

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: November 6th 2013

Agenda item: 9

Wards:

Subject: Update on Developments Affecting Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families Dept

Lead members: Cllr Maxi Martin, Cllr Martin Whelton

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

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

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel note the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments affecting Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last update report in September 2013.

2 DETAILS

2.1 Her Majesty's Inspectors of Probation (HMIP) recently undertook an inspection of casework practice in Merton's Youth Justice Service (YJS). The inspection focused on work to prevent young people reoffending and our on-going work with young offenders. Inspectors noted that the YJS " had made important changes in practice since our inspection in 2011. These had led to the delivery of improved services". In particular progress has been made in strengthening prevention of offending work; improving the protection and safeguarding of young people and in relation to work with young people post sentencing.

2.2 Inspectors noted the willingness of YJS management to seek to understand and address areas for improvement; a more comprehensive management oversight of casework resulting in considerable improvements in case management; good quality pre-sentence reports providing the courts with a sound basis to inform sentencing; and case workers' enthusiasm and determination to build positive, trusting relationships with young people and their parents/carers.

2.3 Areas requiring further improvement include the need for thorough analysis of the risk of harm young offenders pose to others; ensuring there is a timely and effective plan in place to manage and reduce this risk; and more detailed planning in work with young offenders including more routine review of assessments and contingency planning. Report findings will be considered by the Youth Crime and Prevention Executive Board and improvement monitored through an action plan.

- 2.4 In October 2013, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertook a review of transitional arrangements for young people/adults with complex health needs. This review examined services provided by the council's children's services and adult social care services as well as having a particular focus on health services commissioned by Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and provided by NHS Sutton and Merton Community Services and by Epsom and St Heliers Acute Trust. The review was part of a national study and no report on Merton's specific arrangements will be produced. However, the review identified a number of challenges for the network of agencies including the need for a more fundamental integration between and across health and social care services; a more clear lead practitioner approach in the NHS especially when more than one health provider is involved; transitions planning that starts earlier and which engages more meaningfully with young people/adults and their carers; and more robust quality assurance, particularly of health input provided to young people/adults either through the local community based services or health provision in placements.
- 2.5 These findings have prompted both an immediate improvement plan to be co-ordinated by the council and the CCG and will also helpfully inform the 'transformational' approach to services for this group of service users required in the new Children and Families Bill.
- 2.6 In September 2013, Ofsted published its new framework for the single inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. This framework is due to be implemented from November 2013, will replace a number of currently separate inspections, and is a further demonstration of heightened expectations of regulators on the quality of these services. A rigorous, virtually unannounced, inspection programme will take place over two working weeks involving the submission of a number of key strategic documents and significantly more sophisticated datasets; in depth case file study and analysis; examination of the quality of decision-making throughout the child's 'journey'; shadowing and interviewing case practitioners and interviewing children, young people, parents and carers. Judgements will be made against a four point scale reflecting methodology in schools' inspection with the previous rating of adequate to be replaced by 'requiring improvement'. In preparation for the new regime, CSF department's Continuous Improvement Board is overseeing the refreshing of key documents, the development of business processes to collect required data and the implementation of a communications strategy to inform staff and partner agencies of key implications.
- 2.7 Since the panel's last meeting in September, four further school inspection reports have been published. In the primary sector, the rating for The Sherwood school has remained as good while Lonesome school is now rated as requiring improvement. Raynes Park Secondary school has also been rated as requiring improvement while the rating for Wimbledon College has improved to good.
- 2.8 Although the report has not yet been published, an inspection of Brightwell Respite Care unit took place in October and informal feedback indicates that a rating of good will be confirmed.

- 2.9 In September 2013 following development work, the Melbury College partnership between Melrose school and the SMART Centre became operational under a single Headteacher and shared governance. The model is designed to provide a more coherent, integrated offer for pupils with challenging behaviour and emotional needs and those out of school and was, in part, informed by the previous CYP Scrutiny task group which looked at arrangements for these groups of pupils. A commissioning post for the commissioning of alternative education provision (and for broader provision connected to the Raising of the Participation age) has also been established as a 'pilot' funded jointly by the schools forum and the council.
- 2.10 Council officers and partners have continued to implement the new area based commissioning model for universal youth services in Merton. Partnerships in the Morden and Wimbledon areas have already been established and following a commissioning process services are being provided by a number of local community and voluntary organisations. Development work is currently being undertaken in the Mitcham area prior to the commissioning process – a stakeholder event was recently held for local organisations interested in forming or being part of a local delivery partnership. This event was well attended and a number of local organisations are interested in exploring the delivery of commissioned services. The commissioning of services in the Mitcham area is more complicated than in the other two local areas due to transfer of buildings and TUPE issues but officers do not consider these issues to be insurmountable.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. N/A

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. No specific implications.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. No specific implications.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. No specific implications.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. No specific implications.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. No specific implications.

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

- N/A

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None