

Title	Children's Services Update
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Purpose of this report

1. To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update of the latest developments within Children's Services.

Early Help

1. The new Family Support Service went live on 2 September 2019, on time and within budget. The new service launched following the decision by the High Court on 12 July 2019 to dismiss the Judicial Review brought against the Cabinet decision made in March 2019.
2. All areas of work have progressed appropriately to enable a smooth implementation. This include the TUPE transfer of contracted staff from Adviza and Children's Centre providers into the new service and the subsequent recruitment and selection process to the new structure. In addition, all 16 retained Family Centre sites have all been inspected by property colleagues and meet the council's statutory obligations for buildings management, including routine system and safety tests. Work continues to ensure that our online presence supports our statutory functions, such as childcare provision and the Local Offer as well as providing accurate, accessible and relevant content to users seeking to access self-help tools and pathways to community and formal support. A robust performance framework has been developed in conjunction with the Business Intelligence and Insight Team to ensure that the service is delivering the expected outcome.
3. Currently, the Family Support Service is supporting over 800 young people through its direct work with families and the addition of the Intensive Family Support Team provides a resource focused on families at greatest risk of statutory intervention.

National mental health programme between schools and NHS

4. In July 2019, the DfE [announced](#) that pupils struggling with mental health are to benefit from more joined up care and support across schools, colleges and specialist NHS services, in a national roll out of a £9.3 million training scheme. Every school, college and alternative provision will be offered training through a

series of workshops as part of the Link Programme, with the most appropriate member of staff from each put forward to take part alongside mental health specialists. This is designed to improve partnerships with professional NHS mental health services, raise awareness of mental health concerns and improve referrals to specialist help when needed.

5. At the beginning of September 2019, the training was rolled out to schools and colleges in phases over four years, being offered to up to 22,000 schools and colleges, including alternative provision settings. The four-year scheme will be led by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, backed by the multi-million-pound government investment.
6. In Buckinghamshire, 32 primary and secondary schools are currently enrolled on Wave One of the programme, which is focused in Aylesbury and High Wycombe as key areas of identified need. A bid has been put in for further Waves which will include schools in other areas of the county. The scheme has a waiting time of only 4 weeks and aims to reduce CAMHS waiting times by tackling mental health issues early, allowing CAMHS to deliver more focused work for young people with a greater level of need. The project will develop training to ensure that each school will have a trained mental health lead who will be able to refer children to mental health specialists, as appropriate.

Academic results

7. Data released by the Department for Education in October 2019 shows that 5 year olds leaving their Reception year at primary school achieved better than pupils across the rest of the country. 74.3% of our pupils achieve a good level of development, compared to 71.8% nationally. We are ranked 8th against our south east neighbours and 34th compared to all local authorities nationally.
8. The recently released provisional Key Stage 2 results for 2019 show that 66% of our pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 65% nationally. Our results are the same as reported in 2018 whilst national results for state funded schools increased by 1%. When compared to statistical neighbours and all local authorities nationally, Buckinghamshire ranks 6th and 51st respectively. In addition, 12% of Buckinghamshire pupils reached the higher standard or were working at greater depth across all of reading, writing and mathematics. This is an increase of 1% from 2018. Nationally, 10% of pupils achieved this benchmark, which is the same as in 2018.
9. Key Stage 4 (GCSE) outcomes are significantly higher than national and we are, by quite a wide margin, 1st amongst our statistical neighbours and 5th nationally. The long term trend shows a gradual increase of pupils in Buckinghamshire against a decline nationally.
10. Overall, our results are very pleasing and we will strive to improve these further by supporting schools through our Side by Side Project.

SEND Educational Needs and Disabilities

11. The statutory deadlines that we must adhere to as a Local Authority in relation to the issuing an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is 20 weeks. Performance in Buckinghamshire has been low for some time; however, performance in the last 6 months continues to improve.
12. Currently, caseloads are high and stand between 300 and 350 per officer. Shortly, we will be starting a campaign to recruit up to 12 additional officers which will help reduce caseloads to between 180 and 200, more in line with our statistical neighbours. This will assist the service in improving both the timeliness and quality of our EHCPs.
13. Recent SEND Local Area Inspections, combining the efforts of the CQC and Ofsted to enable a thorough inspection of SEND across the local area. The service has a SEND Improvement Plan in place with a number of focus groups working on the key areas that have been identified as being concerning within our Self-Evaluation Framework. Buckinghamshire will be inspected at any point between now and February 2021.
14. On 7 November 2019, the service held a conference for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Adams Park in High Wycombe. The conference was aimed at young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those who are registered as receiving SEN Support. 28 young people attended representing 13 Buckinghamshire secondary schools and Elective Home Education. The conference provided an opportunity for young people to review the support available to them and their peers. During the day young people were asked to provide feedback on their experiences accessing education, their life outside of school and college, as well as their transition into adulthood. The activities generated discussion and some challenging questions which were put to a panel of Senior Managers from across Health, Education and Social Care. The information gained from the day will now be used to inform the development of a new 2020 SEND Strategy for Buckinghamshire. Pupils attending the conference received a certificate to show their participation and I would personally like to say thank you, for their valuable contribution. We plan to make the conference an annual event, bringing together a range of young people with varying skills and abilities to share ideas and have their voices heard.