

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 6th November 2013

Agenda item: 7

Wards:

Subject: Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Update on Strategy

Lead officer: Paul Ballatt, Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance

Lead member: Cllr Maxi Martin

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: As Above

Recommendations:

- A. That CYP Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes and discusses progress in the implementation of revisions to Merton's early intervention and prevention strategy
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In April 2013, CYP Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report on Merton's revised early intervention and prevention (EIP) strategy. This report provides a progress report on implementation of this strategy – including changes to in house and commissioned services - and advises panel members of a current post implementation review being undertaken.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 EIP services have historically played an important part in Merton's overall approach to the earliest possible identification of children and young people with additional needs; the provision of effective support services which prevent the escalation of need; and the minimisation of children and young people requiring more intrusive specialist interventions including being made subject of child protection plans or becoming looked after by the authority.
- 2.2 There has been a greater focus on EIP services nationally as a result of the publication of more research into evidence based approaches; the greater focus on the impact of such services within Ofsted's new inspection framework; the requirement on local safeguarding children's boards to assure themselves of the sufficiency and impact of such services and the need to demonstrate value for money within a period of significant budget savings and diminishing resources.
- 2.3 These drivers led to a multi-agency review of key components of Merton's approach to the delivery of the continuum of universal through to specialist services which led to the following changes:

- Simplification of Merton’s Child and Young Person Wellbeing Model (CWM) which workers in children’s services, settings and schools in Merton utilise to assess the needs of children and young people in order to provide the appropriate level of intervention. The model now maps three levels of services – universal, enhanced and specialist – against which need is assessed.
 - Establishment of a new Common and Shared Assessment (CASA) tool used by practitioners in children’s services, settings and schools in Merton to support early identification and assessment of need and the delivery of appropriate early intervention or preventive services.
 - The establishment in CSF department of two age related enhanced level social work led teams which would work with children, young people and their families whose needs cannot be fully met by universal level services but which are not, at the point of referral, of such concern that specialist level services are required.
 - The recommissioning of a range of services, delivered largely by the local Community and Voluntary sector, which would support the casework undertaken with children, young people and families by the enhanced and specialist level services through timely referral.
- 2.4 At the time of writing the last report to CYP scrutiny panel, the recommissioning process noted above had not been completed. Services are now in place, subject to clear service specifications and regular performance management, and are summarised at **Appendix One**
- 2.5 The changes outlined above were implemented in Spring 2013 alongside significant re-organisation of specialist social care services in CSF department and the establishment of Merton’s Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). These ‘whole system’ reforms were subject to briefings for staff and managers in all partner agencies in Merton’s Children’s Trust and more specific training has subsequently been provided.
- 2.6 The Director of Children’s Services has commissioned a post-implementation review of these changes. The first phase of this review is examining the impact of the introduction of the MASH on volumes of referrals; the quality of multi-agency information sharing; decision-making and workflows from the MASH into specialist and enhanced level teams for investigations or single assessments. This work will be followed by a specific focus on the functioning of the enhanced level teams in terms of the level of need in children and families referred to these teams; the capacity of social work staff including family support workers to undertake the enhanced level casework envisaged and the level of consultation and support provided to universal settings including schools to enable these services to ‘contain’ and resolve concerns about children and young people exhibiting lower levels of additional need.
- 2.7 The impact of the commissioned services will also form part of this second phase of the review. In an attempt to ensure that these services were both

more effectively targeted and more impactful , commissioning intentions for 2013-16 were more explicitly informed by the types and patterns of need presented by children, young people and families being referred to children's social care services. This led, for example, to commissioning of specific services for parents with mental health problems and learning disabilities; families affected by domestic violence; young carers; children with disabilities; young runaways and children at risk of sexual exploitation. Early monitoring (of two quarters activity from start-up) indicates that most of these services are working to expected capacity and standards but a fuller review of effectiveness and impact, in the context of the learning about the impact of the other changes made to the system noted above, is to be undertaken.

- 2.8 In parallel with these elements of the post implementation review, staff and managers in partner agencies are being surveyed on their understanding of the changes made and the impact these changes are making on their own work with children, young people and families. Further partner workshops have also been planned for December 2013 to enable feedback on the review to be provided and partners to be engaged in any 'fine-tuning' required.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Merton's approach to early intervention and prevention services has been subject to wide and detailed consultation with partner agencies and further consultation is planned as part of the post implementation review noted above.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. Findings of the post implementation review will be concluded by early 2014.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. No specific implications for this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. No specific implications for this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. No specific implications for this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. No specific implications for this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. No specific implications for this report.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- CSF dept Commissioned Services 2013-16

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None