

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st JULY 2011

POLICY REVIEW 2011/12: DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP1: PROSPEROUS CITY; SP 4: LEARNING CITY

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO2: Being 'One Council', CIO3: Efficient and Effective Council, CIO4: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward proposals and seek agreement from Members in relation to the forthcoming policy review into early intervention and locality services.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Crowtree Leisure Centre on 19th May 2011. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by Members of the Committee. At the meeting on 9th June 2011, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on early intervention and locality services.
- 2.2 Early intervention is not new and it has even been suggested that its roots can be traced back to Friedrich Fröbel's kindergarten movement in the early 18th century. However and much more recently, well known interventions have included Head Start and the Family Nurse Partnership, which began in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s respectively and still continue to this day. Today, it is widely agreed by experts across the world that early intervention can be of enormous benefit to children. This is reinforced by the findings of the Marmot review into tackling health inequalities. The Marmot review highlighted that giving every child the best start in life was crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course and it made action in this area its top priority. Early action is the key, 'later interventions, although important are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations'.
- 2.3 The joint Treasury and the then Department for Education and Skills defined early intervention for the Government's 2007 spending review as intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems that have already emerged for children and young people.

- 2.4 The term 'early intervention' is used to mean different things and has the potential to cause confusion about whose job it is in a locality. The fact is that every member of staff who works with children, young people and families has some individual responsibility for early intervention. This applies whether they are health visitors, police officers, General Practitioners (GPs), midwives, nursing staff, teachers and teaching assistants, youth workers, speech and language therapists, children's centre staff, social workers, nursery workers and child and adolescent as well as adult mental health workers, among many others. Collectively, schools, colleges, Children's Centres and GP practices and professionals who work in them have contact with almost all children and young people. Universal services and settings are often the places where emerging difficulties can be first spotted, or where children and young people or their families will themselves first ask for help.
- 2.5 Since the inception of Sunderland's Children's Services, ways of working to support children and young people have changed and developed. This has been in response to both local and national imperatives and have often included a move to more localised service delivery e.g. Children's Centres. This way of working has resulted in the development of the 'Team Around the Child/Family' (TAC/TAF) model to respond to the need for joined up services and the need to provide a more integrated approach within existing resources. The aim is to reduce duplication and support a common service delivery approach which continues from the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.
- 2.6 The Common Assessment Framework is a tool to help identify unmet needs in children and can be used by any person whose job involves working with children. A CAF can provide a simple pre-assessment checklist for practitioners and ultimately is a single route process for implementing support and intervention through the Team Around the Child/Family model.
- 2.7 The key driver for the review will be the appropriateness and effectiveness of the restructured integrated early intervention model's processes, multi-agency support packages and early stage interventions within Sunderland.

3. The Scrutiny Review Process

- 3.1 Scrutiny reviews will carry out a number of stages in undertaking and completing a review. The stages broadly are:

Stage 1 Scope

The initial stage of the review identifies the background, issues, potential outcomes and timetable for the review.

Stage 2 Investigate	The Committee gathers evidence using a variety of tools and techniques and arranges visits where appropriate.
Stage 3 Analyse	The key trends and issues are highlighted from the evidence gathered by the Committee.
Stage 4 Clarify	The Committee discusses and identifies the principal messages of the review from the work undertaken.
Stage 5 Recommend	The Committee formulates and agrees realistic recommendations.
Stage 6 Report	Draft and final reports are prepared based on the evidence, findings and recommendations.
Stage 7 Monitor	The Committee monitors recommendations on a regularly agreed basis.

4. Overall Aim of the Scrutiny Policy Review

- 4.1 To investigate preventative and early intervention services for children, young people and their families.

5. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Policy Review

- 5.1 The following Terms of Reference for the policy review are proposed:-
- (a) To understand and define the Early Intervention offer;
 - (b) To look at the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and how this directly links to intervention and support;
 - (c) To identify and understand the pathways, benefits and barriers to families and/or individuals accessing early intervention support;
 - (d) To investigate the impact of support available and identify if these approaches are coordinated, multi-agency in nature and deliver an improvement in outcomes;
 - (e) To consider how interventions can be robustly monitored to evaluate outcomes and provide information to further develop service delivery, and;
 - (f) To look at examples of good practice from across the region and country in relation to the policy review.

6. Potential Areas of Enquiry and Sources of Evidence

6.1 The Scrutiny Committee can invite a variety of people, key stakeholders and interested parties to provide written or oral evidence in order that a balanced and focused range of recommendations can be formulated. A list of potential witnesses, though not exhaustive, is included for Members information:

- (a) Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders;
- (b) Executive Director of Children's Services;
- (c) Head of Early Intervention and locality Services;
- (d) Children's Centres;
- (e) Gentoo;
- (f) Headteachers and Schools;
- (g) Youth Offending Service;
- (h) Connexions
- (i) Police;
- (j) Voluntary and Community Sector;
- (k) Health Visitors;
- (l) Ward Councillors;
- (m) Local MPs and;
- (n) Local Authorities of good practice.

6.2 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the scrutiny process. Consideration will be given to how involvement can be structured in a way that the Committee encourages those views.

6.3 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage (for example, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, black and minority ethnic people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people), which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

7. Funding from the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget

7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report of the need to use funding from the committee's dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid Members in their enquiry.

7.2 At this stage it is suggested that funding may be necessary to support the following activities:

- (a) Key witnesses;
- (b) Engagement with voluntary and statutory organisations;
- (c) General publicity;
- (d) Visits (as necessary) to deliver effective scrutiny; and
- (e) Task and Finish activities.

8. Proposed Timetable of the Scrutiny Investigation

8.1 The following scheduled meetings will include evidence gathering for the study:

Setting the Scene - September 2011

Evidence Gathering - October 2011 to February 2012

Consideration of Draft Final Report - March 2012

Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Committee - April 2012

Consideration of Final Report by the Cabinet/Council- June 2012
(tentative date)

8.2 Additional working group meetings may be required to complete the evidence gathering.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Members are recommended to discuss and agree the scope of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2011/12 as outlined in the report.

Background Papers

Sunderland's Children's Trust Website

Early Intervention: Securing Good Outcomes for all Children and Young People (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Cabinet Report: Locality Based Work (December 2008)

Children's Services Leadership Team: Locality Based Working Update (April 2009)

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