



Children's Services Transformation Programme A better future for all

15 June 2023





Children's Services Vision

Keeping children and young people safe

Supporting children, young people, parents and carers to overcome their challenges

'We aim to build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is.'

Improving children and young people's health and wellbeing

Providing opportunities for children and young people to meet their potential

Children's Services Transformation – Background

- Since 2020 there has been an unprecedented increase in demand within Buckinghamshire, with referral and re-referral rates significantly higher than statistical neighbours. The number of contacts made to children's social care has risen by 61% since 2020/21. In 2022/23, only 20% of the 26581 contacts received required a statutory social care assessment.
- Nationally, there has been a 32% increase in children subject to Child Protection Plans in the 10 years to 2019/20 with a forecast increase in the number of children in care from 80,000 (May 2022) to c100,000 over the next decade.
- The [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) noted that the current way of working by managing risks, responding to episodic need, and having high thresholds to access help, may be restricting the purpose of social care to 'rescuing' children, and keeping services from meeting the needs of families.
- Current structures have led to significant issues with recruitment and retention in certain Children's Services teams, particularly where staff have carried higher than desirable caseloads for a significant period contributing to an over-reliance on a high-cost agency workforce.
- Many other Local Authorities have already moved to create multi-disciplinary locality-based services as this is considered to be best practice with several good and outstanding Ofsted rated Authorities (for example, Hampshire and Herts) having already adopted their own version of this model.
- The move away from process-led referral pathways has been endorsed by the Government in their response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, '[Stable Homes, Built on Love](#)'.

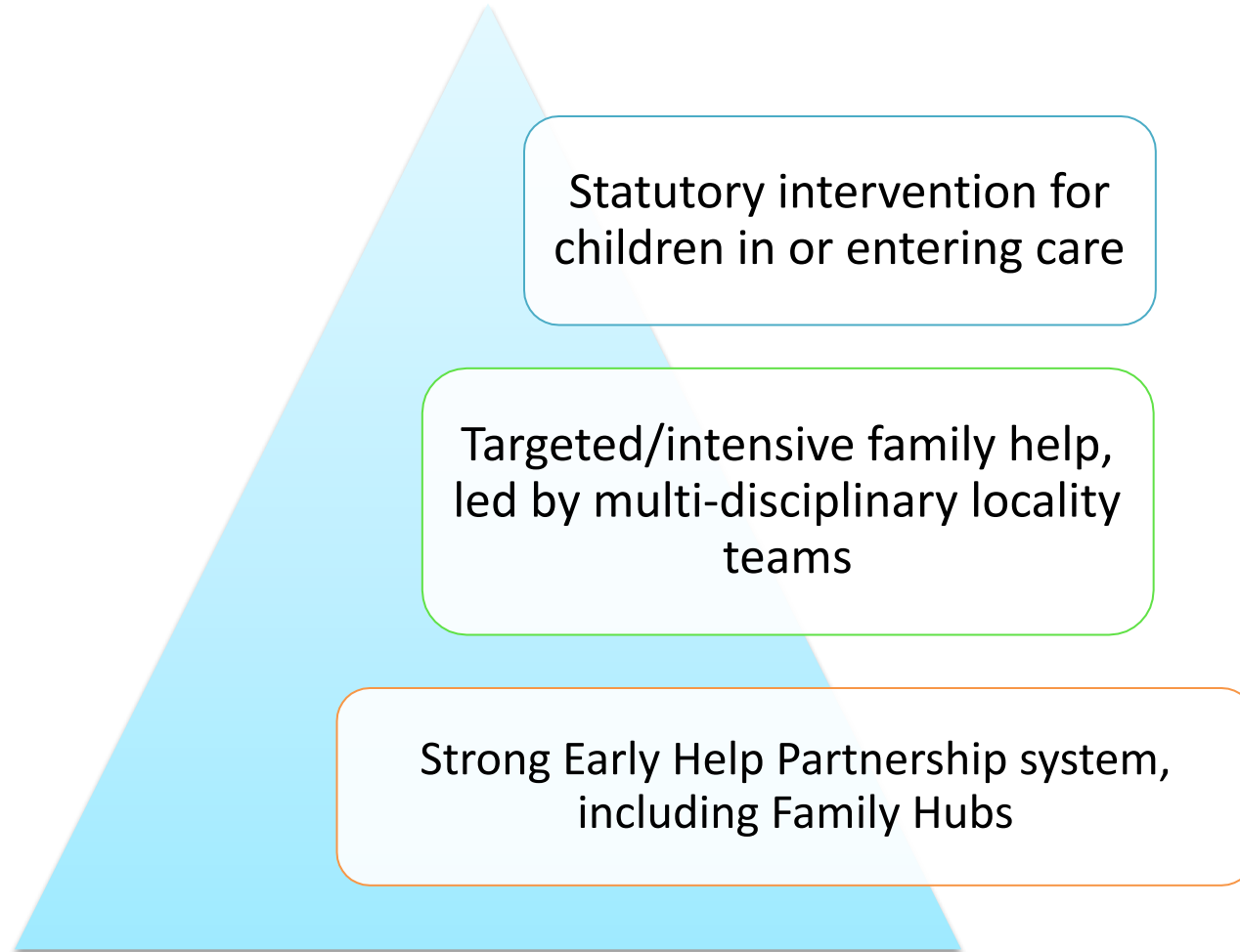
Children's Services Transformation – Context

- Buckinghamshire Council is committed to achieving a good Children's Services, having come out of DfE intervention following the full Ofsted inspection in 2021.
- There is corporate and political recognition that we must do something differently in order to realise our ambition to deliver good quality, effective services for children and young people.
- There has been a long-standing commitment to change the current delivery model for a more fit for purpose structure that puts children at the heart of everything we do and creates more opportunities for professionals, including partner agencies, to integrate services around the needs of communities.
- Opportunity for whole system change and to redefine the support to children and families, including redeveloping our model to be more responsive to children's needs.
- Currently developing a comprehensive programme of change based on a series of key principles.

Key Principles for Children's Transformation

- Ensure that Children and Young People are at the centre of our thinking and decision-making.
- Opportunity to innovate, appropriately address demand and respond to new and emerging threats.
- Reduce hand off points, minimise assessments and enable the system to respond to changing risks.
- Ensure there is alignment between services and seamless transition at all points of the child's journey.
- Introduce and embed a clear practice model and methodology that is all about nurturing relationships with children and families.
- Ensure that the most trusted lead professional is working with the child and family.
- Support the continuous professional development of staff.
- Multi-disciplinary locality based teams working closer to the communities and supporting effective relationships with partner agencies to enable better outcomes for children.
- Ensure there is a balanced system across preventative and statutory services.
- Ensure families are supported to access effective early help services, reducing the need for more intrusive interventions.

The Proposed Operating Model



Early Help Partnership

- Development of the Early Help Partnership, including the establishment of an Early Help Partnership Board:
 - Families that do not require statutory intervention are supported effectively within communities.
 - The Early Help system, boosted by the contribution of partners and the voluntary & community sector, recognises the fluidity of threshold, stepping the right services in for families at the right stage without overreliance on local authority services.
 - Preventative activity is tailored and targeted, through the local partnerships, to ensure it reaches families at the earliest point.

Locality Family Support Teams

- Small, cohesive **teams of skilled, multi-agency professionals** that are attuned to local need and deliver a range of interventions.
- A **trusted lead professional** that works with the child and family to ensure the best possible offer of support at the right point in time.
- Building of **strong collaboration with local partners**, (including the Voluntary and Community Sector) that can target need variation through locality specific services.
- **Reduced hand-offs** between teams that mean families don't need to continually repeat their stories.
- Sense of **one team, one service** leading to enhanced supervision, support and continuous development.

Development of a new operating model

Phase 1- Early intervention, prevention and support

- Reorganisation of key internal services into smaller locality teams. Indicative timescale of November 2023.
- Initial focus on early help pathways, the initial child's journey and prevention of escalating need.
- Specifically looking at early information and advice and case holding interventions with children and young people.

Development of a new operating model

Phase 2- Wider services

- Further review of other teams within Children's Services / wider Council Services and engagement with external partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector. Seeking where possible, alignment to the new operating model.
- Initial, early discovery work has commenced and will run parallel to phase 1 activity.
- Developing longer term transformation roadmap.
- Opportunity to enhance the support provided by improving collaboration through better sharing of information and increased system-wide multi-disciplinary ways of working.

Culture & Workforce

- Develop a cultural framework across the system to embed a whole service identity and way of working.
- Produce a workforce development strategy for Children's Services which includes progression routes and training and development opportunities.
- Develop dialogue and forums to create a learning culture across the service.
- Embed a clear practice methodology across all services including trauma informed approaches and motivational interviewing.
- Development of a recruitment and retention strategy to position Buckinghamshire Children's Services as a lead employer within the South East region.
- Ensure values are embedded within a behavioural framework which underpins the vision.

Strategic Commissioning

- A Placement Sufficiency Strategy that accurately reflects the volatile and unpredictable external placements market.
- Increase in availability of good quality local provision for children and young people that meets their needs and provides them with a safe place to live and thrive.
- A robust recruitment campaign and retention package for our fostering service and residential service.
- Launch of our Regional Adoption Agency with our Voluntary Adoption Agency Partner.
- A responsive menu of edge of care interventions to reduce the number of adolescent children in high-cost provision and prevent further admissions to care through earlier preventative work.

Governance

- Children's Services Transformation Board established to oversee progress against transformation priorities.
- Engagement with key partners and the voluntary and community sector critical to shaping the future operating model.
- Ensuring effective links with other service transformation activity across the Council.
- Regular updates on progress to Cabinet and the Children's and Education Select Committee as required.
- Dialogue at regular intervals with the Department for Education and Ofsted around Transformation Programme.

Questions / Discussion?

