

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

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To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 11 January 2019

Subject: Change for Kent Children Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Corporate Management Team - 13 November 2018

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper sets out the Directorate's new approach to the delivery of integrated services for children and families in Kent.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of this report and endorse the proposals for improving outcomes for children in Kent.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper sets out the Directorate's new approach to the delivery of integrated services for children and families in Kent. It places these developments in the context of the wider ranging and more ambitious Change for Kent Children (CfKC) programme which aims to improve outcomes for all children and their families with the ambition to have these improvements recognised by Ofsted through the judgement of 'Outstanding' in the next inspection which is anticipated in mid-2020. It advises the Committee that the consultation in relation to the identified changes will start in the second week of January 2019. Finally, it identifies the programme as a key component of the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Directorate.

2. Background

2.1 The Children, Young People and Education Directorate and its predecessor Directorates have been through a number of structural iterations over the last five years. The move to the current structure was agreed at County Council in January 2017 but was not progressed until the appointment of the current Corporate Director of the Children, Young People and Education Directorate in October 2017 and the subsequent appointment of the two new Directors of

Integrated Services in July 2018. The amalgamation of Early Help Education and children's social work into one corporate directorate has provided the platform for improving outcomes for vulnerable children across the county. CYPE's focus is on greater integration of these services which necessitates working smarter and differently with families to achieve better outcomes, to provide the type of support that they need and to ensure that as a result we only intervene when actually needed.

- 2.2 The challenge the Directorate has faced over recent years has been around the linkages between early help and statutory social work services which were not always seamless and were sometimes difficult to navigate for both users of the service (children and their families) and for the agencies with which they may be working. We recognise that partners have sometimes found it difficult to know how to raise concerns and make referrals to the right services and this was one of the drivers behind the recent changes to the Front Door. Equally, we could have been clearer with families about the best sources of support and our structures have sometimes made the movement of families through the system too complicated. As families' difficulties have increased and decreased over time this has required work to be moved between different divisions each with a different approach and way of working. Removing inconsistency of transition between services and ensuring a more seamless experience for families is one of the key motivations for the changes that we are proposing.
- 2.3 Key learning from high performing authorities nationally is that they have clearly established pathways for families requiring assistance and there is a coherence to the offer between statutory social work and early help as well as an understanding of how thresholds are managed in a seamless and supportive way. This situation is less problematic when there are clear safeguarding concerns, which require the protection of children from harm, but become more difficult when the concerns are lower or less immediately clear. Equally, developing a system that is geared up to holding risk at a lower level, sometimes in more universal type provision, and avoiding the need to draw families into a child protection system unnecessarily is a key aim.
- 2.4 There is increasing recognition through inspection of the need to deliver services similar to those described above and the Ofsted inspection reports on the three authorities most recently judged to be 'outstanding' clearly establish this principle.
- 2.5 The Ofsted report on North Yorkshire, the first authority in the country to be judged outstanding across all areas, described:

'A wide range of interventions are used to ensure that families receive appropriate support that is proportionate to the level of concern. This is adeptly managed and supports positive relationships between workers and families in order to facilitate change and prevent escalation to statutory services. The processes to 'step up' to statutory services are clear and well understood and all requests are screened via MAST to ensure that this is appropriate, and families are not subject to statutory interventions and transferred to a new social worker unnecessarily.'

- 2.6 The Ofsted report on the London Borough of Bexley states:

'A relentless focus on providing early support results in a high number of families receiving the right level of help at the right time, with fewer families needing statutory intervention.'

2.7 Whilst the East Sussex report commends the work of the 'Swift' programme:

'Intensive, high-quality intervention and consultation is provided through the local authority-led 'Swift' team, a multi-disciplinary service that provides specialist consultation, assessment and intervention across a wide range of need, including child exploitation, substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse, relationship difficulties and parenting. Joint work between social workers and this service adds depth to social work assessments and provides effective, targeted direct work to families.'

2.8 Addressing these issues is at the heart of the integration work programme.

3. The current delivery model

3.1 Whilst the new Directors of Integrated Children's Services (for East and West Kent respectively) were appointed in August 2018, the current operating model that exists under each Director remains largely non-integrated comprising predominantly a 'lift and shift' from the previous structure.

3.2 Across Kent, there are currently four Assistant Directors with responsibility for the area-based Children's Social Work, Children in Care, Contact and area-based Fostering teams, whilst there are also four Heads of Service separately overseeing Early Help Units, Youth Justice, Youth Hubs and Children's Centres in their respective parts of the county. Meanwhile, our PRU, Inclusion and Attendance staff currently sit outside of those teams as a standalone service.

3.3 The Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting oversees Adoption, Fostering, 18+ Care Leavers, 18+ Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers as well as a Virtual School service with limited links to Education Planning and Access.

3.4 An Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance manages Family Group Conferencing, the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service and a Practice Development team, which has recently seen the addition of Early Help Improvement Managers and Practice Development staff.

3.5 Whilst Early Help and Children's Social Work staff have been brought together as part of an integrated Front Door Service, responsible to one Assistant Director, we continue to operate with two separate Management Information teams with separate service leads.

4. The Kent solution – a proposed new operating model

4.1 We have adopted a systematic and outward looking approach to remodelling the Directorate which has been based on learning from national research, national best practice and its evaluation through the DfE's Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice programme. We have also been running four pilot programmes in Kent over the last 10 months testing out several different approaches to integrated working. Those pilots have taught us a lot

about the benefits and draw-backs of different models and the most important learning has been incorporated into our proposed approach.

- 4.2 Whilst more detail on each of those pilots and their evaluation is included in Background Documents, briefly, these pilots tested four different ways of working. The one in the North tested out developing a more integrated approach to working across social care and early help, by decreasing the number of formal handover meetings between staff. This saw a reduction in the duration of C&F assessments (20% decrease), a reduction in duration of child in need cases (13% decrease, vs 199% increase across Kent) and a smaller (7%) reduction in social care caseloads. The pilot in the East examined a more integrated approach to working between schools and social care/early help and saw significant reductions in social care work; reductions in demand (22%), reduction in referrals for assessment (75%), reduction in on-going case (75%) and reductions in social care “contacts” (72%). The South pilot examined a new multi-disciplinary approach to working with adolescents and saw reductions in missing children and young people (65%), reduction in out of court disposals (20%) and a reduction in adolescent referrals (21%). The pilot in the West explored new ways of working to support placement stability for young people where there was a high risk of that placement breaking down and saw 53% of those children being supported to remain in that placement.
- 4.3 In addition to such tangible benefits, there were a range of other positive outcomes which included the better ability of staff to hold risk more confidently, better and more trusting working relations between social care/early help staff and partners, especially schools and the police, who in turn felt better able to manage risk, and more collaborative discussions and decision making between both our own staff but also partners.
- 4.4 We used the information drawn from all of these areas to establish a number of strategic and operational objectives to set the intended direction of travel. We then built a set of design assumptions based on all of the above which established the type of approach we wish to see mirrored across the department.
- 4.5 It was only when those aspects of the work had been completed that we moved on to developing an agreed practice framework (the ‘how’) setting out the model or way in which the department would operate and then the construction of the new operating model (the ‘what’). Form followed function.
- 4.6 The strategic and operational objectives can be found in their entirety in the background papers, however key amongst them is the clearly stated ambition:
- ‘To improve the outcomes and the life chances of the children and young people of Kent, leading to recognition from Ofsted that Kent’s Children’s Services are Outstanding.’*
- 4.7 This sets from the outset the twin ambitions of improving outcomes for children and young people in the county and the ambition to have these recognised by Ofsted through a judgement of ‘Outstanding’ in inspection. This

ambition has been shared widely and welcomed by staff across the department.

4.8 The design assumptions¹, which formed the basis of our thinking about both the practice framework and the model, focused primarily on:

- i. The development of an integrated approach or methodology for the whole Directorate, one which could have a unifying effect and allow staff to feel that they worked for one service operating a single approach to their work with families.
- ii. A recognition that when teams worked more closely together, including being co-located, they were better able to manage risk. Our early help services especially, felt the benefits of working more closely with social work colleagues; they felt more confident and enabled to hold risk better than they could under the previous model. We recognised that sometimes working more closely meant virtual as well as physical co-location.
- iii. An approach that differentiated between the skills of different disciplines, rather than amalgamating all staff into a blended approach was seen as the most effective. All the evidence that we saw suggested that an integrated approach did not mean blending all staff together; the maintenance of professional disciplines delivered clear benefits.
- iv. The better engagement of adult facing staff such as mental health and domestic abuse workers was key to better, less siloed working. We managed some of this within the Kent pilots, but most of the evidence in this area came from other authorities involved in the DfE's Partners in Practice programme.
- v. A model that approached working with vulnerable adolescents in a different way. Another area where we were able to draw on local learning from one of our pilots but also to cross reference it with national best practice. A recognition of the need for a differentiated approach that recognised the changing pressures that face adolescents growing up in Kent and the growing influences on them of pressures which are often external to the family.

4.9 We have remained loyal to our original stated intention, that the starting point for any new approach was to agree the framework or approach and only move to issues of the operating model or structure once those had been agreed.

4.10 Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, final decisions about structure have not been made, although we will be in a position to provide an update to Committee in January.

5. Workforce development plan

¹ Included in their entirety in Background Papers.

- 5.1 The department employs over 2,000 staff across integrated children's services and whilst some structural changes are essential in building the new approach, structure alone is not the key to the better outcomes and improvements to which we aspire. A change to the way that staff work, to the skills that they have at their disposal, the development of better ways of working with families and a new cultural approach to underpin that, are central to our vision.
- 5.2 As we have become clearer about the future shape of the Directorate the need to consider how we can really invest in workforce development to support these changes has become apparent. Our practice framework workstream will begin work on a new and ambitious workforce development plan in mid-November and we anticipate that this will require us to look at both internal resources to support this but also to support through our Big Lottery bid for Contextual Safeguarding and the What Works Centre (DfE) for social work teams in schools. We further anticipate making a bid to the KCC 'Responding to Government Deficit Reduction' reserve fund/Transformation fund.

6. Expected benefits

- 6.1 As set out in the earlier sections, we anticipate significant benefits from the more joined up and integrated way of working. We know that partners will welcome this type of approach and that families will appreciate the greater clarity and continuity of worker that the model offers. There is national recognition that managing risk 'lower' in the system is better for families when done properly and that it is right to avoid too many being drawn into statutory social work services where appropriate. Providing support earlier is also more cost effective for the reasons outlined earlier and although national research has to date failed to quantify this, the logic of the approach is beyond doubt. Finally, it has been made clear by the national regulator, Ofsted, that this is the approach that they expect to see in high performing authorities.
- 6.2 There are, however, potential drawbacks and risks. The provision of earlier help comes with a cost and there is some evidence that working with families at an earlier stage can sometimes identify concerns that we are then obliged to address, which previously may well have remained hidden. In other words, it can identify more, rather than less, need. A more integrated approach requires better co-ordination and whilst this is positive, it can also be complicated and time consuming.
- 6.3 One aim is to hold risk lower in the system, drawing fewer families into statutory social work services where appropriate and safe to do so. We do however anticipate that this may generate some push back from some partners (e.g. schools). Our pilot in the east of the county working with schools to better manage risk will be useful in this respect, as will the work we are about to start with the Coastal Academies Trust.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The main budgets in scope of the Change for Kent Children Programme are the Integrated Services Divisions. The previous Divisions of Children's Social Work and Early Help and Preventative Services have a combined gross

budget of £199m of which £56m is funded from grants and income, and a base budget of £143m.

7.2 The current Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018-20 sets out base savings of £4.5m to be delivered through the integration of services within CYPE by April 2020, this assumed the integration of services would take place in 2018-19. However, these targets were put place in 2017, prior to the start of integration, and the exact profile and amount of savings anticipated to be made from the programme will not be available until the structure and associated detailed considerations have been completed. It is however anticipated savings will be delivered through a combination of staff efficiencies driven from an integrated structure, re-commissioning of existing services to better focus on future needs, and the eventual reduction in future demand of both social work caseloads and high cost children in care placements.

8. Proposed timetable

8.1 The intended go-live date for the majority of the changes is 1 April 2019. The key dates are the start of a formal staff consultation programme in w/c 7 January 2019 with potential interviews for any affected staff taking place in February and March 2019.

9. Conclusions

9.1 Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report the final decision around the future structure which we believe will help to generate the benefits to which we aspire has not been made. We intend to complete this work by 21 December 2018 with a view to starting formal consultation with staff in the second week of January 2019. This means that whilst we will be able to update Committee on the proposed structural changes at the time of the meeting, that information was not available in time for submission of this report.

9.2 However, we are confident that this new approach when it is finalised will be good for the children and young people of Kent, good for the Department and good for Kent County Council. We strongly believe that the improvements to which we aspire will both improve the lives of our children and young people and be recognised for achieving that by the inspectorate in due course.

10. Recommendation(s)

The Children, Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of this report and endorse the proposals for improving outcomes for children in Kent.

11. Background Documents (plus links to document)

- Appendix 1 – Strategic objectives
- Appendix 2 – Summary of Pilot Outcomes
- Appendix 3 – Strategic Objectives

- Appendix 4 – Operational Objectives
- Appendix 5 – Design Assumptions and Principles

12. Contact details

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Appendix 1
Strategic objectives

- To improve the outcomes and the life chances of the children and young people of Kent, leading to recognition from Ofsted that Kent's Children's Services are Outstanding.
- Develop a new practice framework (the 'what'), by the end of October 2018, informed by the learning from the Kent pilots and national innovation programmes
- Implement an integrated operating model (the 'how'), from April 2019, to deliver the new practice framework, and to facilitate a whole systems approach to childhood
- Reduce the proportion of children and young people requiring statutory intervention and entering care, by providing better support earlier and taking swift and decisive action to ensure those in need are able to access to the most appropriate support
- Improve the confidence of Early Help and Children's Social Work staff in holding and managing risk, improving the understanding of one another's roles
- Build on the strong relationships that we have with our partners, engaging them in discussions around how we deliver our services in a truly joined-up fashion
- Engage with children, young people and their families, strengthening their resilience and improving their understanding of how to access the most appropriate support

Appendix 2

Summary of Pilot Outcomes

North Kent pilot - an integrated Social Care and Early Help approach

Summary of outcomes:

- Reduction in C&F assessment duration (down 19.9% in CSWT 3)
- Reduction in CIN duration (down 13.1%, compared to up 19% for Kent)
- CSW referrals remained at a similar level to the previous 6 months
- Reduction in CSWT caseload (down 7.1%)
- Increase in EH notifications (up 9%), though a higher proportion of referrals going to Open Access
- Increase in EH Unit caseload (up 10.5%)
- Increase in EH case duration (up 8.5%)
- Reduction in re-referrals within 2 months (4.7% to 2.6% for CSW, 21.8% to 16.9% for EH)
- Auditing suggested that quality of casework and decision-making was maintained
- EH was successful and effective in taking cases with higher complexity
- Improvement in the understanding of one another's roles across EH and CSW

East Kent pilot – an integrated Social Care and Early Help approach focusing on schools

Summary of outcomes:

- Reduction in demand into SCS in East Kent (down by 22%)
- Reduction in demand from the 5 schools compared to the same period last year
 - Reduction in referrals for assessment / S47 (down 75%)
 - Reduction in ongoing cases after assessment / S47 (down 75%)
 - Reduction in SCS contacts (down 72%)
 - Increase in EH notifications from the schools involved in the pilot (up 34%, EH notifications made by all East Kent schools increased by 18.9% over the same period)
- There was a positive change in the narrative used by schools
- Schools became more aware of the wider service offer within the community
- Staff felt more confident in dealing with children and young people with challenging behaviour
- There was a clear move towards staff working in a more joined-up way

South Kent pilot - multidisciplinary adolescent risk model

Summary of outcomes:

- Due to the positive engagement of the young people in this pilot, we would have expected to see an impact on the number of CLA had the pilot ran for a longer period
- Reduction in missing episodes for young people in the pilot (65% lower than the month they were referred)
- Reduced out-of-court disposals total (down 20% compared to the same period last year)
- Reduction in SCS adolescent referrals (down by 21% in Ashford, compared to 13% for Kent)
- Increase in SCS caseload (up by 3.3% in Ashford compared to a 6% reduction in Kent)
- Reduction in CP cases (reduction from 28 to 25) with increase in CP ends (increase by 167% in Ashford compared to 9% in the rest of Kent)
- Reduction in SCS adolescent re-referrals within 2 months (down 2.9% from the pre-pilot baseline)
- Police reported better identification of not only vulnerable and at risk young people but also adult offenders
- Achieved sustained engagement of partners in a multi-disciplinary approach
- A sense that previously unidentified need was uncovered
- Staff felt more confident in dealing with children and young people with challenging behaviour
- Staff report practice benefits in applying contextual safeguarding
- EH adapted successfully to handling cases at a higher threshold
- There was a clear move towards staff working in a more joined-up way

West Kent Pilot – enhancing placement stability

Summary of outcomes:

- Young people identified for the pilot were chosen due to the high risk of placement breakdown, the assumption being that all children identified would have had a breakdown without the support of the pilot
- 53% of pilot children had no placement changes
- 21% of pilot children ended up in higher level placements
- 5% of pilot children ended up in lower level placements

- 210 hours of respite provided to foster carers through providing activity days for CIC
- Both staff groups felt that they were able to better understand one another's roles as a result of the pilot
- Staff felt supported to work with young people presenting higher levels of risk
- Young people provided positive feedback on having dedicated support from staff
- Sense that providing respite contributed to improved potential for retaining foster carers

Key learning points from the Kent pilots during 2018

- **Integrated EH and CSW intensive team approach** – demonstrated clear benefits in terms of an improvement in cross-disciplinary knowledge and improved confidence of staff to hold and manage risk
- **Collaborative discussions and decision-making** – informal discussions, joint decision-making, team meetings and group planning and assessment helped to reinforce the benefits of integration
- **Shared management of risk** – where managed across an integrated team, staff felt better able to hold and manage demand and risk, with EH staff managing cases of greater complexity
- **Co-location** – was seen to be beneficial in developing a shared narrative and identity amongst staff, leading to the development of a shared language
- **Joint training** – shown to result in an increased knowledge exchange between Children's Social Workers, Early Help workers and youth workers
- **Multi-disciplinary teams** – bringing together a wide range of professionals, with engagement from partners, unified staff around a common goal. Staff and partners reported benefit in working in this way
- **More dynamic decision-making between EH and CSW** – including through the removal of the panel process, resulted in an increase in the throughput of case assessment and case duration
- **Multi-professional pre-referral consultation with targeted communities** – resulted in a reduction in contacts and an increased number of cases managed within the community

Appendix 3

Strategic Objectives

- To improve the outcomes and the life chances of the children and young people of Kent, leading to recognition from Ofsted that Kent's Children's Services are Outstanding
- Develop a new practice framework (the 'how'), by the end of October 2018, informed by the learning from the Kent pilots and national innovation programmes
- Implement an integrated operating model (the 'what'), from April 2019, to deliver the new practice framework, and to facilitate a whole systems approach to childhood
- Reduce the proportion of children and young people requiring statutory intervention and entering care, by providing better support earlier and taking swift and decisive action to ensure those in need are able to access to the most appropriate support
- Support children and young people at risk of entering the care system to remain with their family but, where this not appropriate or achievable, ensure suitable and stable alternative placements are provided
- Improve the confidence of Early Help and Children's Social Work staff in holding and managing risk, improving the understanding of one another's roles
- Build on the strong relationships that we have with our partners, engaging them in discussions around how we deliver our services in a truly joined-up fashion
- Engage with children, young people and their families, strengthening their resilience and improving their understanding of how to access the most appropriate support

Appendix 4

Operational Objectives

- Reduce the proportion of children and young people requiring statutory intervention and entering care, with a reduction in the proportion of CIN and children subject to a CP plan
- Reduce the percentage of re-referrals within 12 months
- Improve the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers
- Reduce the percentage of children with 3+ placement moves
- Reduce the percentage of CLA who have a missing incident
- Improve the attainment levels of LAC at KS4
- Increase the percentage of care leavers who are EET and, particularly, the percentage of care leavers who are in Higher Education
- Reduce average caseloads across Children's Social Work
- Reduce and stabilise the unit cost of LAC placements
- Contribute to a further £4.5m in MTFP savings by the end of March 2020

Appendix 5

Design Assumptions and Principles

1. **EH / CSW practice framework** – We will develop a practice framework which all staff can identify with and follow, with this building on / being compatible with SOS, but with a focus on supporting families to change.
2. **Increase confidence and management of risk** – We will improve the confidence of staff to ensure that they feel more confident in holding and managing risk.
3. **Salad not soup** – We will look to integrate whilst respecting and maintaining the professional integrity and identities of different disciplines and different teams.
4. **Multi-disciplinary working/teams** – We will ensure EH and CSW staff work in an integrated way whilst working more closely with education, health, police and commissioned partners.
5. **Integrated management** – We will integrate the management of teams, probably at AD/HOS Service level
6. **Co-location** – We will co-locate appropriate staff together where possible.
7. **Adolescent risk model** – We will explore urgently a county-wide service for those most vulnerable young people, building on national learning. This will link with the CAT work being carried out in Thanet.
8. **Working with adults' teams** – We will engage adult, as well as child, domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse services, also exploring how we can work more closely with Children with Disabilities.
9. **Educational attainment** – We will look at how we can close the attainment gap for vulnerable children, identifying how our inclusion and attendance teams and our Virtual School can best support this work.
10. **Open Access** – We will look at how Open Access can play a critical role in early identification and ongoing support for vulnerable children and children in need.
11. **Management information, quality assurance and business support** – We will explore how best to bring together our Management Information capabilities and our QA and service improvement resource.
12. **Engaging key partners, including schools and the private and voluntary sector** – With the support of our Area Education Officers, we will ensure partners are aware of and share our agenda to deliver a seamless approach.
13. **Engaging with staff and service users** – We will seek and consider feedback from staff and service users – children, young people and their families – as the proposals are developed.