

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee
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Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19

Lead Officer: Philippa Granthier, Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance

Author: Fiona Phur, Partnership Business Manager – Children's Commissioning

Contact Details: FZPhur@somerset.gov.uk; 01823 355259

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson, Lead Member for Children and Families

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

1.1. Somerset County Council has developed a three year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) commencing April 2016 setting out the actions we and our partners are taking to continue and sustain improvements in children's services. The plan follows a multi-agency approach, overseen by Somerset Children's Trust. Seven improvement programmes, managed by the relevant Board for each improvement area are in place, as follows:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
2. Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life
3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing
4. Building skills for life
5. Providing help early and effectively
6. Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service.
7. Embedding a 'Think Family' approach

1.2. Children and families are a key theme within the County Plan 2016-20, recognising the importance of providing the information and advice families need to help themselves and of focusing our help early and effectively when needed. The key priorities are to improve children's safeguarding services; to improve exam results, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils; and to improve children's health and wellbeing.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. The Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19 is the strategic plan for Somerset Children's Trust, providing the focus for partners' actions and investment and the means by which the Department for Education will measure our improvement. The plan is reported upon on a quarterly basis and we are now reporting upon the activity of the first quarter (April to June 2017) of Year 2 which provides a summary of activity and progress, supported by each of the 7 programmes' Highlight Reports. During this quarter the CYPP has been promoted through each Improvement Programme's delivery board, partnership meetings and events alongside the launch of 'The Journey' newsletter to all Children's Trust partners and their staff.

This meeting therefore provides an opportunity for members to comment on the progress at the end of the first quarter and to consider the actions set to progress

the Plan through its second year. Attached are the Quarter 1 Executive Summary (appendix 1) from the Somerset Children's Trust Executive group, and the 7 Highlight Reports from each of the 7 delivery groups (appendix 2).

3. Background

- 3.1.** On 6 November 2015 Somerset County Council received a Direction Notice from the Secretary of State for Education requiring us to develop and implement by April 2016, a three year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which the Department for Education judge likely to be effective in furthering and sustaining improvement of children's social care functions. This plan is now implemented and reporting upon second year progress.
- 3.2.** The focus of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) in 2016 was vulnerable children and young people and it has informed the priorities for inclusion in the CYPP.
- 3.3.** The seven improvement programme action plans are developed annually and monitored within the nominated delivery groups. The Partnership Business team supports the delivery groups and the SCT Executive and Board by attending meetings, developing task and finish functions for areas of concern and supporting data collection and report writing across all 7 programmes to ensure the impact of the CYPP is realised and evidenced. The positive cross-cutting thinking across programmes to support specific actions is particularly noticeable following a peer review of Special Educational Needs and Education (SEND) and the actions arising from the review now inform year 2 actions. At the end of this reporting period we can demonstrate a positive start regarding additional or improved information and resources; services that support building better resilience in our children, young people, their families and the people who support them; an improved SEND offer and some strengthened approaches to the work required across our partnership.

Areas requiring more focus include the lack of data or changes to data which make year on year comparisons difficult; recruitment and retention issues in services; the challenges faced by partners to engage at pace, and a national lack of placements for children coming into care which impacts upon our local provision. At the beginning of year two the Improvement Programmes are rated amber with a holding trend as work embeds or commences.

- 3.4.** Some of the key activities for year 2, that will require challenge and support from Scrutiny members include:
 - Improving the partnership approach to SEND, across all 7 improvement programmes
 - the West Somerset Opportunity Area which is aimed at improving social mobility (programme 1);
 - developing proposals for the early help hubs (or family hubs) through initial joint working between public health nursing and getset services which will involve consultation around staff, assets and processes and will be supported through Programme 5 and the Early Help Board.
 - Development of an adolescent strategy to target those young people who are most vulnerable to issues of neglect, exploitation and family conflict and breakdown
 - Sufficiency of local placement options for children looked after and those

with more complex needs

- Ensuring a more co-ordinated and joined up approach across partners to support children and families experiencing emotional wellbeing and mental health issues, and addressing the reported high numbers of those who self-harm.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. In developing the new CYPP, all those organisations and groups including under the duty to co-operate as stipulated in the Children Act 2004 were consulted, as well as children, young people and their parents and carers and other key partners.

4.2. Consultation undertaken includes:

- Somerset UK Youth Parliament Advisory Group
- The Unstoppables (SEND)
- CAMHS Participation Group
- Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils
- Young Healthwatch
- Young Carers
- Somerset Parent Carer Forum

The voice of children, young people and their families is regularly captured through the Children Trust's Participation Network which supports its members to consult, listen and feedback their views. Further work is underway in Quarter 2 to widen the scope and to ensure the voice of children and young people truly influences our developments and activity by producing a Participation Toolkit for partners to use.

5. Implications

5.1. Financial: The CYPP has been implemented in a climate of continuing financial austerity for the public sector. The priorities outlined in the plan are to be met within the agreed budgets and staffing resources of SCC and its partners, taking into account anticipated reductions over the next three years.

5.2. Equality & Diversity: Somerset Children's Trust seeks to deliver measurable improvements for all children and young people. This incorporates the need to tackle inequalities and narrow gaps, paying suitable regard to the 2010 Equality Act's General Duty.

5.3. Legal: Local Children's Trust arrangements are underpinned by the 'duty to cooperate' (Section 10, Children Act 2004) and there are no plans to repeal this duty. The Children's Trust holds its individual members to account for delivering their agreed contributions to the shared plan, and has agreed to review progress against the Plan on a quarterly basis.

The Direction Notice referred to in para 3.1 above was issued under section 497A (4B) of the Education Act 1996.

6. Background papers

6.1. [*Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19*](#)

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author