



Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

18 March 2015

Report title	The role, remit and priorities of the Early Help Service 5-18	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
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Report to be/has been considered by	None	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Comment on the proposed new structure and refocus of the Early help Service (5-18).

Recommendations for noting:

The Panel is asked to note:

2. The Early Help Service achieved a savings target of £1.0 million savings under the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The savings were achieved through the implementation of a new service delivery model (the New Operating Model). The introduction of the model led to a transformation of the whole system within Children and Young People and a focus on reducing demand in specialist services, particularly looked after children. To enable these changes to take place the Local Authority is reducing the level of subsidy to schools by implementing a traded services model. In a traded services model schools can opt to buy discretionary support from the Local Authority.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report was requested by Scrutiny Panel in light of the £1.0 million savings target, which coincided with the deletion of the Youth Service and a transfer of targeted youth support into the service. Scrutiny Panel asked to be briefed on the new service following these changes at a meeting on 12 November 2014 which considered the budget savings proposals

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2009, eight Multi Agency Support Teams (MASTs) were developed within the Service that was then known as Social Inclusion. The original rationale for MASTs was to bring professionals from a wide range of agencies together in support of children, young people and families with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The fundamental idea was that MASTs were to be the organisational structure that would promote and develop integrated working across the City.

2.2 It was envisaged that MASTs would evolve from the area team model that had previously been operating within the Social Inclusion Service. As such, the core members of MASTs were Social Inclusion staff (Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Behaviour and Mental Health Support Workers, Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCos), Parenting Support Advisors and MAST Social Workers). However, when MASTs were launched in 2009 it was also clear that strong links were to be formed with key partners outside of Social Inclusion, e.g. Primary Care Trust, Police, Neighbourhood Managers, Connexions, Youth Service, Wolverhampton Homes, and Voluntary Sector organisations.

2.3 The broad priority areas for MASTs were:

- Improve mental health and psychological well-being through the intervention and prevention work;
- To promote social inclusion through close work with schools and other partners;
- To contribute to the improvement of education achievement of pupils with special educational needs through the monitoring of teaching and learning, both in school and in alternative provision;
- To address the gap in targeted/specialist parenting support for children in need;
- To contribute to improving the health of children and young people;
- To contribute to the reduction of anti-social behaviour/youth offending.

2.4 The ambition for MASTs to address all of these priorities proved to be a challenge. Whilst progress was made in terms of developing links with partners e.g. Police, Connexions, Youth Offending Team, there was no shared ownership with regards to evidencing the progress made against the priority areas. This was noted in the Peer Safeguarding review in May 2013 when concerns were raised about the impact and outcomes achieved by the MASTs. Whilst there was agreement that the fundamental idea behind MASTs was a positive one and that they were well resourced, the performance framework was identified as a significant weakness.

- 2.5 In 2012 the management of the play service was transferred to the Social Inclusion Service. The play service provides three open access adventure playground sites across the city and targets the most deprived areas of Wolverhampton. Through access to high quality play experiences, there is a focus on building self-confidence, self-esteem and socialisation skills. The play service supports the Council in meeting its statutory duty to secure, as far as is practicable, sufficient services and activities to improve the wellbeing of young people (section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- 2.6 The historical funding arrangements within the Social Inclusion Service included a £1.4 million contribution from schools via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This equates to around a third of the overall budget for Social Inclusion Service. Funding via DSG has been renewed on an annual basis and it has proved challenging to separate out what DSG money specifically pays for.
- 2.7 In October 2013, a £1.0 million savings target for the Social Inclusion and Play Service was approved for 2015/16. A key focus of this savings target was to reduce the level of subsidy to schools.
- 2.8 The recommendation from the Peer Safeguarding review and the announcement of the savings target necessitated a review of MASTs in order to inform the development of a new service model.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 A cabinet report was submitted in September 2014 outlining proposals for a reduction in the play service budget. These proposals have since progressed with a plan to close two of the adventure playground sites and for the Old Fallings Adventure playground provision to be funded by Public Health, Aiming Higher for Disabled Children and external lettings income. This has been supported by Public Health as it is in line with a desire to improve physical health and reduce obesity through increasing activity levels in families. These changes will take effect from 1 April 2015.
- 3.2 A review of MASTs was conducted in December 2013. The feedback obtained during the review was that the priorities for MASTs should be to:
- Support parents and families to prevent further breakdown in relationships and social integration;
 - Support parents with issues around school attendance;
 - Work with families to address socially unacceptable behaviour;
 - Work in broader community settings, not only in schools.
- 3.3 In addition it was highlighted that there was a need to define the work remit of MASTs and the actual service provided by them. Specifically it was noted that the caseloads held by the MASTs were often children and families with complex needs. As the original focus for MASTs was meant to be early intervention and prevention it was felt that some clarity was required.

As a result, this has led to the development of an Early Help Plan which defines the work of the Early Help Service as intensive support with a focus on reducing escalation to specialist services like Social Care and the Youth Offending Team. The remit of the Early Help service is to work with families who require a multi-agency approach, where there is a need to do a whole family assessment and co-ordinate work through a team around the family approach. There has been a move away from talking about prevention to targeted early help, ensuring that the right support is offered at the right time.

- 3.4 In addition, there have been a number of other developments that have contributed to the reshaping of MASTs. Specifically there has been a redefinition of who the services are provided to. Historically, schools saw themselves as the receivers of services but now the focus is very clearly on providing support to children and families. To mark this move, in April 2014 the social inclusion service was renamed as 'The Early Help Service 5-18' and the MASTs were renamed Children and Family Support Teams.
- 3.5 This led to a need to establish a different working relationship with schools in the City. In line with the government agenda for schools to become more autonomous and a need for the Local Authority to ensure effective but efficient services aligned to statutory responsibilities, work has been undertaken to develop a traded service delivery model. This has focussed on defining which areas of the support historically delivered to schools by the Local Authority are discretionary, i.e. the Local Authority does not have to deliver.
- 3.6 The Early Help Service 5-18 continues to fulfil the Local Authority statutory functions around school attendance, exclusions and statutory assessment for SEN. However, schools have to now decide whether to buy in discretionary support from the Local Authority. Wolverhampton is no different to a number of other Local Authorities and many others made a move towards trading several years ago. The development of traded services is in the early stages of roll out but for schools who opt not to buy support there will be a weaker working relationship with the Early Help Service 5-18.
- 3.7 In Summer 2014, Wolverhampton's Youth Service provision was subject to a large scale restructure as a result of a savings target. This led to the demise of universal youth service provision. However, it was possible to retain a targeted youth support element. As the Early Help Service 5-18 was already transforming into a much more community facing service, targeted youth support was integrated in the Early Help Service 5-18. This has enhanced the multi-professional dimension of the service and enabled more co-ordinated identification of community issues and response to young people at risk of social exclusion.
- 3.8 The move away from work in schools being the main focus for the Early Help Service 5-18 also coincided with a need for the service to strengthen and develop family support. With a citywide priority to prevent and reduce the number of looked after children (LAC), the delivery of family support through Early Help is seen as critical. During 2014, there was a significant restructure within Children Services (the New Operating Model) which saw the co-location of Social Care and Early Help staff into locality based teams. The expectation is that this will lead to improved integrated working.

A significant priority for the Early Help Service 5-18 is to work closely with social care colleagues to ensure there is effective assessment of risk/ need and that the appropriate level of family support is provided in order to prevent the need for escalation to social care.

- 3.9 Critical to the development of family support is embedding a whole family approach within the Early Help Service 5-18. A web based Early Help Assessment system has been launched to support this development. This system encourages staff to carry out a holistic assessment of all family members and adopt a team around the family (TAF) approach rather than team around the child (TAC) approach.
- 3.10 This whole family approach is supported by the Troubled Families programme which since July 2014 has been managed by the Early Help Service 5-18. Troubled Families was launched by the Prime Minister in 2011. Government data collected in October and November 2011 estimated that £9 billion is spent annually on troubled families. This equates to an average of £75,000 per family each year. The government made a commitment to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families by 2015 by ensuring that families received intensive whole family support.
- 3.11 Phase one of the Trouble Families Programme started in Wolverhampton in April 2012 and will finish in March 2015. During phase one, Wolverhampton had to turn around 810 troubled families. There is a clear criteria for identifying troubled families and this focuses on school attendance, anti -social behaviour and worklessness. The Troubled Families Programme is a payment by results programme (PBR). The focus of the programme is achievement of outcomes specifically aimed at getting adults back into work, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving school attendance for three consecutive terms for all children in the family. The programme was transferred to be managed in Early Help 5-18 in July 2014. At this time Wolverhampton were significantly underperforming with only 18 per cent of payment by results being achieved. By February 2015, 100 per cent of payment by results had been achieved and entry into phase two of the programme has been confirmed.
- 3.12 Phase two of the Troubled Families programme starts April 2015 and Wolverhampton will need to turn around 2,840 over a five year duration. The emphasis in phase two is on the work needing to become business as usual and the model needing to be sustainable. The Early Help Service 5-18 will be a key driver in embedding troubled families work across the city in order to bring about public transformational change. It will continue to be a payment by results led programme and we will need to develop an outcomes framework to evidence significant and sustained progress with families. The outcomes framework and local criteria will ensure that the 2840 families are those potential families who may escalate into requiring specialist services, thus ensuring targeted early help is delivered to the right families at the lowest level of support.
- 3.13 Following the reshaping and refocusing of the Early Help Service, work is now underway to develop and refine a new performance framework.

The use of the 'Outcome Star' model is being implemented within the service and this will enable an impact and outcome measure for all casework that is based on distance travelled, enabling evidence of the effectiveness of the re-focused early help.

The priorities for the Early Help Service will be much more targeted than the original MAST priorities and will reflect the outcome measures in the Troubled Families programme:

- improving school attendance of referred young people;
- ensuring excluded young people access full time education provision;
- reducing the number cases that have to be stepped up to Social Care/ other specialist services through effective targeted family support;
- increasing the number of adults who get back into work;
- reducing anti- social behaviour through effective targeted youth support.

3.14 The new performance framework will report on the impact of the work and interventions specifically undertaken by the Early Help Service 5-18. There will be a commitment to evidencing that the service is of a high quality and that the positive outcomes achieved make the service area one which is value for money. In doing this work it will be important to develop a consistent approach to delivery across the Early Help Service 0-5 and the Early Help Service 5-18. A case management system is being developed to provide front line staff with clear guidelines about key actions and timescales for completing work. This will be implemented by April 2015. Both Early Help 0-5 and 5-18 will be using Outcome Star and the Early Help assessment which will enable some shared outcome measures across the services.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The approved mainline Council funded budget for 2014/15 for the Early Help Service 5-18 is £3.2 million. The Early Help Service also has a contribution built into the 2014/15 budget from schools via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £1.4 million, giving a total approved budget of £4.6 million.

4.2 The £1.0 million savings target for 2015/16 which is included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/16 to 2018/19 will be achieved through the re-design of the Play Service and the implementation of a traded model whereby discretionary support from the Local Authority has to be paid for by schools.
[NM/05032015/N]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications
[Legal Code: TS/04032015/M]

6.0 Equalities implications

An equality analysis will be completed when the new staffing structure is implemented.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 The major human resource implication is that if schools do not opt to buy in discretionary services then this will result in some staff redundancies as the Local Authority mainline budget can no longer subsidise posts.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 14 August 2014, Reduction of Play Service provision, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
- 10 September 2014, Reduction of Play Service Provision, Cabinet
- 12 November 2014, Budget Review – 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel