

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 11 MAY 2016

STRONGER FAMILIES PROGRAMME UPDATE

Summary

1. The Strategic Commissioner: Early Help & Partnerships has been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the Stronger Families Programme.

Overview

2. The Stronger Families Programme is Worcestershire's response to the national Troubled Families programme. This report is an update on delivery, evaluation and subsequent system change as a result of the programme.

3. Delivery of phase 1 of the programme was completed by March 2015 and provided support to over 900 families who met the criteria of having children not attending school, youth crime/anti-social behaviour and/or adults not in employment. Of these families 833 achieved the required improvements (improved school attendance, reduction in crime/anti-social behaviour and/or an adult moving into employment) that allowed us to claim further 'payment by results' government funding.

4. Delivery of phase 2 of the programme is underway and has so far delivered support to 760 families who have complex needs.

5. System change: a key requisite of the second phase of the programme is system change - to challenge the barriers faced by families receiving services across the public sector. This is being led in Worcestershire through the Connecting Families Programme.

Delivery of Phase 1

6. Delivery of the Stronger Families Programme ('the programme') began in the spring of 2013 with the recruitment of an internal team and the commissioning of an external provider with expertise in intensive family support. Support was proactively offered to families identified as meeting the national Troubled Families criteria and local criteria such as substance misuse, adult mental health and domestic abuse. School staff and other professionals were proactive in introducing the support to families.

7. Support was based on the proven 'key worker' approach, with one family support/key worker providing a contact point for the family and co-ordinating their own support with those of other professionals, brought together through a whole family plan.

8. Families were also supported by other professionals acting as lead professional where there were either less intensive support needs or specialised intervention was required around children in need, school attendance, youth offending etc.

9. A strategic group of partner agencies oversaw delivery of phase 1 of the programme and were able to remove some barriers to working with families as a direct result of their engagement in the programme.

10. The nature of the programme meant that there was a clear focus on achieving outcomes for families and funding was based on our working with 900 families. By the end of phase 1 over 900 families had received support and 833 families had achieved sufficient progress for a claim for the 'payment by results' element of funding to be made.

11. Families who had ongoing support needs transferred to phase 2 of the programme.

Delivery of Phase 2 (ongoing)

12. As an 'early starter' Worcestershire began delivery of phase 2 of the programme in January 2015. The government has committed funding for this phase until 2020 and Worcestershire has a target to work with 3100 families in this time. There is an expectation that claims for families will be made who have achieved 'significant and sustained' progress before the end of the programme. Therefore the aim is to begin support with the majority of families by September 2018 at the latest. To date 760 families have received support.

13. Changes to the delivery of the programme in phase 2 include the broadening of the national programme criteria to include six broad areas:

- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Children who need help
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by Domestic Violence or Abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

14. Targeted support is delivered by the internal and commissioned Stronger Families key workers, Early Help family support workers and Early Intervention Family Support teams (including Wyre Forest and Hagley project). Funding for the work with each family has reduced by around a third from phase 1 based on the presumption that the needs of this cohort of families are less complex. As with phase 1 the reality is that there is a spread of need with many families either known to social care or on the edge of social care.

15. To date a small number of 'payment by results' claims have been made for families who have evidenced significant and sustained progress (21 in total) and there will be two further opportunities to submit claims this year.

16. Further details on the delivery of the programme, the above criteria and the evidence required to demonstrate progress can be found in the Stronger Families Outcomes Plan at Appendix 1.

Evaluation of the programme

17. At a national level Worcestershire participated in the evaluation of the programme in phase 1 through the following activities:

- County specific case study of the local delivery model
- Submission of data within a cost savings calculator
- Family level interviews with the national evaluation team
- Submission of family level monitoring data (in addition to claims data)

18. The evidence obtained by the Troubled Families team formed part of the business case for continued funding of the programme to 2020, and also led to improved methods of collecting data (including cost savings data), the renewed national criteria and confirmation of the principles of the programme in phase 2 which include:

- Endorsement of the key worker approach
- Whole family support
- A focus on system change and
- Implementation of data sets to inform cost savings across the public sector.

19. In Worcestershire the data available for the cost savings calculation was incomplete due to the difficulty in obtaining historic data from partners, particularly data from different 'health' providers.

20. The cost savings calculator did demonstrate savings across partners especially long term savings where adults went into sustained employment, children returned to school or committed less crime and anti-social behaviour, and where there was less involvement from social care professionals. In a small number of cases costs increased as a result of children being taken into care.

21. Recently we have reviewed the families from phase 1 where a 'payment by results claim' was made to see if they had needed further support since the claim was made. Of the 833 families where a claim was made (as far as can be ascertained from current data):

- 596 families have made no further request for support and have not been referred or re-referred into social care
- 120 families have asked for further 'early help' support, of these 88 have had a further Early Help assessment and plan
- 117 families have had a referral to social care, of these the recorded outcomes include:
 - 41 cases closed following assessment
 - 19 child in need plans
 - 3 child protection cases
 - 3 children taken into care

22. Due to the complexity of the issues faced by families in the programme (nationally this has been reported as an average of nine issues per family) it is to be expected that some families would need additional support following the initial intervention. It is a positive sign that in some cases families are recognising the need for support at an early stage as family structures change (birth of additional children/grandchildren, young people reaching adolescence etc). The figure of 9% of families needing further social care intervention is similar to the levels reported informally by other two tier authorities at a recent workshop event.

System change

23. The learning from the programme is being brought forward into two significant areas of system change:

24. **Connecting Families** is a programme of whole system change that is being designed to overcome challenges that prevent and/or delay positive outcomes for children and families. It will transform the way public services are delivered.

25. The fundamental reason for change is the need to focus on improving the lives of families across Worcestershire. Even with the endeavours of existing service provision, there is still an increased demand on specialist/acute services. It is also evident that there are disproportionate areas of concern, when comparing Worcestershire to national figures and statistical neighbours, across certain health indicators. Connecting Families will ensure a wider service provision for families in the future.

26. The programme will require us to take the time to understand current issues within the system – helping us to identify the right solution ("*Do the right thing rather than the wrong thing righter*"). This will require patience and a fine balance between how we currently provide services and how these might be developed in the future.

27. The programme is looking to design a new approach and delivery model that looks at working with families and vulnerable people in a different way. This has now started in Redditch with Family Support Workers from the Early Help Team, Stronger Families Team, Early Intervention Family Support and District Housing locality staff coming together with representatives from partner agencies as Change Champions. The family support workers will be providing a "key worker" response - this is not what is being tested. The programme seeks to understand and challenge how current processes and systems get in the way and create barriers to providing this support in the most effective way.

28. There still needs to be time given to the testing in Redditch before more formal plans can be put in place for a county-wide roll-out, however, it will be built on the following building blocks:

- Family Support Workers in a District area will at some point be expected to come together as one team and be co-located. Local Partnerships will need to be identified to provide Change Champions to support the approach
- Communications to share learning from Redditch
- District specific learning events to build programme according to local need.

29. **Family Front Door** - the design and development of the new Family Front Door (FFD) is based around the need to ensure that families receive more timely and targeted interventions at an earlier stage in an effort to reduce the need for statutory intervention. An essential part of making this happen is that there are clear pathways in place at the new FFD enabling them to confidently refer the right family to the right service as efficiently as possible (in line with the revised levels of need guidance).

Next Steps

30. The current Stronger Families Outcomes Plan will be reviewed over the next few months to ensure that significant and sustained progress can, wherever possible, be evidenced from data and evidence collected as part of the delivery of family support and other services. The Plan will also be updated to reflect changes in service delivery and the implementation of the Family Front Door and Connecting Families as detailed above.

31. Delivery of the programme will continue to be monitored in terms of delivery, outcomes and system change.

Purpose of the Meeting

32. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report
- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Worcestershire's Stronger Families Outcomes Plan 2015/16

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk

Specific Contact Points for this report

Hannah Needham, Strategic Commissioner: Early Help & Partnerships, Children, Families and Communities

01905 843658 Email hneedham@worcestershire.gov.uk

Debbie Herbert, Lead Commissioner for Vulnerable Children & Families, Children, Families & Communities

01905 846831 Email Dherbert2@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.