

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee	Dated: 12 May 2022
Subject: Children's Social Care and Early Help Service Development 2022-23	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Contribute to a flourishing society 1. People are safe and feel safe. 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Andrew Carter	For Information
Report author: Rachel Talmage	

Summary

The Service Development Plan has been fully refreshed for 2022-23 and sets out the overarching programme of work for the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service. Key pieces of work include a review of threshold application and strengthening our multi agency safeguarding hub, parenting programme evolution, CV writing and interview practice as well as strengthening our work with and for black children.

The report shows plans for the forthcoming year in our drive to achieve and maintain excellence for every child and family known to our service.

The purpose of the report is to enable members to be sighted on the array of work supporting resident children in need of help and protection in the City of London. Work that had good impact in 2021-22 such as the Family Therapy Clinic jointly run with Kings College London and Action Learning Sets for both staff and managers is being continued.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Service Development Plan 2022-23 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, from the Achieving Excellence Board and from Serious Case Reviews.
2. The Target Operating Model completed in September 2021 and as a result our additional permanent three social workers are in post (April 2022), the Deputy Team Manager is now established, and three social workers promoted to the role of senior social worker (reflecting their experience and level of expertise required, as well as being part of our retention strategy). The TOM changes offers consistency for children, as locum staff were relied upon whilst waiting for the Model to complete, having been paused due to covid.
3. The Annual Self Evaluation (SEF) of the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service is undertaken every August. The Evaluation leads to a plan, and this is appended (appendix 2) with an update as to progress.
4. Ofsted made two recommendations in their judgment on our practice¹ published two years ago in April 2020. These recommendations remain in the plan to ensure due focus and attention.

Current Position

5. A new 2022-23 plan has been created following the completion of actions from the 2021-22.
6. Key achievements from 2021-22 include:
 - i. Establishing additional permanent social workers and a deputy team manager, given the increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
 - ii. Responding to the Afghan children and families who arrived in the City in September 2021, creating an early help clinic and extending our early help offer for these families to ensure children received timely health care, were in school/nursery and had mental health support amongst other care.

¹ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50149902> accessed 28 April 2022

- iii. Successful pilot of Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities Parenting Programme, with accreditation by the Race Equality Foundation being awarded in April 2022.
 - iv. All looked after children being in education, training and employment.
 - v. Completion of our Immigration Interview Project, with all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who had been waiting having had their initial home office interview by March 2022. This led to permanent immigration status for the majority of young people – which represented the largest worry from care leavers.
 - vi. Monthly Action Learning Sets for all staff to bring in research and expertise into the service around topics such as intimate partner violence and including fathers. Meaning staff are well motivated and skilled in responding to children and families.
7. The new plan sets out our response to serious case review Child Q, to ensure Black children are seen, heard and responded to as children, and are not harmed at school or by police. Thresholds of need, decision making at the 'front door' – at the start of our service, and participation of children in service design and review are key objectives in the next year.

Key Data

8. Performance data for the service is being considered separately within the Safeguarding Sub Committee. Data is used to drive the actions in the plan and to evaluate progress for children.

Corporate & Implications

9. Children in care and care leavers are our children as a Corporation. More can be done in respect of work experience and job opportunities and the plan includes this.
10. The corporation across every department is a parent to our children in care and care leavers.

Strategic Risk Implications

11. Child safeguarding involves assessment and mitigation of risk. The service aims to protect and support the most vulnerable children in our society. The Achieving Excellence Board is in place to further scrutinise and extend our work for these children.

Equalities implications

12. 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. Systemic relationship based practice is central to our work, and the social GRACES (eg Gender, Race, Religion, Ethnicity, Employment, Class etc) offer us a framework for considering disproportionality and equity.
13. The monthly Action Learning Sets and Monthly group supervision support the service in responding well to similarity and difference within our client group.
14. Child Q has implications for Education and Police services in the City and is being overseen by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Child Q had a profound effect on the wellbeing of Black staff, and support is being treated as a health and safety matter.

Financial implications - none

15. Children's social care is a statutory service. If, for example, children arrive in the city with additional needs, such as the Afghan arrivals, and/or further children with disabilities arrive, then a service must be provided. If risks escalate, then court action might be required. These unexpected needs will have financial implications.

Resource implications - none

16. Children's Social Care and Early help is a responsive service and is has established additional social work posts as part of the TOM. The Early Help Lead is acting up as Team Manager for Children's Social Care. A locum has been appointed to cover the Early Help lead's post for the acting up period.

Legal implications - none

Climate implications - none

Security implications - none

Conclusion

17. 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 2022-23

Appendix 2: Self Evaluation Plan September 2021-August 2022

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