

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	07/06/2021
Subject: Service Development Plan, Children's Social Care and Early Help	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1 & 2
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	NA
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

The Service Development Plan has been updated to provide evidence of progress in the last quarter with the work of the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service.

The cover report highlights work that has had a good impact on children and families such as the City of London and Kings College London Trainee Family Therapy Clinic, and our work supporting children in care and care leavers around covid.

The report shows plans for the forthcoming year.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Service Development Plan sets out objectives that aim to improve outcomes for children and their families. Objectives are drawn from listening to children and families, from staff, from audit and from the Achieving Excellence Board.

2. Ofsted made two recommendations in their judgment on our practice¹ published April 2020. These recommendations remain at the start of the Service Development Plan to keep sight on them. Actions resulting from the recommendations are complete, save for establishing the pilot Deputy Team Manager post. This recommendation has been put forward as part of the Target Operating Model and an outcome awaited.
3. The Covid Section from 2020/21 has been retained as the pandemic continues, although restrictions are lifting. The other actions outlined in the plan are new for 2021/22 and serve to develop the service and keep pace with excellence in practice.

Current Position

4. A new 2021-22 plan has been created following the completion of actions from the 2020-21.
5. Key achievements from 2020-21 include:
 - a. *Timely child in need plans*: managers chair multi agency meetings at the outset and where needed due to complexity or confrontation. Cases have been closed in a timely way when outcomes have been achieved.
 - b. *Virtual family therapy*: Families open for child in need and child protection support accessed family therapy virtually, with attendance being exceptional. Kings College London found that the trainee therapists had a diverse caseload, with very high engagement with families in the City, which reflects parental commitment, social work support and value of the project.
 - c. *Covid confidence*: Young people knowing and understanding covid rules and safety. Feedback from a keywork provider in April 2021 evidenced that our young people were knowledgeable, and the social work service provided clear and updated advice.
 - d. *Reducing immigration delay*: Work with the home office to enable virtual interviews for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, which reduced anxiety for young people.
 - e. *Specialist Sudanese Support*: Establishment of professional relationship with Waging Peace, a charity providing support to Sudanese refugees in the UK, leading to mentoring and emotional support to our Sudanese young people.

¹ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50149902> accessed 19 May 2021

- f. *Improving sleep*: and reducing the impact of trauma via a joint project between City of London and Coram.
 - g. *Social work development*: three students joined the service in the second half of 2020-21, two social workers members undertook Practice Educator training and supported the students, one social worker was attached to the trainee therapy clinic.
6. This 2021-22 plan seeks to extend the sleep work to include foster carers and widen this work across all keywork providers used by the City. The contract is set up and work to start in June 2021.
 7. The 2021-22 plan seeks to strengthen our parenting support offer by running a face to face programme in the autumn term. This action is the only amber action, as the group could not run this Spring as hoped due to covid restrictions.
 8. Strengthening our special educational needs and disability (SEND) transitions work is a key action for quarter one/two and will be undertaken jointly across the People Department. The purpose is to ensure early planning and clear expectations for children with disabilities and their parents in looking forward through teenage years and into adult services.

Corporate & Strategic Implications:

9. *People are safe and feel safe*: children's social care and early help services aim to improve safety and reduce harm. The service is governed by statute and if the service were to not meet its obligations this would have significant corporate and strategic implications.
10. *People enjoy good health and wellbeing*: the transitions work with SEND children is a good example of promoting good health and wellbeing with co ordinated care and support, with clear long and short term plans.

Climate implications:

11. none

Financial implications:

12. Children's social care is a statutory service. If, for example, children arrive in the city with additional needs, or further UASC arrive, then a service has to be provided. If risks escalate, then court action might be required. These unexpected needs will have financial implications.

Resource implications:

13. Children's Social Care and Early help is a responsive service and is seeking to establish additional social work posts which have been filled temporarily by locums

as part of the Target Operating Model. The benefit of establishing the posts is consistency of worker for children and families.

Risk implications:

14. There is risk to children if harm is not identified and responded to. There is reputational risk to the City if outstanding children's services were to drop in quality. The drive to maintain and develop quality services is strong and the oversight rigorous. Audit cycles are frequent and there is extra scrutiny and challenge from the Achieving Excellence Board.

Equalities implications:

15. Systemic practice is the practice model used throughout children's social care and early help. The 'social graces' are used in individual and group supervision, looking at similarity and difference in every piece of casework. Equalities implications are core in every interaction. The 'social graces' include gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality.
16. Social Care and Early Help require that every contract review considers the Public Sector Equality duty, and that every commissioned service provides a short report on the equalities implications of their service.
17. The book club on race and racism should upskill and enable staff across the People Department to notice microaggressions and be able to use the learning in their work with families in as sensitive and helpful way as possible, and to advocate for/with and provide an anti-racist service.

Security implications:

18. The social care and early help service are trained in the Prevent agenda, although have not needed to refer for a Channel Panel in the last year. Staff follow the lone working policy in respect of personal safety, and have a personal safety Skyguard device which allows for additional protection.

Conclusion

19. The Service Development Plan sets out the actions for the next year, with an overall ambition of providing the right help in the right place at the right time, to promote safety and wellbeing of children and their families. This is a live document and will grow in response to family and staff feedback, national research and audit.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Service Development Plan 2021-2

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