

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

26TH JUNE 2020

LSCSB UPDATE: CHILDREN AND FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE, LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background

1. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) was introduced in April 2019, following a period of significant transformation which saw the Children's Centre, Supporting Leicestershire Families, Youth Offending Service and the Early Help Information and Assessment Service amalgamate. The work of the Government's Troubled Families Programme continues within the Service.
2. The Service has an estate of 21 buildings which are located around the County and form the base for teams to work in the communities they serve. Staff continue to work from the shared space gifted by District Councils, where this is possible. Three of the 21 buildings are part of a refurbishment programme which has been delayed due to Covid-19. A group of staff who perform crucial central functions for the CFWS still continue to work from County Hall, along with the core Youth Offending Team who serve the whole County.
3. Commentary has not been provided on the Youth Offending Service in this report as this is provided to the Board in a different report as part of the reporting cycle.

CFWS Response to Covid-19

4. Given the current situation regarding Covid-19, it seems pertinent to appraise the Board as to how the Service has responded to the pandemic:
5. **Staffing** - All staff are currently working from home, attending office bases for tasks only or where working from home is not an option. The restrictions around coronavirus, compounded by the size of rooms and layout of the CFWS buildings across the County, offers a challenge in how we recover services that we are currently working on addressing.
6. Staffing levels have remained extremely good across the Service which is in part due to early decisions to split teams and minimise contact in bases. The wellbeing of the staff has been paramount throughout the pandemic with Managers offering high levels of support.

7. **Service delivery** - The Service has tried to minimise the impact on families and offer support in the best way possible; this has also been challenging:
- a. All 21 buildings are currently closed to the public.
 - b. Groupwork and Pathway (0-5) delivery has halted and work is underway trialling safe and secure digital platforms to engage children, young people and family as part of the service recovery. In most cases, the groupwork material has been prepared as a learning pack and posted to homes with telephone/video calls supporting learning.
 - c. Face-to-face contact has continued with young people and families where there are significant worries or concerns, albeit socially distanced. All practitioners have maintained relationships with their families through telephone or video calls. As time has progressed more young people and children have been visited by their workers. Those assessed as low risk are currently not being visited, but this will be reviewed in the coming weeks.
 - d. Those children and families on waiting lists have been contacted and are being supported. Referrals over the last 8 weeks have been low, however, this is slowly increasing with schools and partners working through their own recovery plans.
 - e. The Service purchased food and goods to create 1164 food parcels that were distributed to families in need across CFWS and Children's Social Care during the lockdown period.
8. **IMPACT Project** – Partners will be aware that the street-based youth work project had to be suspended to comply with the Government guidelines. As of 1st June 2020, the Project became functional and commenced with a two strand offer. Whilst the project has traditionally accepted referrals through JAG's predominantly, there is a need to be more agile and responsive as the restrictions around coronavirus are slowly lifted. The Team have spent the last six weeks engaging with Police and District ASB Leads to develop a response that operates on live intelligence where there are concerns around the congregation of young people in communities. All partners have been communicated with in relation to this offer and are working collaboratively as concerns are growing. Feedback will be provided to partners following sessions.
- a. Strand One – Street-based youth work sessions which will be socially distanced and focused on safety, compliance with Government guidelines at the present time and encouraging engagement in Strand Two. The Team want to understand what issues are presenting for young people because of coronavirus and therefore will be taking every opportunity to gain the voice of those young people they engage with.
 - b. Strand Two – Digital Offer – This is a new addition to the IMPACT Team and is an opportunity for the Team to offer some wrap-around support through informal learning sessions on digital platforms that young people are engaging with. This will enable children to contact the Workers if they have any worries and concerns and is not reliant on formal referrals being made to Services.
9. **Recovery** – The Service is currently working through its recovery plan which will contribute to the wider Leicestershire County Council Plan. The CFWS will

take every opportunity to collaborate with partners around recovery. This is our key focus for the work of this coming year.

Notable developments and updates:

10. **Introduction of the CFWS** – The last year has focused from the move on from the Early Help Review and the implementation of the CFWS. The model focused on the response to whole family working and youth work, including youth justice. The impact of transformation was significant both in how the new Service would function and how staff respond to this, given that significant numbers of roles had changed, new roles were introduced, and staff were being asked to work differently. Investment was made in training and learning opportunities, along with enabling teams to spend time forming and building relationships with each other. New relationships also needed to be formed with partners. There has been a high level of recruitment over the last year due to the need to fill vacancies created by staff being offered new opportunities as part of the new Service. The implementation of the CFWS has been the biggest challenge of the last year.
11. **Payment by Results (Troubled Families Programme)** – During 2019-20 the Children and Family Wellbeing Service was successful in achieving 100% of the Payment by Results (PbR) target set by central government, for families achieving sustained and significant progress and/or continuous employment. The ambitious target of 2770 families was set at the start of phase 2 of the national Troubled Families Programme, and due to the success seen at a national level the programme has now been extended for a further year, with a new target of 464 families. Whilst clearly there will be some challenges in the year ahead in terms of meeting children’s educational outcomes, and securing continuous employment in this difficult financial environment, the service is confident that families will continue to receive the support they need for sustained and significant outcomes to be achieved.
12. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published an ‘Early Help System Guide’ to assist local strategic partnerships in developing their early help strategy, and it is likely that any future funding programme, i.e. beyond 2020-21, is based on this whole systems approach and shared vision for early help. The vision has a significant focus on building resilient communities and co-production, earlier intervention through a partnership approach as well as continued focus on families who make greatest call on services.
13. **Triple P Parenting Programme** – Triple P has been identified by the Early Intervention Foundation as one of only a small number of evidence-based parenting programmes and approaches that has significant and robust evidence of effectiveness, identified through randomised controlled trials. The CFWS has invested in staff training and products (physical and digital) to enable a varied response to parents. The parenting programmes the service

are offering are for parents of primary age children (Triple P), parents of teenagers (Teen Triple P) and parents of disabled children aged 0 -12 (Stepping Stones). These are delivered in the form of seminars, discussion groups and a formal groupwork programme.

14. Although delivery was disrupted in March due to Covid-19, initial feedback from families was very positive, especially from parents attending the Stepping Stones parenting group, who stated that the sessions were beneficial. Parents have since told staff that they can refer to the resources they were introduced to on the course during the current situation, which they are finding helpful. Parents have also reported that the strategies are effective and that the challenges they faced have reduced and are manageable.
15. Current delivery for groups is on hold, but CFWS purchased online codes for the online parenting programmes (teen Triple P and Primary Triple P), which are being offered to families where this approach is appropriate. Triple P have also responded to the pandemic by reviewing delivery methods and CFWS staff have recently attended a webinar to explore online delivery methods. This flexible approach will form part of the CFWS recovery from Covid-19.

Recommendations for the Board

16. It is recommended that the Board notes the content of the Report.

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