
Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 15 December 2011
Subject: Children and Young People's Plan – six month report
Report of: Executive Member for Children's Services, Councillor Mark Versallion
Summary: The report presents to Members the six month report of the Children and Young People's Plan.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Children and Young People's Plan supports the Council deliver the following Council priorities:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.
- Creating safer communities.
- Promoting healthier lifestyles.

Financial:

Working with partners to deliver services together in a more integrated way, with a focus on prevention and early intervention is a key driver of the plan and will in the longer term deliver efficiencies. All priorities and actions are developed within partners' current resources.

Legal:

None.

Risk Management:

Risk is part of delivery planning for the Children's Plan and regular quarterly monitoring of performance supports effective risk management.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

During the development of the plan equalities issues and impacts were considered and included in the priorities are a number of strategic actions which identify children and young people who are not achieving, who are excluded or in vulnerable circumstances. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed alongside the development of the Plan.

Community Safety:

Protecting children and keeping them safe is a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan which contributes to delivering safer communities.

Sustainability:

Sustainable schools are a priority for the Transforming Learning agenda and this has been set out in the Education Vision for Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the progress in delivering the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan from April 2012 to August 2012 is noted as at Appendix A.**
- 2. That Members record any questions or comments that they would like the Children's Trust to consider.**

Background

1. The first Children and Young People Plan was agreed in September 2009 and following a review, refreshed priorities were agreed for the new plan in June 2011.
2. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has played a key role in shaping both plans and in scrutinising the work of the Children's Trust in delivering the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan.
3. At the Board Meeting in September, Board Members considered Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments in relation to the Annual Plan and the recommendation that the Trust consider undertaking an in-depth and robust review of early intervention/parenting. Trust Board members agreed to convene a sub-group which will report to the next Trust Board meeting in March.

The Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014)

4. The Children and Young People's Plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Children's Trust Board.
5. Red, Amber and Green (RAG) ratings are used to provide an assessment of progress to deliver priorities and targets.
 - GREEN indicates good progress is being made with either no delay in activity or very minor delay which is unlikely to have any adverse impact on outcomes. Targets are being achieved and will be met.

- AMBER indicates progress is being made but there is significant delay or underperformance in some activities and this is likely to adversely impact some outcomes if not corrected. Targets have been missed but corrective action is in place to achieve final target.
 - RED indicates overall progress is well behind schedule and activities are under performing and will have an adverse impact on outcomes. Targets are being missed and there is a high risk of missing final targets.
6. Progress on the priorities for the first six months of the year is set out, on this basis in Appendix A.
 7. Performance for the four key priorities is summarised below:

Helping children and young people achieve more and transforming our relationship with schools

8. Performance for this priority is mixed.
9. Ofsted inspections show that 79% of schools are either good or outstanding.
10. One school has been removed from 'Notice to Improve' and Ashton Middle School was given a Notice to Improve on 9 February 2011. The school received a monitoring visit on 23 September 2011 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.
11. Key Stage 2 standards have fallen this year and targets have not been met. Actions to improve performance for 2012 include a conference for middle schools to look at good practice in raising achievement, and a programme of support targeted at those pupils at risk of not achieving Level 4 in English and/or mathematics.

Protecting children and keeping them safe

12. Performance for this priority is mainly good and on target.
13. Performance in protecting vulnerable children and young people has remained good this quarter. Key indicators measuring social care assessment, timeliness and review remain on target to year end 2012. The demand on frontline teams continues to increase with high numbers of children subject to child protection plans. This multi agency work is resource intensive but regular monitoring ensures that access to services and assessment for children in need and those in need of protection is maintained, rather than solely pursuing targets.
14. Performance in relation to Youth Offending shows that the rate of custodial sentences is low but the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system is increasing. The Youth Offending Service and Bedfordshire Police are working together to increase Restorative disposals and implement a Triage system to identify risk factors.

Reducing child poverty and the effects for those living in poverty and improving early intervention and prevention

15. Progress for this priority is difficult to assess on a quarterly basis as this is a long term objective and the effectiveness of the strategy will be seen in improved performance across a range of indicators in the Children and Young People's Plan over the next two to three years.
16. Good progress has however been made in implementing the plans to deliver the strategy 'From Poverty to Prosperity - a Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty and alleviate its effects' and a range of programmes has been commissioned.
17. Annually published information about the proportion of Children who live in relative low income has increased from 12.1% to 13.1%. These figures relate to 2008 and 2009 respectively and given the economic downturn it is likely that this figure will continue to show increases for the next few years.
18. The numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continues to be low. However given the current economic climate it is acknowledged that maintaining this good performance will be difficult and it is likely that a rise in the numbers will occur over the year. This is underlined by the reduction in percentage of economic activity in quarter two from 81.6% to 81.1%. This indicator provides useful contextual information, however given the range of factors and stakeholders that have an influence on this measure it will not be RAG rated.

Targeting the most deprived areas and vulnerable groups to improve children's emotional and physical health

19. Performance for this priority is difficult to assess on a quarterly basis as much of the information is available on an annual basis, however the general picture shows that performance is off track.
20. Performance in relation to health assessments for looked after children, both initial and reviews, has seen improvements over the last six months however it is still not on track. For these reasons a number of new measures have been included to ensure a partnership focus on this area.
21. Provisional data for obesity rates in primary school children show a decrease in the Reception year and an increase in year 6. However as these changes are small they are not statistically significant. Although performance is off track it is better than the East of England.
22. There is no new information to report in relation to the under 18 conception rate. Services for disabled children are on track and a new service has been commissioned for children's mental health which should see a reduction in waiting times for short term interventions.

Conclusion

23. Children's Trust Board members will be asked to consider and challenge each other's performance over the last six months and agree further actions to achieve improved outcomes as necessary.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Children and Young People's Plan – six month report

Background Papers: Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014)

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands