

Date: 6 October 2020

Title: Children's Services update

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Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on how children's services are delivering against the 2021-2023 priorities.

Report for information, discussion, decision or approval: *for information*

Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the report for information

Content of report:

1.1 Our focus for 2021 – 2023

- Every Child has the best start in life
- Children have the right environment and opportunities to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles
- Children in Buckinghamshire are safe and protected

Service: Children's Services

Actions for the Health and Wellbeing Board	What we do to contribute to these actions
<p>We will work with partners to enable children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable to reach their full potential</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our 16 Family Centres allow us to provide venues for health clinics to support young mothers and children. Due to Covid-19 these were suspended between March and September; however, the clinics have started again by appointment only. These clinics enable joint working between our Family Support Workers and Health colleagues and help us to identify the support required for each family and agree how this will be provided. 2. Every school now has a linked family worker, and this supports the early identification of emerging need and together, we can work in partnership to support vulnerable children. 3. We are continually improving our Local Offer for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The Local Offer is an online directory of all the services and support that are offered to families who have children or young people with SEND. The Local Offer explains how to access these services and can signpost families to the right place. Our Local Offer has been developed with parents, carers, young people and professionals and input from all these people helps us to keep it up to date and relevant. The Local Offer is accessible on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) website. 4. BFIS also provides free impartial information and signposting for families with children aged 0 to 19 (up to 25 years for those with additional needs). The role of the service is to help families get the most out of the information and services available in the community and online. This could be something from helping them find out about local events and activities for their family or pointing them in the right direction when things are not going so well, and extra support is required. Our BFIS website also covers a range of subjects including childcare, family finance, parenting support and education. 5. Our Admissions Team provided additional support to parents in making applications for school places. We also monitor and work with parents if they decline a school place and seemingly have no school for their child to attend. 6. Through regular communication with schools, foster cares and social workers, we ensure pupil premium is used effectively to support both the academic and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children. One to

	<p>one tutoring and mentoring will be given to those children we identify as most in need of support.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. We are in the process of finalising our SEND and Inclusion Strategy that identifies our priorities for the next 3 years. There will be a key focus on healthy living as part of preparing children and young people for adulthood. 8. Evidence from our SEND Improvement Plan demonstrates that our work with partners in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans has improved. 9. Where we are undertaking school building works or building a new school we ensure that the design meets all current government specifications and that it delivers the best possible learning environment for children and young people. 10. Our Early Years team proactively support parents of vulnerable children to access their early education entitlement. The team has also started working with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust to deliver Eat Better Start Better training to settings across the county. More recently, the work of the Early Years peer to peer model of support has focused on strengthening the promoting of health and wellbeing initiatives. 11. In September 2020 the Corporate Parenting Panel, a multi-agency panel overseeing support for and progress of looked after children and care leavers, redefined its terms of reference and introduced three operational sub-groups to drive forward at pace the following work streams: housing and support for care leavers; health; and education, employment and training.
<p>We will seek out more feedback from local communities on what is happening in their areas to give children the best start in life</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Coordinators in the Family Support Service (FSS) now attend all Community Boards acting as a conduit to and from FSS on available services and emerging needs to inform service design. Partnership working with Community Boards also enables the service to ensure key messages are disseminated to the wider community and encourage parental engagement. In addition, the close working of our family centres and early year providers help us gain local community knowledge and support requirements. 2. Partnership Forums have been set up in three localities to promote multi-agency support for vulnerable children. Collaborative work with FACT Bucks parent/carer forum and other groups of parents to co-produce wherever possible. 3. Surveys introduced to families accessing our services throughout Covid-19 providing direct feedback on their current experiences.
<p>Together with our partners we will</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need to work with colleagues in CAMHS and colleagues across Health in order to support the

<p>make sure we provide support to children and families with mental health needs</p>	<p>emotional well-being of children and young people and adults who are parents has never been greater. It is clear, that for some members of our community, the last six months have been difficult, and it is probable that this will not change anytime soon. As a service we have worked hard with CAMHS colleagues to ensure that we work effectively together and that we have good working relationships at all levels. The Service Director in Children’s Services continues to have monthly strategic meetings with senior leaders in CAMHS. These interactions have supported staff to create strong team level links and there are a number of examples of complex cases benefitting from multi-agency support. This has enabled a number of young people to continue to remain in the community safely with intensive support.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Training has been be offered for designated teachers to support them in supporting the full return of pupils to school. This included topics on understanding trauma and mental health support. 3. We have staff working alongside school-based Mental Health Support Teams to provide family-centred support alongside Mental Health professionals. 4. Within the FSS, there is a designated lead practitioner for mental health and their role is to promote awareness and understanding of mental health issues across the workforce. In addition, mental health and wellbeing sessions are delivered at our family centres. 5. Key objectives being taken forward by our Integrated Commissioning group relate to mental health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People receive help for mental health difficulties that are effective and timely so that children and young people feel supported at all stages in their lives and have a positive self-image. • Young people experience a smooth transition to adult physical and mental health services.
<p>As part of our COVID-19 recovery work, resources will be targeted appropriately at those families whose circumstances have been affected.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The priorities for Children’s Social Care from March 2020 changed and included operating in a way that would reduce the risk of infection, protect the families we work with and our staff whilst safeguarding vulnerable children and young people. As a result, physical visits to children only took place when the known risks to a child warranted such a visit. All other activities of the service moved to a virtual setting where we strongly encouraged our children, young people and their families to interact with us via video technology. 2. Throughout August 2020, in preparation for the return of the majority of children and young people into education settings, the service began to increase the number of physical/actual visits to children, young people and their families in line with statutory requirements. In essence, this meant that from

	<p>September 2020 a full level of service resumed to safeguard and support vulnerable children, young people and families. There are still some virtual interactions taking place and it is possible that these will have to increase in line with Government and Public Health guidance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A positive outcome of the restrictions in place between March 2020 and September 2020 has been the availability and level of communication between our services and partner agencies. We have seen an increase in the availability of staff and partners to attend statutory meetings such as professionals meetings, case conferences, looked after reviews, core groups and strategy meetings. As a result of this, the service will continue to use modern technology to undertake certain meetings including the use of a hybrid model where necessary with some participants being socially distanced in a room and others being present on screen. 4. Processes to support families experiencing financial hardship are built into our draft Home to School transport policy and associated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2021/22 onwards. Current post 16 charging for Home to School transport is paused in the light of Covid so families of young people with SEND post 16 do not have additional financial pressures. 5. Early Years settings were supported with the completion of a Covid Recovery Tool to support their financial sustainability. Targeted support will be provided to settings in areas most affected by Covid-19. In vulnerable areas, settings will be considered for a Covid Recovery Grant. 6. Between March 2020 and August 2020, in addition to delivery of our statutory safeguarding duties, the service sought to provide practical support to those children, young people and families most in need. This included the use of various staff across the service to make contact with all our looked after children as the lockdown restrictions were put in place to check on their emotional health and wellbeing; increased contact with our care leavers to ensure they were safe and had access to basic necessities; ensuring respite arrangements were available to support children with disabilities and their families; the rollout of the government laptop scheme which has seen over 850 devices sent to vulnerable pupils without access to the internet, providing them with a method of engaging with online learning. In addition, the Virtual School also ensured that all children in care had access to a device to support their learning in the first weeks of lockdown prior to the rollout of the government scheme.
<p>With early years providers and schools, we will work together to ensure that the individuals need of</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our linked family workers with every school is now helping to support early identification of emerging need and work in partnership to agree support for vulnerable children. 2. Parenting provision restarted in September and some courses/support is targeted at specific settings

<p>children are identified at the earliest opportunity so that we can collectively respond at the right time. We will carry out targeted work with our settings and schools in order to improve outcomes and make a difference.</p>	<p>where need is evident.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Extension of Education Psychologists and Specialist Teachers to focus more on early intervention with our schools.4. A specific focus on family support for SEND is being developed as part of the refreshed SEND improvement Plan. Early intervention is key to this. Where reasonable/minor adaptation works are required at a school to enable a child or young person with a disability to attend the school we will work with the school and SEND service to ensure that the works can be undertaken as swiftly as possible.5. Regular contact with all providers and schools helps ensure that needs are identified in a timely manner and respond to accordingly.6. Targeted support provided to settings/schools with a high number of vulnerable children.
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