

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

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To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 7th May 2019

Decision No: N/A

Subject: Update on the HeadStart Kent Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

Key Decision: N/A

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

The HeadStart Kent (HSK) Programme is working to help improve the emotional wellbeing and resilience of young people aged 10 to 16 years. KCC is one of six local authorities funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver the programme which uses a multi-level offer of universal and targeted resources, training and services.

This report updates the Committee on the progress of the implementation in Kent.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In 2016 the National Lottery Community Fund awarded HeadStart Kent a total investment of £10.3m over five years up to July 2021 to improve the mental wellbeing of 10 to 16-year-olds in Kent who are at risk of emotional and mental health difficulties.

The investment aims to facilitate and support;

- i. The implementation of a locally developed, cross-disciplinary, multi-layered, integrated prevention strategy. The programme is co-designed by young people with young people and their needs at its core.
 - ii. The development of the necessary local conditions to enable that strategy to become sustainable in time.
 - iii. The development of a robust evidence-base around 'what works' in the area of mental wellbeing to be proactively shared beyond HeadStart, with the aim of contributing to the national and local policy debate.
- 1.2. Having sought the views of young people about what is important to them HeadStart Kent is focusing on building a sustainable system where every young person in Kent will be able to say with confidence:
- i. "People around me understand wellbeing and how to promote it";
 - ii. "My overall wellbeing is not impacted by the pressure to achieve and to 'be perfect';
 - iii. "There is always someone for me to talk to".

2. HeadStart Kent Offer

- 2.1. The Programme which is underpinned by a theory of change, consists of three Levels:
- i. The Universal element includes a Resilience Hub website to provide information, knowledge, and useful tools for schools, communities, parents and young people.
 - ii. A targeted element provides Priority School Groupings with training on Mindfulness, Resilience Conversations and Youth Mental Health First Aid as well as On-line Counselling and Support, Peer Mentoring and providing Safe Spaces.
 - iii. In the School Grouping areas, the targeted offer includes intensive one to one support, family work, volunteer mentoring and local needs led domestic abuse support.
- 2.2. The roll out of targeted intensive support to the nine districts and School Groupings within Level 3 of the offer has been phased, it lasts at least two years and learning from each grouping has helped to develop and build the sustainability strategy for the programme both locally and nationally. The phased roll-out to districts has been scheduled as follows:
- i. 2016 - Swale and Gravesham
 - ii. 2017 - Ashford Folkestone and Hythe and Canterbury
 - iii. 2018 - Thanet and Maidstone

iv. 2019 - Tonbridge & Malling and Dover

Over the five years of the programme, nine district groupings, covering 133 schools, will benefit from the additional resources of HeadStart within Level 2 and Level 3.

3. Progress

- 3.1. Headstart Kent is now fully operational in seven districts and the response from schools and communities across each of those districts has been very positive.
- 3.2. The National Lottery Community Fund hold both quarterly and annual reviews across each of the partnership areas and Kent continues to demonstrate excellent performance across both the qualitative and quantitative indicators. This includes the development of national and local evidence about what does and doesn't work locally to benefit young people now and in the future.
- 3.3. The HSK Resilience Hub (HeadStartKent.org.uk) offers an on-line advice presence for parents, young people and professionals. The portal which is already well developed and popular with over 113,000 hits on different pages as at the end of February 2019, is currently undergoing further improvement and development.
- 3.4. The roll-out across the seven existing districts has gone well and the final two districts come on line in September this year. 29 HSK Secondary Schools and 50 Primary Schools are currently engaged and another 69 non HSK schools are also engaging with the programme and HSK is on track to deliver to the planned number of 133 HSK schools over the five years.
 - i. Over 1,500 young people have now had a resilience conversation to identify how their global resilience can be improved.
 - ii. 1,643 staff have received training in Resilience, Mindfulness or Youth Mental Health First Aid
 - iii. 4,239 young people have received one or more face to face or online support interventions.
 - iv. 10,000 young people in Kent completed the annual Wellbeing Measurement Framework survey to explore the prevalence of mental health problems and the relationship to other factors such as academic attainment and support networks.
 - v. Headstart supported the most recent election for Kent Youth County Council where 21,000 votes were cast, including 3,000 online.
 - vi. Over 700 young people have been trained as Peer Mentors to support other young people to overcome the challenges they face.

- 3.5. Coproduction led by young people continues to be at the heart of the programme, with Speak Out Groups and 'The Big Conversation' working at County and District Level to engage the thoughts and views of young people.
- 3.6. Coproduction training was successfully delivered to 40 Senior Managers from the Children, Young People and Education Directorate Extended Management Team by young people from HSK, Children in Care Council and Kent Youth County Council. This training is now being developed further across Speak Out and shared across the Participation Network.

4. Personal Testimony

- 4.1. Although many young people have benefitted from the HSK programme the personal observations of Jess Griffiths, a 19-year old young woman from Folkestone, are emblematic of the impact that HSK can have on the lives of young people.
- 4.2. In 2017 the Director of Early Help and Preventative Services interviewed Jess who was due to take part in the annual 'Big Conversation'. At the time Jess said that she was willing to be interviewed in the office but not in the main arena. When she came to the arena, Jess said that she would not come on stage and as she came on stage, Jess said that she would not answer questions. After answering questions, Jess smiled and reported that she was very proud of herself.
- 4.3. Two years on Jess was a key note speaker at a Parliamentary briefing chaired by Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP in the House of Commons, about her own mental health struggles and the importance of involving young people in shaping and improving the services that support them.

Jess said "If someone had said to me two years ago that I would be standing up here in front of this many people – speaking – I would have run a mile! When I got involved in HeadStart I was struggling at school. I didn't have very good attendance, or a great relationship with my teachers, and was always told I was never going to achieve anything in my life.

"I have helped massively to develop HeadStart and, in turn, HeadStart has played a massive role in creating an environment which has helped me develop and get to where I am today. I really look forward to what the future holds and how I can continue to use and build on the skills and confidence I have developed through my journey with HeadStart Kent."

5. Sustainability

- 5.1. The six current national HeadStart pilots are working across the sector to develop a robust evidence base to help develop the approach and future shape of mental health provision. The Kent sustainability strategy has been adopted as a model of good practice across the pilot programmes setting out how to maintain, optimise and further develop the benefits generated by the programme and has been adopted across the partnership.
- 5.2. The Strategy has been informed by our learning from district working and the feedback from schools and a range of key stakeholders gathered through workshops, interviews and partnership events and is considered alongside information about the outputs and impact of the activities delivered.
- 5.3. Across Kent, as the programme moves towards its completion, the improvements and learning in resilience and emotional wellbeing are embedded into schools' and partners' day to day activity and adopted as business as usual.
- 5.4. The School Public Health Service (School Nursing) is now facilitating non-HSK schools to implement the whole school approach through the HSK Resilience Toolkit.
- 5.5. In Gravesham and Swale the Senior Local Leadership Teams, including schools and Integrated Children's Services Managers, are meeting to consider how the programme elements that have made positive impacts are being carried forward and to allocate an officer to apply for funding where this is required. For example, in Gravesham funding has been secured to carry forward volunteer mentoring in the district.

6. Evaluation

- 6.1. The HSK Programme is evaluated at both a national and a local level. Nationally the Evidence Based Practice Unit at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families collects and evaluates evidence about what works and what does not work locally to benefit young people, now and in the future. Part of this is the Young People's Wellbeing Measurement Framework survey. Other partners supporting this are the University College London, Child Outcomes Research Consortium, Common Room, London School of Economics and the University of Manchester.
- 6.2. Findings so far highlight the interplay between mental health outcomes and academic outcomes. They also support the importance of policy and practice initiatives to support better links between schools and mental health services

and the focus on wider outcomes such as those considered in HeadStart to mental health and wellbeing.

- 6.3. At a local level, annual evaluations and other specific evaluation reports are produced by Strategic Commissioning – Analytics within KCC, to provide an independent evaluation of the delivery and effectiveness of the HSK programme, on an annual basis.
- 6.4. Details of the evaluations can be found on the HSK Resilience Hub as follows: <https://www.headstartkent.org.uk/schools-and-practitioners/research-and-evaluation>

7. Conclusion

The progress of the implementation of the HSK programme is positive and benefits for the emotional wellbeing and resilience of young people are being generated as the programme is rolled out across Kent. Work to further develop and sustain the benefits will continue as the programme progresses.

Recommendation(s): The Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

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