
Meeting: Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 November 2009

Subject: The Development of a Single Children's Workforce in Central Bedfordshire

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive/Director for Children, Families and Learning

Summary: The report proposes that:

- a fully integrated local children's workforce is the most efficient way of meeting the five Every Child Matters outcomes for our children and young people;
- the current local workforce does not yet meet the definitions of a fully integrated workforce; and
- the appended draft Children's Workforce Strategy is the means of achieving improved outcomes.

Contact Officer: Patrick Shevlin

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Children Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This report links most closely to the Council's Key Priority 'Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people' as the modernisation of the children's workforce will have a profound effect on improving the life chances of children and young people.

Financial:

The Council's current budget covers the cost of the service and will need to be maintained in order for the Strategy to be carried out.

As the Children's Workforce becomes increasingly integrated and able to share support services, we are likely to be able to deliver cost savings to the Local Authority.

Legal:

While there is strong government pressure to follow the 2020 Children's Workforce Strategy, there is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to comply.

However, there is strong evidence that adoption of a Children's Workforce Development Strategy will help with complying with statutory requirements around safeguarding.

Risk Management:

A fully comprehensive risk assessment appears in the Central Bedfordshire Council Business Continuity Plan in the event that Children's Workforce Development work-streams are impeded

All current grants are subject to the approval of Action Plans put forward by the CWD Team. Income targets are likely to be met.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Implications for staff are being actively considered during the regular strategic meetings and subsequent working parties for the implementation of the strategy and there are two representatives from Human Resources on this group specifically looking at the organisational development and operational aspects of this strategy - this will also include the process for achieving multi-agency local delivery teams.

All proposals as developed will be discussed in full with the relevant trade unions at the regular Council consultation meetings.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The values of the Children's Workforce Development Strategy highlight that:

- The needs, rights and views of the child, young person and family are at the centre of all practice and provision
- Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.

Community Safety:

The successful creation of an integrated children's workforce will have a positive impact on all five areas of the Every Child Matters agenda, including making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. Improved integrated working with police and crime prevention services will have a positive impact in relation to crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour and drug, alcohol or other substance abuse.

Sustainability:

The Children's workforce Development Strategy makes significant contributions to the development of local delivery of multi-agency services. This will have a positive impact on local, sustainable community infrastructures and contribute to services that are better value for money and improve the quality of life of our children and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **that the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the report on progress towards a single children's workforce**
2. **that the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the draft Children's Workforce Development Strategy (as detailed in Appendix 1).**

Background and context

1. The Audit Commission's 'Comprehensive Area Assessment' (CAA) Framework (February 2009) makes specific reference to a Local Authority's responsibility to oversee Workforce Development in the following section:
 - (a) *'Managing resources*
How well does the organisation manage its people, natural resources and physical assets, to meet current and future needs and deliver value for money? ... Does the organisation plan, organise and develop its workforce effectively to support the achievement of its strategic priorities?'
2. The '2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy' was published in December 2008 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families with the intention of making the United Kingdom 'the best place in the world for our children and young people to grow up'. It recognised that there were 'a number of challenges faced by people on the frontline, by leaders and managers, and in the 'delivery system' which supports them'. The Strategy makes it clear that there is a need to change the way in which we work with children by creating a more integrated children's workforce.

Aspirations for a world class children's workforce in Central Bedfordshire

3. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is a Government Agency that works for children and young people to ensure that the best possible staff are working with them. Its functions are to set the standards to which we should be aspiring for a world class children's workforce.

4. The CWDC has developed a 'One Children's Workforce Framework'. This is a tool devised to help to measure how well the children's workforce is working as a team. It demonstrates what is needed to provide an excellent service for children and young people and provides children and young people with a chance to have their say.
5. The framework is configured as a rainbow of seven different colours, each depicting a particular theme and with a final, eighth section encompassing Every Child Matters outcomes. Each theme is accompanied by a statement from an imaginary child, which encapsulates how that child will feel once a first class, integrated children's workforce is in place:
 - (a) Everybody I deal with works together to do what's best for me (shared identity, purpose and vision).
 - (b) I understand what people are talking about and how people are working for me (common values and language).
 - (c) Everybody that I work with wants the best for me (behaviours focused on positive outcomes for children and young people).
 - (d) Everybody is working together to give me the support I need (integrated working practices).
 - (e) I have access to good workers with the right skills to help me (high quality, appropriately trained workforce).
 - (f) Everybody I work with knows the help and support I need (complementary roles focused around children and young people).
 - (g) I know the staff members that I work with well and know that my safety is important to them (capacity to deliver and keep children safe).
 - (h) I know the most important thing for the service is that things work out well for me (outcome focus).

Progress so far in Central Bedfordshire Council

6. The Central Bedfordshire Children's Workforce Development Plan is incorporated into the draft Children and Young People's Plan as an over-arching theme. The priority is to 'develop an integrated workforce which is ambitious for all children and their families and expert in its practice'. There are four key strands of the Children's Workforce Development Plan and each is underpinned by a work plan:
 - (a) Establish and promote a shared identity, vision, language, practices and services across the Children's Workforce.
 - (b) Develop an integrated working and a single staff development framework based on a single needs analysis.
 - (c) Increase the use of training hubs for learning in each area of Central Bedfordshire.

(d) Put safeguarding at the forefront of Workforce Development.

7. Partners from health, police and the private and voluntary sector as well as representatives from schools and the Council are working together to focus on recruitment, retention, development and modernisation issues across the whole local children's workforce.

Recommendations for the future coordination of the Children's Workforce Development Strategy

8. The Draft Strategy Document, currently under consultation, covers a period of three years up to 2013. The Government Strategy suggests that further time and development will be needed before the required changes in practice and organisation are properly in place. A long term vision at local level is required for such a radical transformation to take place.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Children's Workforce Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire Council.