

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
7 September 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES

LEICESTERSHIRE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PARTNERSHIP
PLAN: PROGRESS UPDATE

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the Children and Families Partnership Plan 2021-23.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. In November 2016 the Health and Wellbeing Board approved the Terms of Reference for a Children and Families Partnership to replace the Supporting Leicestershire Families Executive as a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The expanded remit included oversight of how the priorities for children and families, as set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, are delivered.
3. In May 2018, the Health and Wellbeing Board approved the Children and Families Partnership Plan for 2018 – 21 and requested that it received regular progress updates.
4. In November 2020 the Health and Wellbeing Board approved the updated Terms of Reference for a Children and Families Partnership, required to reflect the decision to strategically align the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership, SEND and Inclusion Board, Youth and Justice Partnership Board and the Early Help Partnership to the Children and Families Partnership.
5. In November 2020 the Health and Wellbeing Board approved the refreshed Partnership Plan for 2021 – 23. The Partnership agreed that the current five priority areas and key actions were still relevant, and the focus of actions should remain on identifying where improved partnership working would add value.

Background

6. The Children and Families Partnership Plan is a strategic document which sets out the shared vision for children, young people and their families and the priority outcomes that need to be improved. The Plan is not intended to be a detailed description of the individual work of each partner, but rather a summary of key areas of work that are best delivered together to have the biggest impact on the lives of children and young people.

7. The Partnership has adopted the five supporting outcomes of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy relating to children and young people as the priority areas for the Plan. The five priorities are:
- i. Ensure the best start in life
 - ii. Keep children safe and free from harm
 - iii. Support children and families to be resilient
 - iv. Ensure vulnerable families receive personalised, integrated care and support
 - v. Enable children to have good physical and mental health

Progress to date

8. Priority leads have continued to work with partners and other key stakeholders to deliver the current action plans. It is important to note that the pace of delivery and progress of actions has been affected by Covid-19 due to resources being re-focussed on responding to the pandemic. Key progress includes:

Priority 1 - Ensure the best start in life

- Work is being undertaken to help understand the impact of the pandemic on school readiness. Plans are in place for a communications campaign to share key messages around the importance of accessing preschool places and getting school ready.
- Workshops have been delivered to council, health and midwifery staff to promote a greater understanding of the 1001 critical days agenda. 170 people attended across the five sessions.
- A universal offer has been developed to support children identified as at risk of delay through the two year health check.
- The model for virtual meetings, enabling providers to receive professional advice to support vulnerable children, is now well embedded. Providers and professionals have welcomed the virtual appointment system and feel that children have been better supported as part of the graduated approach.

Priority 2 - Keep children safe and free from harm

- The Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Vulnerability Ops Group continues to meet and is making good progress against its Partnership delivery plan.
- Work has taken place across the Partnership to embed the role of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Nurse and it is hoped that this will open up access to information for other organisations.
- Activity has taken place to produce a communications and training plan around broadening the approach to Operation Encompass. It is the intention that a pilot will take place in a specific area of the county before it is rolled out.
- A week of county lines intensification activity had taken place. Locally, this resulted in 33 search warrants and activity centred around Leicester train station led to 37

arrests and the seizure of Class A drugs and firearms. 27 vulnerable children and adults have been safeguarded as a result of the activity and visits to other vulnerable people have taken place.

- The Violence Reduction Network has visited a number of schools to talk about the dangers of county lines and how to report any concerns.

Priority 3 - Support children and families to be resilient

- The areas for action under this priority have been reviewed with a focus now on early help. The Early Help Partnership has identified shared priorities for action and leads have been identified to progress work against five workstreams:
 - To review Early Help Partnership governance and leadership
 - To develop early help data sets
 - To develop shared systems and process for early help
 - To develop the early help workforce
 - To engage communities in early help
- A shared vision, Terms of Reference and governance model have been agreed by the Early Help Partnership and approved by the Children and Families Partnership.
- An Early Help Partnership data group has been set up to scope the data available across the partnership and identify any barriers and opportunities for developing Early Help data sets. The group will now be extended to include City and Rutland representatives as many agencies work across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR).
- Consultation was undertaken with schools on the efficacy of current early help systems and possible improvements. Following feedback from schools, a pilot is being run with Hinckley schools to enable them to phone a dedicated line to discuss possible referrals into the County Council's Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) before completing a multi-agency referral form (MARF). There has been a positive response from schools who have taken part in the pilot so far.
- Workstream leads met with the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnership Voluntary and Community Sector Reference Group to discuss effective means of engaging the voluntary and community sector in Early Help and ensuring they are enabled to participate and able to influence developments.

Priority 4 - Ensure vulnerable families receive personalised, integrated care and support

- Recruitment to the new Assessment and Resource Team (ART), providing wraparound therapeutic services to support step-downs from residential care, has been successful. Regular panels now take place to consider referrals, chaired by the Head of Service for Children in Care. The team is now working with a number of children and offering consultation sessions to social workers for other children.

- A meeting has taken place with district council housing leads and Children's Social Care (CSC) to start a piece of work to review the Joint Housing and Social Care protocol for 16 -17 year olds at risk of homelessness. CSC is undertaking an audit of cases where the protocol has been applied to consider the impact for young people and this will inform any updates required. Work will be completed by September 2021.
- Work is on-going to agree a protocol for the extension of the CAMHS offer to care leavers until they are 25. The protocol is part of the Strategic Looked After Children action plan and is an outcome of the two health summits that have taken place over the last year. It is recognised that this is an aspiration of both health and children's social care however, there are no defined timescales or specific actions currently against this outcome. A CAMHS representative and Adult Services have now been invited to join the strategic health meeting to provide oversight and move this action forward.
- Substantial work is underway to review the pathway to adulthood through the Council's Defining Children's Services for the Future transformation project. The data gathering stage identified the potential for more focussed planning for adulthood during the teenage years. Activity to address this includes coaching and mentoring for staff on independence focussed plans and 'enabling' outcomes written in a SMART format, with change measured in a way that recognises the significance of small steps.

Priority 5 - Enable children to have good physical and mental health

- The areas for action under this priority have been reviewed and action plans are being developed to progress work against the following:
 - i. To develop a programme of work to implement Trauma Informed Practice aligning to the LLR Trauma Aware workstream
 - ii. To understand why breastfeeding initiation across Leicestershire is lower than national average
 - iii. To reduce A & E attendances for 0-18s across the County
 - iv. To reduce food poverty (including holiday hunger) through further development of the Leicestershire Food Plan
 - v. To reduce maternal and child obesity
 - vi. To improve perinatal mental health
 - vii. To reduce/stop smoking in early pregnancy
- A Trauma Informed Practice launch event was held with schools with 140 delegates attending.
- The Council, working with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport and other partners, is co-ordinating the delivery of a DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme across Leicestershire to target children at risk of holiday hunger and social exclusion. The Easter programme was delivered via a grant round to schools and 668 children accessed provision across 30 schools.

Youth Voice

- County Youth Council Leicestershire (CYCLe) members have continued to virtually participate in activity including the British Youth Council's meeting with government officers on Covid-19 messaging, the Big Conversation on poverty and the Making a Bigger Mark conference. They have also taken part in interview panel training with the County Council, Stop and Search awareness training with the Police and have provided advice and feedback for surveys undertaken by the Council and the Police.
- LCC participation officers also co-ordinated Leicestershire's online Make Your Mark ballot activity in December 2020 and have supported the three elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) to progress their campaign activity on improving cancer care for young people, the environment and poverty. The MYPs have been supported to discuss their campaign ideas and share their views with members of parliament, local councillors and senior managers from the Council and organisations, including Health, and attended Children and Families Partnership meetings in January and July 2021.

Integrated Care Systems – Children's Design Group

- It has been agreed that the Children's Design Group will provide regular progress reports to the Partnership. Discussion has taken place on linking the Design Group's pathway plan into priority 5 of the Children and Families Partnership Plan, specifically in relation to Leicestershire activity.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme 2021

- As a response to concerns over "holiday hunger", the Department for Education (DfE) had awarded funding to each local authority to oversee the delivery of Holiday Activities and Food Holiday clubs, targeting children eligible for free school meals. The aim is that the children who attend the provision will be supported to:
 - i. eat more healthily over the school holidays,
 - ii. be more active during the school holidays,
 - iii. take part in engaging and enriching activities,
 - iv. be safe and not be socially isolated,
 - v. have greater knowledge of health and nutrition,
 - vi. be more engaged with school and other local services.
- Leicestershire County Council, working with LeicesterShire and Rutland Sport and other partners, co-ordinated the delivery of the HAF programme which has been delivered over Easter and Summer holidays and will also be delivered over Christmas. Leicestershire schools were able to apply for HAF funding to deliver holiday clubs over Easter and provision was offered at 30 schools across the county. The application process was extended over the summer to enable Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and out of school providers to also deliver provision and 25 organisations were funded to deliver 1,500 places across 55 venues across the county.

Future Developments

9. Work over the next six months will include:
- The launch of the refreshed Partnership Plan for 2021-23,
 - On-going communications campaign to promote the benefits of early years provision for all children but especially those who are more vulnerable,
 - Multi-agency task group to explore what additional support may be needed for children who have missed out on health assessments due to Covid-19 pandemic,
 - LLR task group to consider the development of a shared early help assessment which could be used by all partners,
 - Developing an action plan around trauma informed practice, including a resources list for schools. A tender bid is being produced for an organisation to lead the strategy on how trauma informed practice could be embedded across LLR,
 - Co-ordination and delivery of the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme over the Christmas school holidays to target children eligible for free school meals.

Officer to Contact

Jane Moore
 Director of Children and Family Services
 Tel: 0116 305 2649
 Email: jane.moore@leics.gov.uk

Mala Razak
 Children and Families Partnership Manager
 Tel: 0116 305 8055
 Email: mala.razak@leics.gov.uk

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

10. The Partnership has an interest in ensuring that there are effective arrangements in place so that the services provided meet the identified needs of local people. An EHIRA assessment has been carried out in relation to the impacts of the Plan.