

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Social Care and Wellbeing DATE 14 January 2010

DIRECTOR Fred McBride

TITLE OF REPORT Children's Services: Redesign

REPORT NUMBER: SCW/10/006

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline progress to date and seek agreement for the continued implementation of the Children's Services redesign as agreed at previous committees in March, May and September 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- Note the progress to date
- Agree the continued implementation of the structure set out in Appendix 1
- Agree the staff arrangements set out in paragraph 3.2
- Agree the use of the Family Centre based at the Quarry Centre as the new contact service

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Children's Services redesign is being delivered within existing resources. The redesign seeks to increase capacity by improved efficiency, organisational and structural arrangements.

3.2 Posts of Team Managers (22 posts) and Practice Improvement Officers (6 posts) are created by re-designating and refocusing existing posts of senior social worker and team leaders (all G15 posts).

4. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

4.1 The imperative for the service redesign takes account of;

- Service inspections and findings by HMIE and SWIA

- The need to create one service led by a Head of Service to ensure leadership, identity, shared values and ethos, consistency of practice and strategic planning and development
- The need to create capacity
- The need to improve practice

4.2 Children's services in Aberdeen City must work in line with statutory powers and duties to improve outcomes for children. Target outcomes include;

National Outcomes

- 4 Our Young People are successful leavers, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- 5 Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- 8 We have improved the life chances of Children and Young People and families at risk
- 9 We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger

Single Outcome Agreement

- 4B We will engage Young People to facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and place in society
- 5A Improve the healthy development of Young Children and their families, particularly those children most at risk
- 8B Improve the life chances of Looked After Children
- 9A Reduce anti-social behaviour, violence, domestic abuse, racist incidents and drug / alcohol related incidents

National Integrated Children's Services Outcomes

- Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Included, Respected and Responsible

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The redesign of the services is not an end in itself rather it is part of a longer term process which aims to deliver enhanced capacity, based on shared ownership, values, ethos and culture, improved practice, strong leadership, clarity of role and responsibility with clear lines of accountability.
- 5.2 Integrated and partnership working will be a critical driver for the new service with effective relationships with a range of partners.
- 5.3 Effective screening and referral systems will ensure that children get the appropriate level of service when they require it from the appropriate agency ie intervention will be proportionate and timely. This will be ensured by implementing partnership fora across the continuum of need eg pre-referral screening arrangements.

6. REPORT

6.1 As reported to Social Care and Wellbeing Committee in September 2009 several adjustments to the structure were required. The structure diagram is attached as Appendix 1.

6.2 Social Care and Wellbeing, Children's Services are organised into the following themes:

- Reception and Protection
- Family and Community Support
- Children in Need
- Alternative Family Care
- Young People's Care and Accommodation

6.3 The structure was adjusted to ensure:

- Each service theme is led by a service manager responsible for
 - a) Operational management
 - b) Quality assurance
 - c) Strategic planning and development
 - d) Partnership working and integration
- The integration of strategic planning, quality assurance, practice improvement, operational practice and service delivery.
- The creation of Practice Improvement Officers working in each theme. Practice Improvement Officers will work closely with service managers on their identified 'theme' and work together with other Practice Improvement Officers across the service. Their main roles are to;
 - a) Identify and action practice improvements
 - b) Ensure quality assurance of services
 - c) Support strategic planning and development
 - d) Chair Looked After Children reviews
- Service Managers will chair case conferences in recognition of the priority and serious circumstances of children assessed as likely to require a child protection plan
- One Service Manager (Reception & Protection) has management responsibility for all referrals made to Children's Services
- Staff currently designated Senior Social Workers and Team Leaders will change title to that of Team Manager

- The reviewing of Looked After and Accommodated Children will be chaired by Team Managers and Practice Improvement Officers. In order to ensure the independence of the role of chair, managers will only chair reviews outwith their management group.
- Children's Rights Officer will report directly to the Head of Service
- Head of Service and Service Managers have lead responsibility for progressing integration and strategic partnership agendas

6.4 Committee has previously agreed to establish a contact centre. It is recommended that this service be located in the existing Quarry Family Centre based in Northfield. An options appraisal was carried out by officers which considered:

- Accessibility for service users
- Office and staff accommodation
- Accommodation for children and families having contact
- Space for assessment and observation of contact
- Space to encourage positive contact such as cooking preparing family meals supported by a worker able to advice on behaviour management and take on a mentoring role with parents
- Locality of other family centre provision eg Deeside Family Centre was not appropriate as it is the only centre in the south of the City
- Whether the facility was part of Social Care and Wellbeing estate (Ashgrove is part of Education, Culture and Sport's estate)

6.5 Families currently receiving a service at the Quarry Family Centre will not be disadvantaged by the realigning of service. Where a service user continues to require a service they will be offered a service at an alternative centre and supported in this regard (many of the services are offered on an outreach basis rather than only at a building.)

6.6 The redesign of Children's Services was first acknowledged as necessary in January 2009 and staff have been aware of proposals since that time.

6.7 There has been significant engagement with staff about the proposals throughout 2009 with the majority of staff keen for full implementation of the redesign without delay.

6.8 The final structure and proposals for matching staff into the structure have been available since July 2009 and have been the subject of staff briefings. The information is also available on The Zone.

6.9 The trade unions have had the information since July 2009.

6.10 To date existing Service Managers have participated in a job matching process. In addition two new service managers have been recruited. The

- remaining service manager post will be re-advertised without delay.
- 6.11 Senior social workers and team leaders have been keen to participate in the redesign implementation and have completed preference forms and participated in assessment meetings.
 - 6.12 A similar process will be repeated for all staff in Children's Services.
 - 6.13 There is a strong desire from staff in children's services to make the new structure work. Staff are keen to know how they will 'fit' into the structure and to 'get on with it' (although inevitably there is a degree of anxiety while the process is incomplete).
 - 6.14 There is a sense within the service that with the new structure comes a 'turning of a corner' with a large majority of staff viewing the redesign as a positive progression.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Structure Diagram



