
12 March 2013

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) – Councillor O'Boyle

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Children, Learning and Young People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Update on the progress on the implementation of the Fundamental Service Review within the Children, Learning & Young People's Directorate

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

During 2011 and 2012 the Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate undertook a wide ranging Fundamental Service Review. The review covered early intervention services for children and families and work with partner agencies on this, children's centres, fostering and adoption services and services for children in care. The aims of the review were to reduce costs by reducing the overall numbers of children and young people entering the care system and to thereby reduce overall costs to the Council.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress made with the implementation of the fundamental service review and that implementation is now largely complete
- (2) Note the outcomes achieved to date
- (3) Note that this impact of some changes are still to be felt and seek a further update report after a further 6 months

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

The last update was an all Member scrutiny briefing on 25 September 2012

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Update on the progress on the implementation of the Fundamental Service Review within the Children, Learning & Young People’s Directorate

1. Context (or background)

The Children Learning and Young People Directorate (CLYP) was overspent by £4.2M in 2010/11. The main driver for the overspend was the number of looked after children and the costs of their care and related support costs such as transport, social work staffing and legal fees. The purpose of the CLYP Fundamental Service Review (FSR) was to find a way to address the underlying cause of the overspend by reducing the numbers of children and young people in our care, and providing lower cost care packages where possible. Coventry had for many years had a higher number of children in care than comparator authorities.

In December 2011, the Case for Change report was taken to the Transformation Programme Board. The key themes of the case for change were:

- Safely reduce the number of children entering care
- Faster exit for those who are in care to permanency
- Better value from placements for children in care
- Improved quality of service and outcomes for looked after children.

All of these themes have an impact on cost, and the FSR also set out how cost reductions would be delivered:

- Reducing the number of LAC; and
- Increasing Internal Foster Care (IFC) provision

Based on the activity information provided by the FSR Team, the original savings model assumed cost reductions of £8.4m by 2015/16. Corporate savings built into the medium term financial strategy are £2M for 2013/14, £4m for 2014/15 and £5.2m for 2015/16. The difference between the savings level and the level of cost reduction is due to the budgetary overspend in this area.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 In the report to Cabinet Member and later Cabinet (dated 14 February 2012) the recommendations of the fundamental service review were summarised as follows:

Proposed change	What will be different?
<p>1 Strengthen Early Intervention and Prevention services by:</p> <p>a) One early intervention offer for the City</p> <p>b) Refocus early years support to vulnerable families. This includes reducing the number of children's centres in the less deprived parts of the City, implementing the Healthy Child Programme, improving Speech and Language Services and adopting a "key Worker" model across all our early intervention services.</p> <p>c) Sustain and build on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of support that children and families can receive (according to their age and/or need) will be accessible in one place in an easy to access format. This will include specific information about parenting support, children centres, health and family support. • Families with higher needs will have a key worker allocated to them with case-holding responsibilities. Increase in numbers of key worker staff. The key worker will take a more family-focused approach which we know is more effective. • Increased focus on empowerment of

<p>Overcoming Barrier to Learning (OB2L) programme</p> <p>d) Create a new crisis intervention service for 11 to 16s</p>	<p>families including work with fathers and building on successful volunteer work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the healthy child programme • Investment in more speech and language support • CAF and OB2L used as main ways to engage partners, e.g. schools, NHS organisations, in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people • Prevent adolescents from coming into care by offering sharper and more effective response at the point of crisis.
<p>2 Social Work Service:</p> <p>a) Speedier transfer of cases within the service and give priority to 0 to 4s</p> <p>b) Develop Community Based Assessment Service (CBAS) and Family Group Conferencing (FGC) Services through redirecting investment to give this successful service more capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce delay at all stages of our processes so that children achieve permanence more quickly • CBAS and FGC can more effectively support case planning and decision making so that this is quicker and enables courts to have confidence in our assessments of parenting capacity and the child's' needs. This will help speed children to permanent placements
<p>3 Fostering and Adoption– realigned service</p> <p>a) Restructure service to functions of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Recruitment and assessment ii. Home Finding iii. Placement Support <p>b) Explore partnership with voluntary organisations for additional adoptive placements and post adoption support.</p> <p>c) Review post adoption financial support</p> <p>d) Increase adoption rates, speed up processes and reduce delays – particularly in the courts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of foster carers who are better prepared and better supported. • Wider choice of foster placements for children in care • Wider range of adoptive homes available to improve choice of placements and speed of home finding • Greater diversity of post adoption support options • Better value for money of post adoption support arrangements. • Processes sped up and delays reduced
<p>4 Performance Management:</p> <p>a) Development of a stronger performance management culture throughout the service</p> <p>b) Measuring impact of early intervention</p> <p>c) Using information to better target resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored information to local service managers so that they can manage casework more effectively • Track all looked after children's progress so that any child whose place is not progressing can be identified and action taken. • Use information to measure the impact of interventions systematically and target resources to those most in need. • Linking activity to financial performance and delivery of the planned savings

3. Implementation of the strands of the Fundamental Service Review

3.1 Implementation of the various strands began in the summer of 2012.

3.2 Early intervention services

The establishment of early intervention has centred on the creation of a new Children and Families First (CFF) service. This includes existing teams such as the former Multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs), the former education welfare services and parenting activity including universal and targeted parenting interventions following the Triple P model. CFF also now includes the “Coventry Talk Now” initiative and new increased numbers of Common Assessment Framework Coordinators.

The service around children’s centres has been refocused to provide targeted services. The Children’s Centre workforce has been reformatted into the Children and Families First Service with case holding children and families’ workers. Education welfare officers have been merged into this service to provide focused early intervention with children and families where school attendance is an issue. These roles are now known as Children & Families Workers (schools). A total of 70 children and families workers are now in place with 15 posts still vacant as at the end of January 2013.

As part of the refocusing of the work of children’s centres, 6 centres were closed altogether. These were Cheylesmore, Coundon, Earlsdon, Finham, Whoberly and Wyken. Whilst the Council no longer runs services in these centres all have some services either private or operated by the local school or doctors’ surgery continuing on site. Children Centre Reach Areas and boundaries have been reviewed to incorporate the whole city including these areas. For families in those reach areas requiring more support, this is provided through workers and the Common Assessment Framework system.

In order to strengthen the engagement of partners in early intervention, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) procedures were rewritten and agreed by the LSCB in September 2012. These include clear processes for “step up” and “step down” to allow children to be transferred safely from social care services to lower level support and to allow those who need more support to be transferred into social care support. A new IT system (eCAF) to hold cases under CAF was purchased and training is now underway for all practitioners. There are currently around 1400 CAFs being held in the City, the new eCAF system will firm up data and enable performance monitoring to ensure they are being progressed effectively.

The crisis service was reframed and set up as a 7 day a week including evening service. The team has been recruited to and started work with children and families in January. In addition to this, national funding has been used to set up the Multi-Systemic therapy team to undertake direct work with difficult young people to avoid them coming into care. This started work in November 2012 and is currently working with 14 families. These two teams link up with the Troubled Families work which is targeting activity on some of the most challenging families seeking to improve school attendance, reduce worklessness and anti-social behaviour. Troubled Families is the subject of separate government monitoring on a “payment by results” basis, but the work is an integral part of early intervention.

There remain some challenges on early intervention including the upskilling of all workers to hold cases and the effective embedding of CAF and eCAF with our partners as well as with our staff. There remains a challenge around the low level of health visitors in the City which can impact on universal services and their implementation.

3.3 Implementation of social work service elements

The changes within the social work service were carried out without structural change. The Community Based Assessment Service and the Family Group Conferencing services have been invested in to increase their capacity to support keeping children out of care or to limit the length of their stay in care. The investments in the Crisis and MST teams mentioned in section 3.2 also have strong links into the social work side of the changes as these teams work closely with social workers on the avoidance of care as well as with early intervention services.

There has been an increased focus on achieving permanency for children and young people in care and for progressing their cases as speedily as possible. As part of this process there have been a series of workshops for social work teams on care planning and concurrent planning. The LAC tracking process has been relaunched with a focus on younger children to ensure that these cases are being progressed in a timely fashion towards permanency.

Additionally an automatic transfer process has been introduced to ensure cases are routinely transferred out of the Referral and Assessment service.

3.4 Implementation of changes to fostering and adoption service

The former fostering and adoption service was restructured in July 2012 into 3 teams as in the plan above and was renamed the Family Placement Service. This restructure has enabled the team to focus on particular aspects of finding families, recruitment and assessment of carers, home finding and support.

Whilst this change has taken some time to bed in and there have been a number of changes within the team, there has been a renewed focus on carer recruitment and a larger number of foster and adoptive carers have come forward for assessment and approval. Much initial work has focused on increasing the number of enquiries received through advertising. Work continues to convert appropriate enquiries into assessments of carers and ultimately foster or adoptive placements.

The full management structure of this service is yet to be fully staffed.

3.5 The implementation of performance management

Throughout the implementation of the changes described above there has been a clear focus on performance management within the services. There was already a good level of data available, but this was not renewable daily and did not necessarily drive immediate activity. A number of "dashboards" have been implemented for social work teams and a summary leadership dashboard has been developed to track numbers in the system on a daily basis. The dashboards are linked to the Protocol recording system.

A monthly performance board has been established to review the data of the previous month and to tackle any emerging performance issues. This is supported by 3 performance surgeries to give more focus to performance improvement. The 3 surgeries are focused on LAC, Safeguarding and the most recently established early intervention surgery.

The focus on performance in a structured manner has led to a number of activities to drill down and understand causes behind performance and has led to practice improvements and new processes such as LAC tracking being re-established.

4. The impact of the changes

- 4.1 The activity of implementation of the fundamental service review is largely complete. The impact of the changes made is now being monitored through the new performance

management processes. Implementation took longer than originally anticipated and thus the full expected impact of the changes in practice and in financial terms has not yet materialised.

- 4.2 The main aim of this work was to reduce the overall number of children in care. To date the number has not reduced, but has largely been stable for over the last 4 to 6 months at around 585. This consistency is in the context of an increasing child population in the City and of increasing numbers of children entering the child protection system

There is now routine monitoring of children who are in the care system to ensure that they are moving swiftly through the system towards permanency wherever that is possible.

Recent work on speeding up our adoption processes in terms of placement of children new into care has started to have an impact. Our performance on the speed of adoption had been poor, but recent cases have been much quicker indicating that our new processes are having a positive impact. However, between April and December 2012 fewer children overall were placed for adoption than in the equivalent timespan in previous years, a full review of all cases has been started to understand the background to this and whether any further action is required.

Numbers of enquiries from prospective carers increased following refreshed advertising the autumn of 2012 and this has begun to result in more carers being approved through panels. Unfortunately a number of existing carers have left us for a variety of reasons and this has meant we have not yet achieved the net gain in capacity for our internal fostering service. Indications of gains in the last 2 months of 2012 suggest we may have started to turn the corner on this issue.

There will be on-going monitoring of the impact of new services and the early intervention offer throughout 2013. It is hoped that we will see an increased impact of these services as they become established.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.2 2012/13 Forecast

The financial forecast for 2012/13, based on December's LAC data, is an overspend of £1.5m. This is because the placement profile required to deliver cost reductions has not changed in line with expectations. Overall, the number of Internal Foster Care (IFC) placements has reduced while more expensive external foster care placements have increased. Alongside this, external residential placements have remained broadly static.

5.1.3 Recasting the model for 2013/14

The original target cost reductions have not been met, and the expected cost has, therefore, been recast, and reprofiled. The revised model is still based on a reduction in LAC, and an increase in IFC placements – Table 1 below indicates how the numbers of LAC and IFC placements are forecast to change over the next 4 years from a base of 579 reducing to 457 LAC (reduction of 122), and an increase from a base of 190 to 281 IFC placements (increase of 91).

Table 1 Predicted profile of LAC and IFC

Year (by 31/03)	Annual changes		Cumulative totals	
	LAC to reduce by	Internal Fostering to increase by	Total LAC	Total Fostering
2013/14	41	23	538	213
2014/15	41	23	498	236
2015/16	40	23	457	258
2016/17	0	22	457	281
Total	122	91		

The reprofiling of numbers outlined above provides expected savings of £1.1m in 2013/14 rising to £7m in 2016/17. Table 2 below highlights the impact of these savings, taking into account the current underlying overspend, and expected medium term financial strategy budget reductions.

Table 2 Placements financial position

	Forecast P6 2012-13 £m.	Forecast 2013-14 £m.	Forecast 2014-15 £m.	Forecast 2015-16 £m.	Forecast 2016-17 £m.
CLYP FSR					
Underlying Overspend (net of EIG and Health Contribution)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
MTFS Budget Adjustment	0.0	2.0	4.0	5.2	5.2
Saving Required	1.3	3.3	5.3	6.5	6.5
Forecast Saving	0.0	(1.1)	(3.4)	(5.6)	(7.0)
Net Position	1.3	2.2	1.9	0.9	(0.5)

Nb. underlying overspend is different to number quoted in para 5.1.2 as this is P6 forecast

5.1.4 Increase in IFC fees from 1st April 2013

The fees to foster carers and maintenance payments will be increased from 1st April 2013 (2% for fees and 5% for maintenance). This acknowledges that we need to maximise every opportunity to recruit and retain IFC's and moves towards bringing Coventry's fees into line with the Fostering Framework and our neighbouring Local Authorities.

The additional cost for 2013/14 is £350k, and it is expected that this will be offset by an increase in 7 specialist foster carers, and an equivalent reduction in external residential placements (marginal saving of £50k per placement). Urgent work is required to review and relaunch the specialist foster carer scheme.

5.1.5 The reduction of LAC numbers is based on the forecast activity reductions as identified through the FSR. This was that the Early Intervention Focused Family support could reduce numbers by an ongoing 59; the crisis intervention service could reduce numbers by an ongoing 39; and increasing permanency could reduce numbers by an ongoing 24. This presumes a stable baseline of LAC numbers. No assumptions or cost reductions are included in this model for the Multi-Systemic Therapy or the Troubled Families projects. It is forecast that these alone could reduce the numbers of LAC by an ongoing 120. This means that within the FSR financial model there is some contingency for other issues which might adversely affect the number of LAC, such as population growth. This will need to be

monitored very closely as we move forward, particularly in light of high/increasing child protection numbers.

5.2 Legal implications

Services provided to families and children by the local authority are regulated under statute and statutory guidance and impose a number of duties upon the local authority to meet the needs of children under a regulated legal framework.

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on the local authority to provide sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of Looked After Children (“sufficiency duty”)

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The achievement of the aims of the fundamental service review will help the City Council achieve its financial cost reduction targets. The overall improvement of services to children and their families and to looked after children in speeding their progress to permanency will also support the Council's priority to support and celebrate our young people.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risk in this project is largely now around the failure to achieve the objectives and the savings embedded within it. This is being managed through rigorous performance management.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The fundamental service review did result in some job reductions amongst some types of roles, however, new roles were also created, so it also provided new opportunities.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

It is part of our standard practice to monitor the make-up of those in contact with social care, the children in our care and those subject to child protection plans. This monitoring is carried out on an on-going basis and compared to the make-up of similar groups nationally to ensure that our practice is consistent across all those we work with.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

We are continuing to work with partners, particularly those in health in relation to our early intervention services and processes. We are developing a prevention and early intervention strategy which will help bring our work together with that of our partners to work to best affect across the City.

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