

Health Scrutiny Committee

Report on Early Intervention Service and Interfaces with Health

Background

1. This paper has been prepared for the Health Scrutiny Committee so as to provide members with a brief introduction to the work of the redesigned early intervention service and to draw particular attention to the health-based aspects of the service.
2. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and partner agencies want all children and young people to have the best start in life and receive the on going support that they and their families need to fulfil their potential.
3. Services for all children and young people (such as schools, colleges early years settings, primary care, health visiting) have a key role in promoting well being and preventing problems. For the majority of children and young people high quality universal services will enable them to achieve good outcomes and reach their full potential.
4. However from time to time some children will become “vulnerable”. They may have difficulty making a transition from primary to secondary school, their development may be delayed, they may break the law or have emotional difficulties. Others are vulnerable because of their own development, family circumstances or environmental factors.

Issues

5. The vision in Oxfordshire was to change the way services are delivered across all agencies so that universal targeted and specialist services can work in a more integrated way to identify and work with vulnerable children and their families at an earlier stage and provide services in a way that children young people and families have said will make a difference to them.
6. The proposals included the integration and redesign of existing services to offer one early intervention and prevention service, that is capable of working locally with vulnerable children young people and families with additional or complex needs.
7. All partner agencies were actively involved in the shaping of the new service through the Early Intervention Steering Group. This group had and continues to have strategic responsibility for driving the implementation of the Early Intervention Service forward and will form the governance partnership responsible for the oversight of the new service reporting to the Children’s Trust and local Safeguarding Board as well as to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

8. Health partners were and continue to be actively involved in the design and implementation of the service. There was senior representation from Public Health, Health Commissioning and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust at strategic level through their representation on Early Intervention steering group. At operational level Health and County Council managers and practitioners are working together to ensure that service delivery for children young people and their families across Health and the Early Intervention Service is as seamless and integrated as possible.
9. The Early Intervention Service “went live” on 1 September 2011. The service operates from the 44 Childrens Centres and from seven Early Intervention hub sites. There are three Early Intervention managers North, Central and South responsible for strategic delivery of the service and each hub is managed by an Early Intervention hub manager.
10. The service is targeted at vulnerable children young people and families with additional and or complex needs which cannot be met by existing resources in the locality.
11. The range of services and interventions that the Early Intervention Service can deliver with partner agencies for vulnerable children, young people and their families includes:

Support to professionals

- Consultation and advice to professionals children young people and families through a dedicated helpline and drop in sessions
- Contributing to and supporting integrated working processes through the provision of advice training and support to undertake Common Assessment Framework and utilise Team Around the Child / family processes
- Support to lead professionals through provision of advice and training
- To assist in work with other professionals and community groups to ensure that plans and interventions are complementary and families and children access appropriate services

Support to children young people and families

Diverse and flexible support to children young people and families covering wide- ranging issues which can impact upon family life. This may include:

- Direct work with children, young people and their families in their home and/or alternative community setting using evidence based interventions e.g. solution focused cognitive behavioural Webster Stratton approaches
- Group work

- Open access and targeted sessions in both the hubs and the satellites for young people to respond to the needs of the area
- Community outreach work which responds to the needs of the area
- Acting as lead professional where appropriate for some children, young people and their families
- Delivery in conjunction with children centres and partners of evidence based parenting programmes
- Diversion activities and assessments to prevent young people entering the youth justice system
- Restorative practice which focuses on the needs of victims and offenders offering support to the victims of crime and encouraging offenders to take responsibilities for their actions.
- Provision of professional counselling
- Provision of mentoring and coaching
- Access to employment, education and training opportunities

12. This range of evidenced based early interventions will help to improve outcomes in relation to:

- Persistent absence
- Exclusions from school
- Number of young people not in employment, education or training
- Numbers of young people offending including first time entrants to the criminal justice system
- Teenage pregnancy rates
- Levels of children and young people admitted to hospital for non-accidental injuries including self-harm
- Improving foundation stage profile results for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups
- Inappropriate caring responsibilities
- Improving attendance and attainment of children looked after

13. There are seven Early Intervention delivery themes that have been identified to ensure clear responsibility for strategy, performance and delivery in relation to these key areas of work. Each Hub Service Manager together with an Early Intervention Manager has a lead responsibility for one of the delivery themes

- Early years development and parenting
- Health & Well being
- Engagement in education, employment and training
- Youth and youth justice and anti-social behaviour
- Community development
- Workforce development
- Integrated processes

14. The role of the hub manager and EIS manager is to ensure the strategic direction of this area of work across the Early Intervention Service by

- Taking a lead on the relevant Key Performance Indicators for the directorate in relation to the delivery theme
- Ensuring delivery of the key theme is co-ordinated consistently across the county, to a high quality and responsive to local need

15. Themes included within Health and Well being delivery are:

- Anti bullying
- Substance misuse
- Sexual health/teenage pregnancy
- Disabilities
- Mental health

16. To support the monitoring of performance around these issues a set of Early Intervention performance indicators are in place whereby regular reporting of the indicators helps Early Intervention staff and partners, agree, review and plan future service delivery and direction in a meaningful way.

17. The service has been operational since September 2011. There is on-going support and joint work with Health colleagues and much has been achieved in a short time span which builds on the good partnership working that was already in place including good partnership practice between Childrens Centres and Health. This is helping to ensure that Health and Early Intervention services are working well together to achieve better outcomes for children.

18. Care pathways have been agreed for children young people and their families so that where Health or Early Intervention staff identify needs for children/families to access services from Health or Early Intervention this can be done seamlessly.

19. It is obviously early days and now that the service is up and running there is still work to do to strengthen and modify these pathways in the light of practice. To take this forward a day is being organised in March 2012 for Health and Children Young People and Family practitioners to test these pathways identify where there is good practice learn from this and modify and change as necessary.

20. A draft action plan has been drawn up around the themes within the health and well being delivery strand (described above). This plan identifies where there is good practice but also where there are issues that need to be addressed and an action plan to address these issues.

21. The implementation of the new service has also led to some new and innovative work across Health and Early Intervention Service. An example includes a nurse practitioner employed within the Early Intervention Service.

22. The service is responsible for diverting young people away from the criminal justice system. Many of these young people do have mental health needs

which in the past have not always been identified at an early stage which has sometimes meant that young people's mental health issues have not been addressed as part of an integrated support plan to help then young person.

23. Together with Health colleagues a successful bid was made for diversion pathfinder funding. Through this funding the service is now able to employ a mental health nurse whose role is to screen young people who are being diverted for Mental Health issues and do appropriate checks to see what services have already been involved. The nurse can also access and broker services for Diversion clients as required and work directly with young people.

Conclusion

24. As stated it is very early days for this new service. There is however a strong commitment across all agencies in Oxfordshire to ensure that we are providing more holistic integrated support for families. Health Services and the County Council are committed to building on the good work that is in place and continuing to work together at strategic and operational level to ensure that we are jointly delivering services that will improve outcomes for children young people and families. This will be monitored through performance management frameworks and governance arrangements ensuring that where there are challenges, gaps in service delivery mechanisms are in place to address these issues.

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