoring this to ensure that victims' immediate safety is still addressed as the priority. It does raise the problem we have faced year on year of insufficient IDVA provision and temporary posts due to time limited grant funding. A priority across the partnership will need to be to have necessary funding for the IDVA service we require to meet the demand on a permanent basis.



CEDAS Demand - Monthly total referrals to the Domestic Abuse Hub – during the pandemic								
Source	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Total (%)
IDVA/MARAC referrals by police	19	20	27	26	26	35	22	52%
IDVA/MARAC referrals from Hub/DAFSU or self	2	8	11	10	4	4	7	14%
IDVA/MARAC referrals from myCWA	2	7	2	0	2	6	7	9%
MARAC referral only from myCWA	1	3	3	2	0	2	0	3%
IDVA/MARAC referral from Hospital IDVA /Hospital	2	5	3	0	4	5	2	6%
IDVA/MARAC referral outside area	1	2	2	2	3	4	4	5%
IDVA/MARAC referrals by local partner agency	2	7	8	5	8	5	3	11%
Total	29	52	56	45	47	61	45	

6.10 Recovery work:

6.11 We have evidence of escalation in frequency and seriousness of abuse in cases already known to our services and that clients are seeking support more frequently, particularly in relation to anxiety. We do offer contact with mental health services but inevitably clients prefer to speak to someone they know rather than repeat their story, so staff are providing much more emotional and psychological support and holding cases open for longer

which adds pressure to their workload. Most recent data would suggest that 89% of clients are also experiencing mental ill health.

- 6.12 We have not seen an increase in the demand for emergency safe accommodation, and so far, we have been able to respond to the need in Cheshire East. We are working with colleagues in housing to ensure we can continue to respond if demand spikes. There was a delay for a period in clients being offered permanent accommodation to move to, which 'blocked' emergency provision, but we were able to manage this and it has become less of an issue since lockdown ended. The most significant pressure is on providing the level of support that those fleeing domestic abuse to emergency accommodation require. However, myCWA have been creative and relentless in their approach and support to ensure that victims and their families have the right response.
- 6.13 Other areas covered by the Cheshire Police footprint are reporting the same picture in terms of demand for domestic abuse services as ourselves.
- 6.14 Police incidents reported have on occasion been higher than for the equivalent period last year across Cheshire. We see these figures fluctuate anyway so it would be difficult to suggest that this represents a trend. The police are clear that initially, crime overall was down 38% so domestic abuse cases will represent a higher proportion of the total.
- 6.15 Sexual offences were down 35%, and those of rape equal to last year. The crime incidents are up for domestic abuse in Cheshire East, but after examination, one incident can result in several crimes, and we have been informed that domestic injury crimes are the same as last year, so this is not a useful indicator of demand. It does illustrate the proactive approach that the police have had, particularly when married with their figures for the ratio of arrests and those that proceed through for charge which are all increased. This is extremely positive and is now one of the highest rates in the country.
- 6.16 Work with children and families**
- 6.17 The IDVAs already work closely with social workers on cases where high risk domestic abuse is a safeguarding concern. It was IDVA practice to sit within social work teams in Macclesfield and Crewe. While physical co-location has not been possible, IDVAs continue to liaise and inform social workers so that any plan is responsive to known risks.
- 6.18 We also continue to report to and attend any Initial Child Protection Conference and reviews where domestic abuse is a feature of family life in order to advise on and broker specialist services where needed.

- 6.19 While MyCWA is not conducting as much face to face work with clients as previously, they are providing individual and joint family work, some of which is delivered by video link. More recently the centres have been open to offer pre-booked 1:1 counselling and clinics, but the response from clients has been small. We will continue to review and respond to what clients are saying suits and supports them best.
- 6.20 There have also been virtual groups run which have had some surprising positive results, particularly for the behaviour change programme. We plan to review the reasons for this and take the learning into our future offer (see below). MyCWA have also sent out practical tools to help families and children be safe and manage behaviour and promote self-efficacy and resilience.
- 6.21 In addition, we have a child concerns log which identifies children who are not visible to social workers and for whom we have some concern, because a parent may not be engaging with services or the child has an additional need which places them at some level of vulnerability. MyCWA are liaising with our Family Service about such children while those known to high risk services are shared with the strategic manager to collate emerging concerns from other agencies. This has enabled us to coordinated support to avoid escalation.
- 6.22 There has been significant sharing of resources not just with parents but with professionals supporting families, this includes the dissemination of 'Monkey Bob' toolkit. These have been positively received. There has also been a conversion of many tools to virtual toolkits which have been launches thematically and have been well-received. These can be viewed at the website <https://www.mycwa.org.uk/self-help-tools>.
- 6.23 Work with those who harm**
- 6.24 During the lockdown period, we noted an increase in self-referrals from people who know their behaviour is unacceptable. This is again extremely positive. MyCWA had provided some basic resources for people to check their behaviour in the heat of a stressful moment and to consider further help seeking and this has clearly worked.
- 6.25 The latest data for Q2 had 34 referrals for intervention for those that harm. This compares with 59 for the whole of 2019/20 and 69 for the first 2 quarters of 2020/21. If this continues at the same rate for the rest of the year it would mean an increase of 130%. Many of these referrals are for adults where children are already known to Children's Social Care.

- 6.26 However, we are now in a situation where our resources to respond are extremely stretched as it is not easy to deploy staff to cover perpetrator work due to the level of knowledge, training and experience that is necessary to identify and manage risk. To meet need we have had to offer additional hours to a specialist worker to respond. This will have an adverse impact on the budget. This will need to be reviewed again this month as we cannot balance the demands with the resource we have.
- 6.27 In one sense this is a 'brilliant problem' but underscores again the need for support for those who harm to become as normal a response as support for victims and we have a long way to go to get the level of funding required to make this regular practice. This will be a priority for our work going forward, it is where, as a partnership, we need to make more difference and develop and this has started at a strategic level.

6.28 Business Continuity During Covid-19

- 6.29 As outlined previously, specialist and partner services mobilised quickly to facilitate safe working with most staff working from home or deploying appropriate distancing strategies where work was needed face to face.
- 6.30 We agreed to target our resources at our 'front door', the Domestic Abuse Hub, in anticipation of a rise in demand and the commissioned service who already seconded a worker daily to contact those who were referred, added two more staff to this team.
- 6.31 While high risk victims continue to be referred immediately to the IDVA team this has meant that all other clients are being offered a more thorough piece of work at the Hub at the first point of contact, with the aim of minimising the number requiring longer term support, as the usual menu of options delivered from MyCWA community bases could not safely be delivered.
- 6.32 We recognised however that some clients would continue to need more intensive support and agreed a set of agreed criteria to allow prioritisation for onward referral including complexity, children on plans, people intending to separate which is known to increase risk.
- 6.33 One of the real and unexpected successes of the changes to the way of working has been the positive feedback and impact of running some of the group work virtually. This has necessitated the re-writing of the material and much smaller groups but it has been very successful in victim recovery work (Gateway) and for behaviour change work the impact has been that those in the group have been more honest and reflective. We will look

towards including the most successful elements within our offer as we resume more usual patterns of working.

6.34 Informing partners and the community

6.35 We have released a series of briefings outlining the continued provision of specialist services and help from statutory and commissioned services aimed both at partner agencies and those who might need our services.

6.36 These have included advice and resources to manage safety during lockdown, as well as to promote health and wellbeing, as stressors both for victims and those who harm are known to be increasing.

6.37 Our commissioned partners, MyCWA, have been particularly proactive in getting these messages out on social media and online, and this has gained a national profile.

6.38 Sub regionally the Police and Crime Commissioner also developed resources, linked to the existing 'Open the Door' Cheshire wide campaign, with a focus on supermarkets which may be one place where victims might be able to seek help.

6.39 Additional Funding

6.40 During the lockdown period, the PCC offered small pots of money to meet specific needs e.g. extra publicity or mobile phones, but has also led a sub-regional bid to government for more substantial funding, particularly to meet the demand which we expected once lockdown was eased. We were successful in this and this has meant we have had an additional IDVA post for 3 months and been able to provide mobile phones to victims as part of their safety plan.

6.41 Additionally successful bids to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Justice (via PCC), Lottery, Steve Morgan foundation and Cheshire Community Foundation have supported our commissioned service myCWA to:

- Increase staffing to the Hub, delivering an immediate comprehensive piece of work to those in crisis and significantly reducing waiting times.
- Temporarily increase IDVA capacity to the DAFSU by the equivalent of a full time IDVA until December (34 cases).
- Respond to out of hours crisis calls. For example - a client attempts suicide on a Friday evening, staff respond to crisis, liaise with emergency services, liaise with hospital, plan discharge with hospital, support return home, follow up all weekend. Hours worked 15 – this small additional staffing is important and significant.

- Shift all 1-2-1 and group work onto Zoom (accommodated and high need clients have continued to receive face to face interventions). All group content had to be re-written.
 - Deliver 11 complete recovery programmes via Zoom
 - Deliver perpetrator programmes via Zoom
 - Deliver groups to children and young people via Zoom
 - Mental health support group moved to Zoom.
- Produce new resources to support adults and children as well as new resources for other professionals.
- Deliver 309 care packages, feed 49 local families and provide nappies and/or toiletries to 35 families.
- Support local professionals with virtual 'lunch and learn' sessions.
- Provide support via social media to 186 people.
- We have opened four new refuge spaces - 2 in Crewe and 2 in Macclesfield to increase capacity.
- Telephone and video call check in with vulnerable families and individuals.
- Provision of technology (phones and tablets) to ensure clients can get online.
- We have created cartoons and video material to support adults and children under strain.
- Supported young people, adult victims and perpetrators to tell their stories.

6.42 Partnership Work

6.43 We appreciate the many ways that partner agencies, businesses and members of the community have responded flexibly and creatively to offer help to victims of domestic abuse. For example, a member of the public offered her Air BnB accommodation for a family needing to flee, and one of our businesses donated all the food at the closedown of their canteen for families in need.

6.44 We would like to highlight the work of three key partners – our local police, the Council's Prevention and Early Help Service and Housing. As other agencies have reduced face to face contact the police have increased their offer of visits to victims and to alleged perpetrators where specialist services have flagged up that such an intervention is safe and supportive. This has resulted on two occasions in supporting a family to access safe emergency accommodation and in other instances has reassured victims that they are not forgotten. The specialist officers have worked flexibly with us to promote trust with victims and hold to account those that harm. The impact of this local approach has been recognised when Cheshire East

were shortlisted and won the Partnership category for the police ACE awards.

6.45 The police have led a sub-regional Q&A on domestic abuse which is designed to provide a platform to raise awareness, this has positive potential in the future and we have worked to support this initiative.

6.46 We have been given the very practical support for a period of an administrator to help with processing Hub referrals as we were midway through recruitment to this post when lockdown started. This was provided by the Council's Prevention and Early Help Service and supported the response at a critical time when we had a gap in staffing.

6.47 The Council's Strategic Housing manager has also helped us address accommodation concerns by offering a forum to action target hardening and alternative accommodation should our 'refuge' properties become full.

6.48 Sexual Violence

6.49 Acute Services for people subject to sexual assault continue to be provided at St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Manchester. Aftercare support, to which the Council contributes, is commissioned sub regionally through the Police and Crime Commissioner and is provided by the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC).

6.50 RASASC report a reduction of almost 50% in referrals since lockdown. Unlike domestic abuse, where we believe occurrence is under-reported, the cessation of the night time economy is likely genuinely to have reduced rates of sexual violence. However, assaults that occur at home and in the context of domestic abuse are likely to have increased and RASASC expect an upturn as we emerge from this period of restrictions.

6.51 They too have been sending messages to say support is available in a range of ways so that victims know they can access help when they are able to do so.

6.52 We have been notified of a change to their arrangements to provision for children intended to increase and improve access to services for children and their families. This is not Covid related but gives us an opportunity to reinforce messages to staff in children's services in particular about use of their therapeutic support to enable children to recover from abuse.

6.53 Summary

6.54 Services and partner agencies are working well together to offer support to individuals, families and communities affected by domestic abuse. This is a

mix of 'business as usual' and adapted services to safely support those who need our help. There have been some positive and unexpected benefits as a result of the ways of working.

6.56 Whilst we have not seen an increase in victim demand we have seen greater severity of harm and risk, and an increase in the demands for perpetrator work. Sadly some of the stories are harrowing and we have had two clients take their own life. It is our hope that the need for appropriate and sufficient funding for the IDVA service will be provided in a timely way to meet such need and to continue to safeguarding some of Cheshire East's most vulnerable residents.

6.57 We believe some of the changes we have made will place us in a strong position to ensure continuity of service as the local restrictions change. However we remain vulnerable in meeting demand particularly in respect of the funding for the IDVA service for victims most at risk and in responding to the needs of those who harm.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

7.1.1. The support offered to victims' children assists the Authority in meeting its statutory obligations under the Children Act 1989. The new Domestic Abuse Bill is currently open for consultation and subject to amendment and consultation will come into force in April 2021. From that time, local authorities in England will likely have a duty to assess, provide support and safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse and their children. It is clear that at the moment significant work is already being done to assess, provide support and safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse which puts the Service in a good position with this additional duty.

7.2. Finance Implications

7.2.1. The Council's budget for 2020/21 includes £0.7m for Domestic Abuse Services. This Budget is summarised below:

Service Area	£m
Domestic Abuse	0.1
Childrens Commissioning	0.6
	0.7

7.2.2. The current forecasts are that expenditure will match budget levels. There is a particular issue with the contribution to IDVAs where the Council's and partner contribution do not meet current costs. The Local Authority currently funds 65% of the costs of the IDVA service as well as 100% of the costs of the recovery service covered by the commissioned service MyCWA. If sufficient funding for 2021 onwards cannot be secured it will mean that we would need to reduce the IDVA service by two members of staff to remain within budget. This would be a reduction in service of 34% with no reduction in demand. This would have significant risk for victims and their families. A budget report is going to the Partnership in October for consideration.

7.3. Policy Implications

7.3.1. None

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. There are no equality implications. Services have a proactive outreach policy to sectors of the community from whom referrals are frequently received.

7.5. Human Resources Implications

7.5.1. There are no Human Resource implications currently. There would be such as outlined in the financial section, if insufficient funding was available for the high risk IDVA service.

7.6. Risk Management Implications

7.6.1. A Risk Management plan regarding funding for Council based specialist domestic abuse services is in place and reviewed quarterly.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

7.7.1. The commissioned provider is using formal and informal community networks as well as digital means to widen access to all support services

7.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. Adoption and achievement of the recommendations will improve support services to children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

7.9. Public Health Implications

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health, although of course Domestic abuse is a public health issue, and our colleagues in public health have been working in partnership with us on the JSNA and the strategy for working with those who harm.

7.10. Climate Change Implications

7.10.1. The Council team follow council recommendations regarding environmental impact and this is a requirement of the Commission also e.g. minimising the requirement to travel by making full use of digital media such as the newly developed eMARAC system.

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. Domestic abuse is not confined to any particular ward and resources are deployed in response to need.

9. Consultation & Engagement

9.1 Not applicable

10. Access to Information

10.1 There are links to supporting information on the Council's LiveWell website within this document

11. Contact Information

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

Name: Kate Rose

Job Title: Head of Service: Safeguarding Children and Families

Email: kate.rose@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1:



The voice of service users during Covid restrictions

‘It was important to have continued **phone access** to MyCWA during the lockdown period and during the ongoing Covid restrictions. I contacted MyCWA about counselling during the lockdown period and **received a copy of the Look After Yourself’ booklet**, which I found helpful. A much needed **virtual Coffee and Chat group** was set up via a Facebook page. The **webpage has been helpful for keeping in updated with My CWA news and for some contact between other service users who engage with the page.**

The worst part of my divorce process continued during the lockdown period, with two court hearings taking place. **My solicitor has been excellent**, and although he is very supportive, he is not a counsellor and it would have become very costly to continue turning to my solicitor for non legal advice.

My GP has been very supportive. She kindly gave me a contact for a private Counsellor who specialises in trauma , but I couldn’t afford to pay privately due to the ongoing divorce and legal costs. My GP then referred me to the Delamere Resource Centre and from there, **I was referred to RASARC for trauma counselling.** I have also been invited to participate included in **RASARC’s bi-weekly support group**, via video call. The first session was on dealing with anxiety, which I found very helpful. **RASARC got in touch within 24 hours** and have offered counselling via zoom, they are going to call me weekly until I get an appointment and are sending self help stuff by email, I’m really impressed.

My GP also set up a referral to the Well-being Coordinator at the **GP Practise who put me on to another local charitable organisation called Survive.** I have joined a **bi-weekly craft group** with them, which is held on site with social distancing measures in place. I might also receive trauma counselling through Survive, but I’m awaiting the initial assessment. **‘Been on phone to Collette police lady for half hour well good call she's top**, truly...am made up have spoken to her after it being a good fair few weeks.’

The **availability of specialist’s counselling has been a big issue for me.** I haven’t had any counselling support for over a year and although the counselling I received previously was helpful, it wasn’t specific enough to meet my needs. **I feel I have fallen between the gaps in this area, and I’ve been quite desperate at times.**

I've sought out other services and sources of support myself. I have **completed a couple of online self development courses**, many of those are free. Most recently, I completed a 16 week course in Dementia Care Level 2 course via the blind study. **These courses have helped to distract my mind, whilst learning about something completely new.**

I also participated in a **28 Day Challenge in Positive Thinking** during the lockdown period. This was **free at the time** I participated and it was delivered via nightly Zoom meetings every weekday evening. It involved guided and self hypnosis, some of the language and techniques were new to me, plus there was homework. It turned out to be a brilliant programme, and the guy who ran it was excellent and very supportive. Most of the participants in the pilot re-joined the second revamped version. It was offered for free again, and the second time round it was invaluable for learning strategies around reframing negative thinking.

I also found a couple of online conferences based on Trauma and PTSD. They were also **free and were delivered via a schedule of pre-recorded podcasts by experts and specialists in this area.** I watched a number of the podcasts and all were really interesting and helpful for me and my circumstances.

I have **made use of Facebook for some other support groups.** I've never been a fan of Facebook or used it before, but I found some really good sites which suit my needs. I contribute to these as best I can to support other people, and likewise, if I've been having a tough time, others will jump in to support me. I have **made some good friends over the summer**, in the UK and USA as a result of engaging in those groups. **I think the availability of online support during the lockdown both to replace services previously provided face to face and for delivering completely new initiatives have been critical.** Many individuals who needed practical, emotional and psychological support before the lockdown still needed ongoing support during the lockdown and many other people needed help as a result of the Covid restrictions.



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: NEET Problem Solving Summit

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

Author: Ali Stathers-Tracey, Director of Prevention and Early Help

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director of People

1. Introduction and Policy Context

- 1.1. Our Vision for children and young people in Cheshire East is that we work TOGETHER to deliver the best outcomes to empower young people to become independent, safe, skilled and happy.
- 1.2. The Coronavirus has brought some unprecedented challenges, no more than for our young people whose education and future planning has been “paused” while the nation attempts to deal with the crisis.
- 1.3. In Cheshire East we are determined to do all that we can to re-start the system for young people, to bring together several national and local initiatives to make sure young people are able to make choices about their short term, and their longer term ambitions as they move in to adulthood.

2. Background

- 2.1. Some young people face even greater challenges, our cared for children and care leavers face huge hurdles as they do not have the same nurturing parents who can help them to make their way into adulthood. It is all of our responsibilities to offer greater support to this group of vulnerable children as part of our coordinated efforts.
- 2.2. Also, our young people with Special Needs, Learning and Physical Disabilities will need extra support as they plan for the future. We need to be sensitive and flexible in our employment and training support offer of help, more than ever.

3. Briefing Information

- 3.1. On the 24 September 2020 we welcomed all agencies and sectors to the first Cheshire East Summit focussing on the current needs of our young people aged 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 3.2. The first NEET Summit is the start of this journey and it is an important milestone in ensuring that we are joined up and coordinated in our shared vision to support NEET young people to thrive.
- 3.3. We want to emphasise the need for us to consider the impact of long term, intergenerational unemployment and poverty in different areas of Cheshire East. It is vital that we work hard to understand the impact of deprivation on the life chances of our young people and address the imbalance. To set some context in terms of NEET statistics, currently numbers are steadily increasing in Cheshire East:

NEET Info Sept 2018 to Sept 2020 across
Cheshire East

	2020	2019	2018
Neet 16 - 18Yrs	222	209	174
SEND	28	25	11

- 3.4 Figures from Welfare to Work partnership show in March there were 2,500 claiming universal credit, and now there are 12,000 claiming universal credit.
- 3.5 We have surveyed our young people in the Summer to ask them what they would like to do – results show they would like:
 - Care roles – childcare in particular but also care of older people
 - Construction – practical jobs
 - Working with animals
- 3.6 From the same summer survey young people telling us the barriers are:
 - Mental health
 - Not enough local vacancies
 - Not enough training opportunities
 - Confidence

- 3.7 Attached below is the action plan that came out of the first NEET summit and specifically in relation of what additional work the People's Directorate can do to grow our employment support offer to our children leaving care, children with SEND as they move in to adulthood and our vulnerable adults open to Learning Disability and Mental Health Teams where they would benefit for employment and work opportunities within the Local Authority.

NEET PROBLEM SOLVING SUMMIT - ACTION PLAN

Action	How?	Who?
Create a YP Providers Network for Cheshire East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual quarterly meetings via Teams - Focus to problem solve complex NEET work - Create a variety of options - Align the Journey First Workers to intensively manage cases 	Sarah Ramsey to set up and service the network
Consider the Council's role as a large Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to offer more opportunities for Apprenticeships, Kickstart Places, Workplace opportunities - Report to come to People's DMT in November 	Colin Jacklin
Promote Sharing of Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use existing networks to share what opportunities are available - Consider the creation of a Digital Jobs Board 	Colin Jacklin Sarah Ramsey
Create a virtual delivery "hub" between JCP and Youth Support Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JCP and IYSS to start planning for the creation of an integrated delivery hub to make Kickstart work for long term NEET 	Sarah Ramsey Elaine Parry
Promote existing virtual "job fairs" for targeted NEET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All attendees to receive details of upcoming job fairs before the end of October 	Colin Jacklin
Promote in advance CV and introductions for young people to employers in advance of job fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each provider working with a NEET Young Person to prepare their interests and skills prior to Job Fairs to give them an added advantage to employers. 	Zoe Macey All
Understand better the skills, needs and preferences of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that training and skills opportunities are also showcased at Job Fairs - to create more flexibility and opportunity. 	All
Enable personal confidence building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journey First to commission individual training and confidence building activity 	Phil McCartney

and self-esteem for those YP with the greatest challenges	into the programme offer	
Consider Social Enterprise and business start ups support package to promote entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a Business Incubator Model - All to consider self-employment as an option for YP 	Ali Stathers-Tracey & Dave Leadbetter to meet with Growth Company initially
Promote the role of advisors within schools and engage early with complex YP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore the Career Advice walls options across schools and join up the options earlier 	Mark Bayley

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Version
Number: v1.0

Key Decision N

Date First
Published:

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: High Needs Funding for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

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

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Following a previous report to the Committee in 2019, this report provides an update on the work being carried out through the Schools Forum to develop a proposed new model for allocating High Needs top-up funding, along with details of planned next steps for this work. In addition to the progress update, the report provides Committee members with the opportunity to put forward any relevant support and challenge as required.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
- 2.1.1. Note the progress on this work to date.
 - 2.1.2. Provide feedback on the proposed timeline for future activities and intended next steps, including conduct of a second phase of the pilot exercise using a revised version of the proposed matrix and banding system with a small number of mainstream schools.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. Findings from initial pilot work

- 3.1.1. In October and November 2019 selected pilot schools completed and returned Banding Descriptor Matrices for children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans in their school, along with feedback sheets based on their experience of completing the proposed Matrix.
- 3.1.2. During December 2019 and January 2020 the project team carried out an in-depth analysis of the information that pilot schools had submitted. This returned a considerable number of issues that required further consideration. As a result, the analysis phase of this pilot was extended.
- 3.1.3. To further understand the issues, individual meetings took place with each pilot school to discuss their experience of using the Banding Descriptors Matrix for the children and young people in their setting. We carried out these meetings virtually to ensure that this work could proceed despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.1.4. Based on the feedback from the pilot schools, the following actions are now underway and/or planned:
 - A range of meetings have been held with health and education colleagues to make changes to the matrix descriptors.
 - Meetings are being arranged to consider changes to how weightings and formulae are applied and allocated across the matrix.
 - Technical support is being arranged to consider changing how the matrix is presented / formatted.
- 3.1.5. Once all these meetings have taken place, the updated Banding Descriptor Matrix will be shared with pilot schools as the project moves towards launching a second phase of this pilot in the New Year.

3.2. Proposed next steps for development and implementation

- 3.2.1. Updated projected timescales for the High Needs Funding project are shown in the table below:

By when?	Task
Now – w/c 16th November 2020	Update Matrix wording and format based on feedback from 1 st phase of pilot scheme (including 1:1 meetings with pilot schools). Includes meeting/gaining input from wide variety of professionals (e.g. Educational Psychologists, Cheshire East Autism Team, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) on wording changes.
w/c 16th November 2020	Share updated wording and format with pilot schools (for feedback on whether improvements have resolved issues raised in 1 st phase of pilot)
w/c 16th November 2020 – 19th February 2021 (end of Feb half term)	Revise Matrix weightings, formula overrides, Matrix scores associated with each band, and financial amounts assigned to each band.
w/c 22nd February 2021	Launch 2 nd phase of pilot (pilot schools to use revised matrix on combination of pupils with new EHC needs assessment requests and previously completed pupils with EHC Plans)
23rd April 2021 (1st Friday of Summer term) (TBC closer to the date)	Deadline for pilot schools to return completed matrices from 2 nd phase of pilot
23rd April 2021 – 4th June 2021 (end of summer half term) (TBC closer to the date)	Analysis of completed matrices from 2 nd phase of pilot and amendments to matrix (as required)

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The proposed model received positive feedback in both the face to face and online consultations (see below section for details of the consultation exercises), thereby supporting continued exploration of the proposed model.
- 4.2. The issues raised in the initial pilot phase, combined with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, necessitated an extension of the pilot phase of this work. We are keen to ensure that we understand the impact of any proposed model before a full implementation is agreed and taken forward.

5. Background

- 5.1. The below sections provide a brief outline of the work that has taken place since the previous report to this Committee in 2019.
- 5.2. Updates on the progress of the High Needs Funding work have been shared regularly at meetings of the Schools Forum.

5.3. Consultation

- 5.3.1. Since the last report to this committee, extensive consultation exercises have been carried out to gather input and feedback on the proposals from a wide range of stakeholders.
- 5.3.2. During June and July 2019, 11 consultation sessions on the proposed changes to the High Needs Funding allocation model were delivered across various locations in Cheshire East to 131 attendees, which included: Headteachers, teaching staff, school governors, Elected Members, health and social care professionals, parent carers and a young person. In addition, 4 separate sessions were delivered to local school SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) on a single day at the SENCO conference. A separate session was also delivered to Local Authority SEND staff at a service development day.
- 5.3.3. Attendees at the consultation sessions were asked to participate in several exercises, including:
 - A SWOT analysis to capture the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the proposed allocation model
 - An exercise to look at the proposed matrix wording and consider how it would work for a child they are involved with, and provide feedback on any changes they think may be required
 - A discussion on how a new model could be implementedFeedback from each exercise was captured and used to inform changes to the model and planning of next steps.
- 5.3.4. An invitation was also extended at the consultation events for schools to put themselves forward as volunteers for the pilot phase and we received volunteer numbers far in excess of the number required.
- 5.3.5. In addition to the consultation events, an online consultation was available and promoted between July and October 2019, and included a document outlining the proposals along with questions to gather feedback on both the current system and potential proposed changes. 59 individuals provided responses to the online survey and respondents included: an early years provider, school representatives/school governors, parent carers, health commissioners/providers, a local authority officer and a local resident.
- 5.3.6. The below tables show the results from the online survey when participants were asked to indicate how they felt about the current

High Needs Funding allocation model (the biggest percentage has been highlighted in bold). These results, combined with the feedback from the consultation events and previous intelligence, confirm the need for changes to the allocation model.

	The current method is....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure/ Don't know
1	... is transparent and it is easy to understand how decisions on funding are made	0.0%	12.1%	10.3%	31.0%	39.7%	6.9%
2	... is objective and enables consistent decision making	0.0%	19.0%	15.5%	31.0%	24.1%	10.3%
3	...allows funding to be used flexibly to support a child or young person's individual needs in the most appropriate way for them	1.7%	22.4%	19.0%	37.9%	15.5%	3.4%
4	...is flexible enough to allow needs to be met effectively even in exceptional and complex cases	1.8%	17.5%	12.3%	42.1%	19.3%	7.0%

Please choose the statement that best suits your feeling towards the current model for allocating high needs funding.		
Please select one box only		
Answer Choice		Response Percent
1	The model is very good, no changes are required	1.7%
2	The model is good, but some changes are required	34.5%
3	The model is poor, a moderate amount of changes are required	37.9%
4	The model is very poor, a substantial amount of changes are required	25.9%
5	Please provide any feedback you would like to share to support your answer:	0.0%

5.3.7. Results from the online consultation also strongly supported the principles that we had put forward for a new model. These were as follows:

- **Transparency** - it should be clear to everyone how funding decisions are made
- **Objectivity** - decisions should be consistent
- **Sufficiency and ability to address exceptionality** – the model should provide funding to meet needs effectively, and be flexible enough to do so even in exceptional cases

- **Flexibility** – it should be possible to use funding flexibly to meet the child/young person's individual needs
- **Acknowledgement of increasing demand and costs** – should be more efficient and flexible use of the High Needs budget to meet need

- 5.3.8. When asked how strongly they agree or disagree on the proposed change to allocate funding as a financial amount instead of an hourly total, **55%** of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal (25% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and a further 20% responded as 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'unsure/don't know').
- 5.3.9. **67%** of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed new model will allow for more flexibility in provision, and **58%** strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed new model will improve how decisions are made going forward.

5.4. **Overview of the initial pilot phase**

- 5.4.1. A matrix working group comprised of a wide range of professionals across education and health was established, and several workshop sessions were held for this group in order to optimise the Banding Descriptors Matrix prior to initiation of the pilot. This group utilised the feedback from the consultation events and online consultation during this optimisation work.
- 5.4.2. 18 pilot schools were identified, covering different geographic locations, sizes and age ranges (amongst other factors) in order to test the proposed matrix model under different circumstances. The pilot was launched in September 2019 and pilot schools were briefed on the required tasks. As outlined above, pilot schools returned completed Banding Descriptor Matrices and feedback sheets. Results have been analysed, and changes were made to the projected project actions and timescales as a result.

5.5. **Equipment Audit**

- 5.5.1. In February and March 2020, we also ran an online equipment audit in conjunction with the Council's Commissioning Service in which educational settings were asked to provide information on equipment that they had purchased to support children and young people with SEND. The information gained through this audit was used by the Council's Commissioning Service when developing future options for commissioned Equipment services.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Extensive consultation on the proposals has taken place, and we will continue to engage with key stakeholders and give full consideration to legal implications as we move forward.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. The Council receives approx. £39.9m of High Needs DSG funding (before any deductions for places at academies). This is under pressure from the rising numbers and costs of children with SEND, in particular those being sent to independent provision. It is therefore necessary to establish a funding system that is sustainable and allows maximum use to be made of funding. Controls and moderation processes will be established for the new model in order to manage spend.
- 6.2.2. The introduction of the new system will require additional resource to implement and potentially run two funding systems in parallel during the implementation phase – which is to be established.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. Under the new model, schools will still receive top-up funding for children and young people with an EHC Plan. Adoption of the new model will alter how funding requirements are determined, but aims to do so in line with the child or young person's individual need.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been initiated and will be finalised as part of the next phase of this work.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. Extending the pilot will facilitate our ability to gain a full understanding of any financial risks (or other risks) before wider implementation.
- 6.6.2. In addition, consideration is being given as to the best way to provide protections for any school which may have a predicted loss in budget upon implementation to ensure that children will not be disadvantaged.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

6.8.1. Upon adoption of a new model, the amount of top-up funding for individual children and young people with an EHC Plan may change (either increase or decrease) based upon the banding amount determined by their individual need. It is however important to note that the primary focus of adopting a new funding model is to increase the transparency, equitability and flexibility (i.e. reduced association with 'hours') of high needs top-up funding.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. There are no climate change implications for this report.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. Any agreed new funding model would apply equally to all children and young people with SEND in all wards of Cheshire East, and therefore implications would be borough wide.

7.2. All members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the previous public consultation for this work.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. Extensive consultation has taken place on the proposed changes, as outlined in section 5 of this report.

9. Access to Information

9.1. There is no additional information.

10. Contact Information

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

Name: Jacky Forster

Job Title: Director of Education and Skills

Email: Jacky.Forster@cheshireeast.gov.uk



FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2021

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expects to take over the period indicated above. The Plan is rolled forward every month. A key decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

“an executive decision which is likely –

- (a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

For the purpose of the above, savings or expenditure are “significant” if they are equal to or greater than £1M.”

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents, may be viewed at any of the Council's Offices/Information Centres 5 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from, these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686472

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A record of each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, at Council Information Centres and at Council Offices.

This Forward Plan also provides notice that the Cabinet, or a Portfolio Holder, may decide to take a decision in private, that is, with the public and press excluded from the meeting. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, 28 clear days' notice must be given of any decision to be taken in private by the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder, with provision for the public to make representations as to why the decision should be taken in public. In such cases, Members of the Council and the public may make representations in writing to the Democratic Services Team Manager using the contact details below. A further notice of intention to hold the meeting in private must then be published 5 clear days before the

meeting, setting out any representations received about why the meeting should be held in public, together with a response from the Leader and the Cabinet.

The list of decisions in this Forward Plan indicates whether a decision is to be taken in private, with the reason category for the decision being taken in private being drawn from the list overleaf:

1. Information relating to an individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including to authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal and professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If you would like to make representations about any decision to be conducted in private at a meeting, please email:

Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Such representations must be received at least 10 clear working days before the date of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder meeting concerned.

Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 clear day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as soon as possible in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made. Any decision made in this way will be published in the same way.

Forward Plan

Key Decision and Private Non-Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
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Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-53 - Crewe Regeneration and Investment Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Towns Fund / Town Investment Plan / Crewe Town Board</u> To authorise officers in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders to facilitate arrangements for the Council to act as Accountable Body for the Crewe Town Board; to delegate authority on economic development and regeneration matters to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration; and to authorise the development and submission of a Crewe Town Investment Plan. 2. <u>Future High Streets Fund</u> To authorise officers in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders to accept a government grant to support the regeneration of Crewe town centre, with associated financial approvals. 3. <u>Crewe HS2 Hub</u> To consider an update on the HS2 programme including the Covid Impact Assessment for the Crewe hub station scheme and business case; and to approve the further development of the revised (post-Covid) scheme. 	Cabinet	10 Nov 2020		Jez Goodman	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-7 Covid-19 - Update on Response and Recovery	<p>To receive an update report on the Council's response to Covid-19 and the Recovery Plan.</p> <p>To note the financial effects of Covid-19 on the Council, as regards additional expenditure and loss of income, and to consider the potential options for managing residual financial implications within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>An update report will be presented to each successive Cabinet meeting up to and including 4th May 2021.</p>	Cabinet	10 Nov 2020		Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-9 Household Waste Recycling Centre New Contract Service Provision	The household waste recycling centre contract is due for renewal in 2023 and the open procurement process will start in 2021. The report will present a review of the current contract and options available for how the service could be run in the future.	Cabinet	10 Nov 2020		Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager for Commissioning	N/A
CE 20/21-10 Social Value Policy	The review and refresh of the Council's Social Value Policy. The new policy will be underpinned by a new set of supportive resources to facilitate the implementation of the policy and the delivery of effective social value and corporate social responsibility.	Cabinet	10 Nov 2020		Shelley Brough	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-42 Congleton Leisure Centre Redevelopment Project	To seek authority to enter into the construction contract with Rock Merchanting (T/A Pulse Fitness) for the redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre.	Portfolio Holder for Communities	November 2020		Paul Bayley	Fully exempt - para 3

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-6 Development of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site	To approve the progression of the project, subject to planning approval, to enable the scheme to be developed in line with the capital budget outlined within the report; and to authorise the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Communities, to enter into a construction contract with the preferred bidder and make related decisions to deliver the Cledford Hall project.	Cabinet	1 Dec 2020		Karen Carsberg, Strategic Housing and Intelligence Manager	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-14 Adult Social Care: Our Covid-19 Winter Plan 2020/21	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's response to the Government's publication of the adult social care winter plan. Officers are to be authorised where necessary to implement the adult social care recommendations/actions.	Cabinet	1 Dec 2020		Nichola Thompson, Director of Commissioning	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-15 Better Care Fund S75 Agreement	To enter into a new S75 Partnership Agreement with the local health partner (NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group) to cover the period from 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021 with the option to extend the agreement for a further period of one year, subject to there being a national requirement to operate the Better Care Fund as a Section 75 pooled budget agreement until 2021/22.	Cabinet	1 Dec 2020		Nichola Thompson, Director of Commissioning	N/A
CE 19/20-49 Council Tax Base 2021-22	For Cabinet to consider the Council Tax Base for Cheshire East and identify any changes to the calculation of the tax base for 2021-22 with a view to recommending the amount calculated to Council.	Council	16 Dec 2020		Paul Manning	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-11 Procurement of Facilities Management Service and the Council's Energy Supply	To approve the re-procurement of facilities management services, to include maintenance, statutory compliance and energy supply management and to authorise officers to take all necessary actions to implement the proposal.	Cabinet	12 Jan 2021		Denise Griffiths	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-3 Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme	To approve procurement of works to improve Flowerpot Junction, utilising the NPIF allocation from DfT and local funding contributions from s106 contributions and council match funding. Authorise the preparation and making of a CPO relating to land required for the junction improvements where this cannot be acquired through negotiation, and delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure and Highways, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Transport to finalise the scheme details and enter into an agreement with the Council's appointed Highways Term Services to deliver the scheme.	Cabinet	2 Feb 2021			N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-8 Carbon Action Plan Key Decisions	To authorise Officers to take all necessary actions relating to land allocation and procurements for initial projects contributing to sustainable energy generation and green sequestration.	Cabinet	2 Feb 2021		Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager for Commissioning	N/A
CE 20/21-16 Third Quarter Review (Finance) 2020/21	To note and comment on the three quarter year finance and performance position, and to approve any supplementary estimates and virements.	Cabinet	2 Feb 2021			N/A
CE 19/20-50 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-25	To approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-25 incorporating the Council's priorities, budget, policy proposals and capital programme. The report will include the capital, treasury management, investment and reserves strategies.	Council	17 Feb 2021	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 February 2021 Cabinet – 2 February 2021		N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 18/19-60 The Minerals and Waste Development Plan	To seek approval to consult on the first draft of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan.	Cabinet	4 May 2021		David Malcolm	N/A



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2020

Report Title: Work Programme

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. To review items in the work programme listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by committee members.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve the work programme, subject to the agreement to add new items or delete items that no longer require any scrutiny activity.

3. Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1. It is good practice to regularly review the work programme and update it as required.

4. Background

- 4.1. The committee has responsibility for updating and approving its own work programme. Scrutiny liaison meetings – held between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee, alongside the portfolio holders and key senior officers – ensure that there is continued awareness and discussion of upcoming policies, strategies and decisions within the committee's remit area.

5. Determining Which Items Should be Added to the Work Programme

- 5.1. When selecting potential topics, members should have regard to the Council's three year plan and to the criteria listed below, which should be considered to determine whether scrutiny activity is appropriate.

5.2. The following questions should be considered by the committee when determining whether to add new work programme items, or delete existing items:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority?
- Is the issue of key interest to the public?
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation?
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends or underspends?
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?

5.3. The committee should not add any items to its work programme (and should delete any existing items) that fall under any one of the following:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere by another body (i.e. this committee would be duplicating work)
- The matter is sub-judice
- Scrutiny would not add value to the matter
- The committee is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within a specified or required timescale

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. There are no implications to legal or financial matters, equality, human resources, risk management, or for rural communities, children and young people or public health.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All.

8. Access to Information

8.1. The background papers can be inspected by contacting the report author.

9. Contact Information

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

Name: Joel Hammond-Gant

Job Title: Scrutiny Officer

Email: joel.hammond-gant@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Date: 23.11.20 Time: 1.30pm Venue: Virtual meeting	Date: 25.01.21 Time: 1.30pm Venue: Committee Suite, Westfields	Date: 22.03.21 Time: 1.30pm Venue: Committee Suite, Westfields
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The Committee considers a young persons story at the start of every meeting

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Update on Covid-19	To receive a standing update at the beginning of each committee meeting on Covid-19, it's impacts and how the council is responding to support children and young people in the borough.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families Public Health and Corporate Services	Committee	Scrutiny	People live well and for longer. A responsible effective and efficient organisation	Standing update until further notice
Covid-19: Mental Health Impacts	In addition to the standing update on Covid-19, to consider a report focusing on the mental health impacts of the pandemic on children and young people, and the current offer of services available.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People live well and for longer. A responsible effective and efficient organisation	23.11.20
Domestic Abuse	To receive a report on the current impact of Domestic Abuse and Hidden Harm during the Covid-19 Lockdown Pandemic.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre-decision scrutiny	People live well and for longer	23.11.20

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Children's Services Performance Scorecard – Quarter 2 (2020/21)	To consider the performance data relating to matters within the remit of the committee, from Q2 of 2020/21	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Chairman	Performance monitoring	People live well and for longer A responsible effective and efficient organisation	23.11.20
High Needs Funding	To update the committee on progress towards a new model for how high needs funding to schools is allocated.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre decision scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation	23.11.20
Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2020/21	To review the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2020/21.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	Agreed to be received via electronic circulation (Nov 2020)
Annual Adoption Report	To give consideration to the Annual Adoption Report 2020/21.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	Agreed to be received via electronic circulation (Nov 2020)
Adoption Panel Annual Report 2020/21	To consider the annual report 2020/21 of the Adoption Panel Annual Report	Independent Chair, Adoption Panel	Children and Families	CLT	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation	Via electronic circulation (Nov. 20)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Virtual School Annual Report	To consider the annual report	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Chairman	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation	Via electronic circulation (Nov. 20)
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report	To give consideration to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive.	Agreed to be received via electronic circulation (Jan 2021)
Pre-Budget 2021/22 Consultation	To consider the 2021/22 Budget proposals relating to Children's Services.	Executive Director of People Director of Finance and Customer Services	Children and Families Finance, IT and Communications	Committee	Budget scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation People live well and for longer People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive	25.01.21 (moved back from Nov 2020)
Refresh of the Self Evaluation Framework	To provide the Committee with a service performance position post-lockdown ahead of any potential Ofsted Inspection.	Director of Prevention and Early Help	Children and Families	Director of Prevention and Early Help	Overview	A responsible effective and efficient organisation	25.01.21

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Early Help Strategy	To update the committee on the strategy post Cabinet decision.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Portfolio Holder	Pre-decision scrutiny	People live well and for longer	25.01.21
Lifelong Learning	Overview of the impact of lifelong learning.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Performance monitoring	People live well and for longer	25.01.21
Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report	To consider the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) Annual Report 2020/21.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive	25.01.21
Update on Progress of the Kickstart Programme	To receive an update on the progress/success of the Kickstart Programme, which commenced in September 2020.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive	25.01.21
Children's Services Performance Scorecard – Quarter 3 (2020/21)	To give consideration to the Children & Families quarterly performance scorecard	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	25.01.21
Integrated Front Door Update	To receive an update on progress relating to the Integrated Front Door.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21
Annual Education Report	To give consideration to the Annual Education Report	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Virtual School Headteacher Report	To consider the report	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive.	22.03.21
Six-Monthly report of Member Frontline Visits	To review the Member Frontline Visits Report covering a six-month period.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive	22.03.21 (moved back from Jan 21)
Update on School Organisation and School Capital	To consider an update on School Organisation and School Capital in Cheshire East.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21
Update on SEND	To receive a six-monthly update on SEND.	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21
Children's Services Performance Scorecard – Quarter 4 (2020/21)	To give consideration to the Children & Families quarterly performance scorecard	Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	TBD

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