

Report of: Health Scrutiny Committee

To: Executive Board

Date: 5 November 2007

Item No

Title of Report : Locality working and the Common Assessment Framework for children & young people

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report to the Executive Board the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Committee as part of their discussions on Locality Working

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Caroline Van Zyl

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by: James Pownall (Legal & Democratic Services)
Nichola Stretton (Financial & Asset Management)

Policy Framework: No

Recommendation(s): The Executive Board is asked to respond to the Health Scrutiny Committee's recommendation:

1. That there was a gap in provision of a dedicated lead officer dealing with Health and Children & Young People issues. (This was highlighted by the fact that the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager was only officer available to act as a contact point for Locality Co-ordinators in the City)

The Health Scrutiny Committee requests further investigation into the need for a dedicated officer working in the area of Health and Children & Young People.

(Executive Board is asked to note the background information to provide context to the above recommendation)

Health Scrutiny Committee – -13th September 2007

4. Minutes of the Health Scrutiny Meeting – 13th September

15. CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL BEING

2) Locality Working in Oxford.

The Committee welcomed Fiona Thompson-Tur (Locality Co-ordinator) and Maria Godfrey (Service Manager, Locality Working) to the meeting. The Scrutiny Officer had submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning locality working and the Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People, and she briefly introduced this report to the Committee.

Maria Godfrey explained that locality working focussed on early intervention. Staff from both the PCT and Oxfordshire County Council were now involved in all localities. There was a substantial training programme that enabled any professional working with children and families to utilise the Common Assessment Framework to identify the agencies that could best help the child and/or the family. To date, almost 1,200 care professionals and some volunteers had received training, and this process would continue. The majority of locality co-ordinators were in place and good progress was being made.

The following additional information was provided:-

- (a) Information sharing and communication were essential. The Common Assessment Framework provided a holistic assessment that combined different agencies in order to assist people in need. The Team Around The Child dealt with the casework process.
- (b) Next year, "Contact Point" would be implemented. Under this scheme, every child in the UK would be on an index that recorded which agencies (if any) had involvement with a particular child and his/her family. One person working with the family or child would take responsibility for ensuring that an action plan was drawn up and implemented.
- (c) Maria Godfrey indicated that she would be happy to explore means by which City Councillors could have an involvement in locality working. Negotiations were already ongoing with various Council service

providers, such as housing, and she was willing to look at involving other sections too. A link with Environmental Health would be useful.

- (d) Should Councillors have concerns about a particular child, they were advised to contact one of the Locality Co-ordinators. Information could be found on the County Council's website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localityworking.
- (e) Val Johnson pointed out that the City Council did not have an officer with specific responsibility for the needs of children and young people. She was willing to act as an initial contact for the Locality Co-ordinators so that they had a gateway into the Council.

Resolved:-

- 4. To thank Maria Godfrey and Fiona Thompson-Tur for their attendance and useful contribution;
- 4. To draw to the attention of Executive Board that Val Johnson was the only officer available to act as a contact point for Locality Co-ordinators;
- (3) That there was gap in provision of a dedicated lead officer dealing with Health and Children & Young People issues

2. Background

2.1. The Committee's discussions around Locality Working (the covering report on this item is attached as Appendix 1) have highlighted a growing agenda on Children's and Young People's Issues, that are led through county-wide partnerships. Funding streams for these partnerships are also County led.

2.2. Issues that these partnerships focus upon are particular priorities for Children and Young People within the City such as: Safeguarding children from harm, promoting welfare and re-dressing health inequalities.

2.3. Due to the lack of a dedicated lead officer for Health or Young People's issues, it is the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager who tries to ensure attendance at these meetings and endeavours to conduct the necessary workload to ensure the City's priorities are recognised and built into county-wide action planning. However as the agenda grows this is not always possible.

2.4. Further streams of work will also come out of new duties placed upon District Councils connected with Child Protection issues.

2.5. In the light of this growing agenda the Health Committee would like to see a review of the Council's role and remit within these partnerships and its new duties to determine any resource gaps.

3. Comments from the Strategic Director

None received

4. Comments from the Portfolio Holder

None received

Contact: Julia Woodman, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 252318 Email jwoodman@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None

Appendix 1



Covering Report of: Julia Woodman (Scrutiny Officer)

To: Health Scrutiny Committee

Date: 26th July 2007

Item No:

Title of Report : Locality working and the Common Assessment Framework for children & young people

Purpose of report: To consider the development of integrated locality working around services for children & young people.

Key decision:

Portfolio Holder:

Scrutiny Responsibility: Health Scrutiny Committee

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by: Imogen Wooder (Legal & Democratic Services)

Andy Collett (Financial & Asset Management)

Policy Framework: N/A

Recommendation(s):

The committee is asked to note the attached report and make recommendations as necessary

Introduction

'Every Child Matters' and 'Youth Matters' has identified integrated multi – agency working as a key component for improving the outcomes for children and young people. The national guidance on the timetable to deliver the service integration is by April 2008.

All agencies in Oxfordshire, 'delivering services to children, young people and their families have agreed new integrated working arrangements. This means moving away from operating in single service silos to delivering services on a local basis through coordinated teams that will work across professional boundaries from both statutory and voluntary services.'

The arrangements enable all universal, targeted and specialist services to work together to use existing resources more effectively to build capacity for more practical support at earlier stages. The new model of service organisation includes the following key elements:

- Organising services into 3 areas with 13 locality teams across Oxfordshire with named staff from services and agencies.
- Underpinning ICT systems, a practitioners operating manual and information sharing protocols.
- Developing co-location opportunities over time places where staff can meet and work in North, Central, South.

Working across agencies with a local focus will offer the following benefits:

- Better co-ordination, particularly of more complex cases that fall outside the need for statutory involvement.
- To recognise where support needs to be given at an early stage, before crisis intervention is needed
- To streamline to a single assessment process that removes bureaucracy, duplication or the potential for differing advice given to families.
- To place the assessment process in a local setting, with professionals that are familiar with the community

The Oxfordshire Locality Working and Integrated Support Services Team have also recognised that families need to be part of the decision making process and this needs to happen not only in the immediate context of assessment of individual families, but also in a wider context of developing / designing services.

Where are the localities to be situated and who will form part of the locality teams?

The 4 localities that affect the Central (Oxford) area are highlighted below:

- Headington / Wheatley
- Cowley / Iffley
- North Oxford / Cumnor / Botley
- Oxford South East

The teams will support universal services such as schools according to need. Staff will continue to be managed within their own services but operate integrated 'virtual' teams with a locality co-ordinator.

Agreement has been reached with the following agencies and services to identify and allocate staff to the 13 localities. The teams comprise staff from universal and support services and named allocated staff from some specialist services e.g. social care. Listed below are the agencies / staff currently involved.

Educational Psychologists	Children's Centre Staff
Behaviour Support Staff	Community Midwives
Advisory Team for Inclusion	Children's Physiotherapy/ Occupational Therapists
School and College Staff	Extended Schools Coordinators
Youth Services	GP
Connexions	PCAMHS
Health Visitors	School Nurses
Early Years SEN Inclusion Team	Key Voluntary Sector Partners
Special Educational Needs Support Services	Named Social Work Staff
Speech and Language Therapists	Named School Partnership Advisers
Educational Social Work	Named Police Officers

There is ongoing work to finalise arrangements with some agencies particularly police, midwifery, key voluntary sector partners and housing

The role of a locality co-ordinator

The co-ordinator will:

- Develop a working knowledge of support services in the area and be able to identify appropriate resources
- Co-ordinate the multi-agency team working to support individual children / families
- Advise / support the nominated lead professional who liaises with the family.
- Facilitate and provide joint agency training
- Support the development of common processes and information sharing.

The Common Assessment Process (CAF)

CAF provides a common method of assessment across all services working with children and young people.

The CAF process is aimed at early intervention, to aid practitioners to work together and allow families to be part of this assessment process. (An example of the CAF form is attached as Appendix 1) Its potential use is wide but is aimed at children & families:

- With additional needs that do not meet the requirement for statutory intervention
- Where the needs are unclear / complex and integrated assessment will present a broader / clearer picture
- If progress has not been made by the family accessing universal services and further targeted support may be needed

In terms of circumstances the child / family may be experiencing:

- Housing issues
- Poor nutrition
- Substance misuse
- Poor attendance or exclusion from school
- Anxiety or depression

When CAF identifies that a multi agency response is required a team Around the Child (TAC) meeting will take place

The Team Around the Child (TAC)

The team is made up of 'practitioners who have contact with the child / young person on a regular basis and who provide practical support and advice with and to those who are able to work directly with the child / young person and family.' This is not a static team and may change as the needs of the child / family changes. The advantage to the family is that they can talk to a range of

practitioners in one place. The family is also placed in a central role for discussions around the types of targeted support needed.

The team can also refer to more specialist services.

A TAC action plan will specify what action will be taken by those involved, detailing who has responsibility and what outcome is expected from the action. The action plan has to be completed within 5 working days and copies sent to all practitioners and the family.

Reviews should take place a minimum of every 6 months and the family or individual practitioners request an earlier review.

Potential for linking Oxford City Council Services to locality working

Frontline service links –

Community Housing Services -The Housing Options and Temporary Accommodation Teams work with the most vulnerable families, children and young people. They therefore have a potential role within the locality teams and where appropriate activating the CAF process. (This was a recommendation within the Health Scrutiny Review Report)

Environmental Health – The Occupational and Residential Health team will see families in situations of poor housing / overcrowding. It would therefore be beneficial for this team to have a referral route to the Locality Co-ordinator.

Area management links

A Joint Area Management Steering Group for the Central Region (encompassing the 4 City localities) will provide a link informing the working / priority setting of the Children & Young People's Partnership Board. The Group will also oversee to oversee the ongoing development work and design of operational processes within its localities. It is therefore important that the City Council has active representation on this Steering Group.