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To: Kent Health and Wellbeing Board

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Subject: Kent County Council Children's Commissioning Priorities

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Summary: This report provides a summary position of Children's commissioning priorities, in the context of Kent County Council's 5 year vision '*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*', the whole Council Transformation agenda '*Facing the Challenge*', and specifically the 0-25 Portfolio.

These priorities will support effective commissioning and transformation of children's services to deliver improved outcomes, meet statutory duties and deliver savings.

There is a significant and increasing amount of partnership work taking place as we seek to ensure that services are aligned around the needs of children and families.

FOR COMMENT

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Kent Children's Commissioning Priorities

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Introduction

- 1.1 The council will deliver sustained changes to children's services in the year ahead. 2015/16 will see us deliver on our 0-25 Transformation Programme, move toward integration with health commissioners in the north of the county, and commission a range of new services to meet needs and improve outcomes.
- 1.2 This report sets out the areas in which we are making the most significant changes during the year, and the changes that we are expecting to the way that we work together as partners to deliver them.

2. Background

- 2.1 The council's new Strategic Statement "*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*" establishes the Strategic Outcomes that will be the focus of our efforts in the next five years. Whilst each of the outcomes is cross-cutting, the first "Children & young people in Kent get the best start in life" will drive prioritisation and business planning for children's services.
- 2.2 There are seven Supporting Outcomes that provide the detail behind the strategic outcome. These are:
 - Kent's communities are resilient and provide strong and safe environments to successfully raise children and young people
 - We keep vulnerable families out of crisis and more children and young people out of KCC care
 - The attainment gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers continues to close
 - All children, irrespective of background, are ready for school at age 5
 - Children and young people have better physical and mental health
 - All children and young people are engaged, thrive and achieve their potential through academic and vocational education
 - Kent young people are confident and ambitious with choices and access to work, education and training opportunities
- 2.3 The 0-25 Portfolio was established in 2013 to ensure consistency across children's services in the council and create a seamless service offering that places the needs of children at its core. This has seen a substantial amount of change in the past year, including the establishment of the Early Help & Preventative Services Division and the integration of the Children with Disabilities Service into a new all-age disability service.
- 2.4 In addition to the specific priorities outlined in this document, there will be a particular focus on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the year ahead. The importance of preventing CSE through identification and early reporting of risks, and of providing support to victims will be considered and prioritised within all of the activities the council undertakes.

3. Key Areas of Activity for 2015/16

3.1 Implementation of the 0-25 Programme

3.1.1 Throughout 2014/15 the council has been working on plans for the transformation of early help and social care through a single programme that aims to introduce a systemic approach across the service. The programme began with a diagnostic assessment that identified potential for significant operational benefits alongside improvements to outcomes for children and their families.

3.1.2 The improvements identified focus on improving outcomes for children and families through provision of more effective services that meet needs early and so reduce demand. This is to be achieved through service re-design that creates the environments for our practitioners to consistently deliver excellent practice. These were tested in a live environment in 2014, during which practitioners were delivering, reflecting and refining approaches.

3.1.3 The key changes that we will see in roll-out are:

1. New Early Help units will bring together professionals from a range of backgrounds, working together as a team, based on reflective practice and outcome focused working
2. New children's social work teams, implementing assessment and support to children in need, using new processes to deliver focused and timely support
3. Introduction of a county wide "edge of care" service to identify adolescents at risk of entering care and provide timely interventions
4. A more proactive approach to placements and accommodation for young people, ensuring we have the provision we need to meet the needs of each child in care and care leaver

3.1.4 A full Business Case for Implementation was approved in early 2015, with delivery of changes across Kent between March 2015 and July 2016. Implementation will see the roll-out in phases, initially in Maidstone, before changes are made more widely. The expected timeline is:

- April 2015 – Implementation begins in West Kent
- June/July 2015 – Conclusion of the West Kent rollout. Moving counter-clockwise across the county, Implementation begins in South Kent as the Early Help restructure is completed.
- August 2015 – Early Help Triage and the Central Referral Unit join together and co-locate.
- September/October 2015 – Implementation begins in North and East Kent; scheduled to continue into early 2016.

Engagement with partners

3.1.5 During the initial phases of transformation the council has been primarily focused on refining internal process and functions. We have engaged HWB partners through regular updates to the Children's Health & Wellbeing Board.

3.1.6 As we move into implementation we expect to significantly increase the level of engagement activity with partners. We plan a presentation for the KSCB Board, and will look to utilise refreshed Children's Operational Groups as forums to discuss implementation on a district to district basis.

3.2 Disabled Children

- 3.2.1 April 2015 saw the integration of the Childrens Disability Social Care Team into a newly formed Disabled Children, Adults Learning Disability & Mental Health Division. This is a key step in developing a whole-life pathway for people with disabilities.
- 3.2.2 The emphasis for the year ahead will be on integration and seamless working. Commissioning activity will focus on the system of services for children with disabilities, including social care, health, education and special needs – as well as transitions into adulthood and adult services between 18 and 25 years.
- 3.2.3 Following the alignment of adult and children’s disability services we will undertake work targeted to reducing barriers to successful outcomes for young people in transition to adult life. This will involve joint work with commissioners responsible for commissioning services for adult with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions, sensory impairments and physical disabilities.
- 3.2.4 A key area of focus will include the development of joint commissioning between KCC and Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley and Swale CCGs. This will see a Joint Commissioning Manager post established and recruitment of a KCC hosted Disability Commissioning Officer. The aim of the project is to create a more seamless pathways across services and ultimately to benefit from pooled funding and aligned strategies.
- 3.2.5 We will continue work across Kent on joint commissioning for SEND and implementation of the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. This will involve greater joint working with commissioners of services for children with special educational needs and/or complex health needs in particular those with neuro developmental disorders such as ASC or ADHD.
- 3.2.6 During 2015 we will be procuring new arrangements for Short Breaks respite services. These will be three year agreements with a range of voluntary and community sector providers designed to ensure equity of access and opportunity across the county.

Engagement with partners

- 3.2.7 Partnership working is central to work with disabled children, and has become increasingly important since the introductions of Education Health and Care Plans. A standing group of the Children’s Health & Wellbeing Board, chaired by Patrick Leeson provides leadership and direction for this partnership work.
- 3.2.8 The development of integrated commissioning during 2015 is an exciting step that has potential to enhance systemic working that places children at it’s core. It will be important to balance this work with north Kent CCGs, with working alongside other CCGs in seeking to develop a consistently high quality service across the county.

3.3 Accommodation

- 3.3.1 We will be undertaking a programme of work to ensure that young people leaving care have the skills they require to live independently, and are able to access suitable accommodation. In the past the council's approach has not been aligned, leading to a fragmented accommodation and support offer.
- 3.3.2 Reporting to the 0-25 Portfolio Board the programme is seeking to co-ordinate the accommodation and support provision for young people aged 16 -25 aligning Supporting People activity with Children in Care and Care Leavers. This will bring together a number of projects seeking to resolve/improve accommodation and support and deliver efficiencies and replace contracts for support and accommodation that are due to end during 2015.
- 3.3.4 A key part of this work is a Care Leaver Pathway project, which is focused on ensuring young people develop the skills they need to live independently during their time in our care. The work follows our transformation principles, including the establishment of a live test environment for practitioners to establish the best approaches.
- 3.3.5 The programme aims to deliver a number of outcomes including the following:
- Children in Care, Care Leavers and Vulnerable Young People aged 16-25 are self-supporting and living independently as early as possible
 - Children in Care, Care Leavers and Vulnerable Young People aged 16-25 are housed in suitable accommodation that meets their needs in line with their pathway
 - The Council's is supported to meet its sufficiency duty

Engagement with partners

- 3.3.6 There is a substantial level of engagement with partners in looking to provide effective support and accommodation to young people. This includes a series of meetings chaired by the Leader of the Council to bring partners together to identify solutions.
- 3.3.7 In addition to the regular Joint Policy and Planning Board in which partners discuss housing issues, we have established a multi-agency steering group to oversee the programme of work of the programme.

3.4 Emotional Wellbeing Strategy

- 3.4.1 The council is working in partnership with colleagues from the health service to develop a new Emotional Wellbeing Strategy, as a sub-strategy of Kent's Health & Wellbeing plan.
- 3.4.2 The aim of the strategy and action plan is to establish a new systemic approach to meeting emotional needs of young people across all tiers of need. A key element of this work is for the procurement of a suite of services, from August 2016, at the point that current contracts for Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, and emotional well-being services come to an end. We will move from service design to procurement activity, and implementation of agreed actions during 2015.

- 3.4.3 A key emphasis of this strategy is on providing support for children who are at risk from, or have been victims of Child Sexual Exploitation. The actions outlined in the delivery plan will include procurement activity to ensure we have the right specialist interventions in place to support children who have been victims, along with wider workforce activity to ensure staff working with children with all tiers of need have the skills to identify and respond to risk.

Engagement with partners

- 3.4.4 The development of the strategy and plan are examples of true partnership working. The Steering Group has been led by individuals across health, public health, and social care. Regular updates have been provided to both the Children's Health & Wellbeing Board and full Health & Wellbeing Board.

3.5 Early Help Commissioning Intentions

- 3.5.1 Alongside the development of our internal Early Help & Preventative Service we will design and implementing new externally contracted early help services. This will replace a wide range of contracts and grants that have been in place for a number of years, and commissioned through a range of different processes.

- 3.5.2 Our Early Help commissioning intentions will be developed through a series of workshops, designed to establish need across the council, prioritise areas of focus and then to design the system and services we will procure. The focus will be on working alongside internal services and partner agencies to ensure that we are utilising the whole resource available in the most effective way.

- 3.5.3 Another priority will be to establish more locally based innovative arrangements for supporting children and families. In keeping with the council's social value focus we will be seeking to utilise voluntary sector agencies including those in the arts, sport and recreation to deliver early help opportunities tailored to the specific needs and interests of families.

- 3.5.4 A wide range of contracts, covering support across a range of levels of needs and ages from birth to adolescence are due to end in March 2015. We expect to have new contracting arrangements in place to replace these from April 2016.

Engagement with partners

- 3.5.5 The first multi-agency workshop to consider and prioritise needs took place on April 28th. This involved staff from across the public sector and provider organisations, considering data and intelligence on a district by district basis.

- 3.5.6 Two further events are planned for May. We will continue to keep partners informed of progress through the Children's Health & Wellbeing Board and Children's Operational Groups.

4. Developing stronger partnership working

- 4.1 As identified in the priorities outlined, partnership working has continued to improve during 2014/15, within a stronger Children's Health and Wellbeing Board and a range of sub-groups to tackle the key priorities of the partnership.
- 4.2 A key area of further development during 2015/16 will be the strengthening of Children's Operational Group, such that they represent a meaningful and effective means of delivering improvements to children's outcomes in each district of Kent.
- 4.3 A workshop on 2nd June 2015 will focus on how to ensure we have the right arrangements in place. The aim is that we will then have groups working in all districts by September 2015.

5. Summary

- 5.1 This report has provided a summary position of the Children's 0-25 Transformation Programme Plan and the Children's Commissioning Team Business Plan. These documents will be available upon request.
- 5.2 There is a significant and increasing amount of partnership work taking place as we seek to ensure that services are aligned around the needs of children and families.