

By: Alastair Pettigrew, Interim Director for Specialist Children's Services

Malcolm Newsam, Interim Managing Director, Children, Families & Education Directorate

Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children Services

To: Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 30 March 2011

Subject: Preventative Services Manager Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides an update for the Members of Vulnerable Children and Partnerships POSC on the progress, developments and future remit of the Preventative Managers.

Introduction

1. (1) Preventative Services Managers (PSMs) were appointed in September 2010 to each District, co-located alongside the District Managers of Children's Specialist Services. The development of these roles is in its early days and the evolution of the roles continues.

The current PSM brief is to bring greater focus and cohesion to early intervention and preventative services in order that children, young people and their families' needs can be identified and met at the earliest possible stage. It seeks to bring together health, education and social services for vulnerable children.

Strategic Priorities

2. (1) Since September 2010 Preventative Services Managers have taken the lead in partnership with each District across several strategic priorities. The current priorities are identified below, and it should be noted that these priorities may be subject to change. Such changes could be necessary across the whole county e.g. following inspection processes or could be linked to a particular geographical area, where performance monitoring reveals a wide gap in specific services from other areas in Kent or statistical neighbours.

(i) Ensuring early intervention through CAF, Lead Professional and Team around the Child

The Government's strategy to secure prevention it to lodge that responsibility in universal services and to use a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to identify the additional needs of children and to plan to meet those needs by the appropriate staff from the relevant agency. This process fully involves the parents who agree with the team providing the service, which member of staff should be the lead professional who takes responsibility to coordinate the service.

It is intended that the preventative measures will result in more children having their additional needs met by universal services – health and schools, thus resulting in fewer referrals for more costly interventions.

947 CAFs were completed between April 2009 and March 2010 compared to between April 2010 and January 2011 when there were 1,246, showing an increase of 299.

(ii) Children's Centres

Working with the Children's Centre central support team, PSMs have concentrated on extending the reach of Children's Centres to vulnerable families. This has included refocusing outreach resources and encouraging partners to refer vulnerable families to Children's Centres for support.

Within each District, PSMs have strengthened the governance arrangements for Children's Centres through the appointment of Independent Chairs to the District Advisory Boards. Arrangements are also in place for each Centre to have a Steering Group focused on promoting participation and engagement of all stakeholders in the life of the centre; most importantly this enables strong parental engagement.

As Centres prepare for inspection by Ofsted they have been supported by PSMs in completing a Self Evaluation Form focused on recording outcomes for service users through a process of data analysis and service evaluation.

(iii) Early Intervention Services

Working with the Commissioning Unit in Children, Families and Education, PSMs have mapped the range of local services and providers focused on early intervention in each District. Thanet and Shepway piloted a commissioning review of these services and this is now being rolled out across the County. The aim is to ensure that each District is aware of services based on outcomes for service users, evidence of high quality and value for money. It is of critical importance that all commissioning undertaken in this way is linked into the new CFE commissioning register and follows proper procurement processes in close

partnership with the work of the new Director of Strategic Commissioning when appointed.

(iv) Support to the KCC Improvement Plan

The recent Ofsted inspections have identified significant shortcomings in safeguarding and looked after children work. One element of this plan will seek to free up children's social care to work with the children with the highest levels of need by assisting preventative services to deal with some referrals which are more appropriate for universal services. Benchmarking data confirms that Kent Children's Specialist Services also receive significantly more referrals of children in need, make more children the subject of a child protection plan and place more children in care than its statistical neighbours. The challenge for the preventative service is to demonstrate that it can reduce the referrals to more expensive services. If it can do this it will prove its value both in quality and value for money. The Improvement Plan includes actions to bring this about.

Recommendations:

Members of the *Vulnerable Children and Partnerships* Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

Note the report

Alastair Pettigrew
Interim Director, Specialist Children's Services
01622-221573
Alastair.Pettigrew@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

None

Other Useful Information

None