

Committee: Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 14th January 2014

Agenda item: 4

Wards:

Subject: Transforming Families

Lead officer: Paul Angeli – Head of Children’s Social Care

Lead member: Councillor Maxi Martin

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact officer: Curtis Ashton

Recommendations:

- A. Members of the Panel note progress made in Merton in implementing the national Troubled Families initiative.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the progress made by Merton’s Transforming Families (TF) team in its work with families.

2 DETAILS

UPDATE ON TF TEAM AND CURRENT CAPACITY

- 2.1 The Transforming Families team continues to be overseen by an Operations Manager who manages two Lead Practitioners. Each Lead Practitioner currently supervises 4 – 5 case practitioners. The team also has a Business Support worker who assists with the general administrative needs of the team and with data collation processes which are significant due to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requirements (which are linked to performance related funding).
- 2.2 A Community Development Worker was appointed in July 2013 and works for the Merton Voluntary Service Council in conjunction with the Transforming Families team with a particular focus on the Phipps Bridge estate supporting the local ambitions established through the Performance Reward Grant financial allocation.
- 2.3 Commonsense Community Development Trust work alongside the Transforming Families Team and have been tasked with working with 30 families between 2013 – 14. These 30 cases will represent a ‘step down’ process from the Transforming Families team once the Transforming Families intervention ceases. This ensures that those families who still require support continue to receive it (although at a reduced level).
- 2.4 The Transforming Families team recently appointed to the post of Gangs Worker following the successful bid for funds from the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). This worker commenced at the beginning of November 2013 and is working closely with teams within Social Care and

Youth Inclusion- and other teams across the council- to identify and provide support to those young people (particularly young men) who are engaged with, or on the periphery of, gang membership.

UPDATE ON TRANSFORMING FAMILIES DATA/PERFORMANCE AS AT THE END OF OCTOBER 2013

2.5 Performance data on local authorities' implementation of the Troubled Families initiative is published at regular intervals. Merton's data has consistently shown that once the Transforming Families team became fully operational in January 2013, activity and impact has increased significantly. As of October 2013, 320 families had been identified and 300 families had been worked with by the team and/or in conjunction with other social care services. 42 families have been identified as having been 'turned around' or 'transformed' due to the fact that they have fulfilled the Payment by Results criteria outlined by the DCLG. 25 families have achieved the crime/ASB/ education outcomes and 17 families have achieved the continuous employment outcome. These are success stories as the team is working with families who have very complex and high level needs. The Transforming Families team in Merton is working with cohorts of families that are particularly challenging and cannot easily be 'turned around', as is the case in some other local authorities. A large number of cases are referred from the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team and are often families with complex needs. In addition, a number of cases are being co-worked with the Youth Justice/ Offending Service and Social Work teams.

2.6 It is of particular note that the team has worked with a large number of parents on its programmes who have sustained employment - larger numbers than in neighbouring local authorities. Merton also exceeded the target of numbers of families worked with (128) for year 1 of the programme. The target was 124 families as set by the DCLG.

Area	Total target number of Families	Number of families identified as at the end of October 2013	Number of families worked with as at the end of October 2013	Number of families achieving crime/asb/education result as at the end of October 2013	Number of families achieving continuous employment result as at the end of October 2013	Total number of families turned around as at the end of October 2013	Number of families achieving progress to work outcome as at the end of October 2013
Merton	370	320	300	25	17	42	1

(Provided and published by the Department of Communities and Local Government, November 2013)

2.7 These figures are soon to increase as the next window for claiming the Payment by Results element of the programme commences this month. The team is currently working on data collation in relation to the cases that will be claimed for in order to evidence success to our internal auditors and

to the DCLG. The team is anticipating making a significant claim in January 2014.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

Housing

- 2.8 Locally joined up working is generally good. However, one of our challenges is in relation to the small number of families who are in need of re-housing either within or outside of the borough. The relationship with Merton Priory Homes is strong but needs to be sustained and further developed.

Education

- 2.9 Effective partnership working exists between the Transforming Families team and education colleagues, in particular in the Education Welfare service and local schools. The major education issue being addressed is poor school attendance. There has been considerable success in improving attendance and returning young people to appropriate provision. Challenges remain regarding out of borough children and those attending academies.

Police and Probation

- 2.10 Relationships are effective and work is underway in the borough in relation to the Ending Serious Youth Violence action plan. A small but significant number of families known to the Transforming Families team are assessed as possibly having issues relating to gang involvement. The Youth Crime Executive Board is actively addressing this issue and the appointment of the MOPAC funded gangs worker will assist in joining up this work with the Transforming Families agenda.
- 2.11 There are a number of significant changes that are forthcoming in the Probation Service, but these should be alleviated within the team as a Probation Officer will continue to be seconded within the Youth Justice/Offending Service.

Job Centre Plus

- 2.12 As one of the main national criteria for eligibility for families for the programme is worklessness/unemployment. Work has been carried out with the local Job Centre and a worker from Job Centre Plus commenced work in the team one day a week on the week in November 2013.

PHIPPS BRIDGE PROJECT

- 2.13 The Community Development worker noted above has been in place since July 2013. Although progress made was not reflected in the October return, the worker has been pro-active in getting the programme running in

the Phipps Bridge area. Initial work involved profiling the population of the estate. The following factors are of particular note and demonstrate that the estate has a higher proportion of families eligible for the programme than the rest of the borough:

- Above average (Merton) % of population are children and young people (Phipps 29%, Merton 18%).
- Above average single parent families (Phipps 43% of families, Merton 20%).
- Higher than average number of people with disability or long term conditions or mental health issues. Lifestyle and socio-economic data indicates a much higher rate than average of Phipps residents will have future health problems.
- High levels of smoking and obesity or mental health issues. Lifestyle and socio-economic data indicates a much higher rate than average of Phipps residents will have future health problems.
- The rate of domestic incidents in the ward is second highest in the borough.
- High unemployment is in issue within the ward and this requires attention
- Relatively high number of teenage conceptions
- Lower than average attainment at foundation stage assessment profile (school readiness)
- Lower than average Key Stage 2 attainment
- Lower than average GCSE results
- Higher than average rates of school exclusions.

2.14 This information has been used to identify an agreed focus of the specific work on the estate. Work will be focused on:

- High cost/concern families with multiple problems
- Young people at risk of offending, and their families
- Children and young people at risk of abuse etc. and their families
- Children and young people with significant health needs and their families
- Children and young people with significant physical or learning disability and their families
- Families affected by domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems – the three main drivers of safeguarding issues in families.
- Young people at risk of exclusion or NEET and worklessness issues in their Families
- Community members at risk of alienation or attachment to violent extremism.

How outcomes will be measured

2.15 Outcomes measures for children, young people and adults worked with on the programme include the following:

- Improved attendance at school

- Reduction in exclusions
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Reduction in domestic violence
- Reduction in housing enforcement actions
- Reduction in number of child protection concerns
- Increased take up of health services (e.g. substance misuse services, Mental Health)

2.16 The Community Development Worker will work closely with MVSC and the Transforming Families Team to both identify families on the estate for intervention and co-ordinate interventions. Additionally the worker is tasked with developing community capacity.

2.17 The Community Development Worker has established appropriate networks between MVSC and transforming families' team. She has also established local stakeholder networks (South Mitcham Community Association, Merton Priory Homes, Friends of Phipps Bridge, Haslemere and Benedict Schools, Mitcham Schools cluster, Wimbledon Guild, Leisure. The CDW has also met with local councillors and our Lead Member of Children's Services.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE PROGRAMME

2.18 The team has begun to engage with the full Year 2 cohort of families during 2013/14 and prepare for the January 2014 Payment by Results return. Work is also planned for the promotion of the team within the community to increase self-referrals

2.19 The strengthening of the protocols and arrangements with MVSC to deliver the Phipps Bridge project is a priority, which will lead to the identification of eligible cases within this estate

2.20 A new database is being procured to ensure that data collection and monitoring systems and processes are in place and tailored to local and DCLG data returns.

TRANSFORMING FAMILIES PANEL

2.21 A monthly multi-agency Transforming Families Panel was introduced in December 2013. This is where case practitioners, their managers and partners (such as Social Care, Education, Police, Job Centre and Commonsense) discuss families known to the scheme. The objective of this panel is to ensure that safeguarding and risk concerns are shared (due to the complexity of many of the cases) and to track and monitor the progress of the success of the cases (particularly in relation to the payment by results criteria). The Panel will also assist with the planning processes in relation to new cases and in identifying 'step down' and 'step up' progression.

NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

- 2.22 The Department for Communities and Local Government has commissioned a national three-year evaluation of the Troubled Families programme. Merton is one of twenty Local Authorities in the country who have been selected to take part.
- 2.23 The objective of the study is to explore, in depth, how TF services are operating, to understand how systems and services have been designed and formed to work with families and to provide on-going learning about how to optimise the efficacy of the TF programme. Case studies will be based on interviews and group discussions with staff and workshops with local partners, at both strategic and operational levels. Researchers will be carrying out two day long site visits in the first and third year of the evaluation (Waves 1 and 3) and one telephone interview during the second year of the evaluation (Wave 2). This will lead to the DCLG publishing a report at the end of the programme.
- 2.24 The research commenced in November 2013 with the researcher interviewing the Director of CSF, the Head of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion, the Service Manager of Family and Adolescent Services and the Transforming Families team. The researcher is due to return in January for the second part of the workshop. The researcher was extremely complimentary about staff and Merton. As part of the research project 2 Merton families will also be interviewed.
- 2.25 We have been advised that Merton will receive individualised feedback from this research, although we are not clear at this stage when this may be provided.

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 None for the purposes of this report.

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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

11.1 N/A

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None

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