

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

16 November 2010

Subject: Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy and Intentions

Cabinet member: Cllr Lionel Grundy – Children's Services

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

This paper introduces the Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy which has been endorsed by Wiltshire Children's Trust. The strategy outlines a framework for ensuring there is a good range of high quality, cost effective services which meet the needs of parents and families leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.

The paper highlights the commissioning intentions contained within the strategy which have an impact on family and parenting support services currently provided by voluntary sector agencies under contracts which end on 31 March 2011.

Proposal

To approve the Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy including the commissioning intentions outlined in the strategy and highlighted in section 8, 9 and 10 of this paper.

Reason for Proposal

On 10th March 2010 the Wiltshire Children's Trust Executive agreed to develop a Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy as parenting and family support is relevant to 9 out of the 10 priorities identified in the current Children and Young People's Plan. In addition, the Children's Trust Executive was also aware that a number of family and parenting support services provided by voluntary sector agencies under contract were due to end on 31 March 2011. The Family and Parenting Support Strategy provides a framework for making decisions on future services.

Name of Director	Julia Cramp
Designation	Service Director Commissioning & Performance (DCE)

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

16 November 2010

Subject: Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy and Intentions

Cabinet member: Cllr Lionel Grundy – Children’s Services

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy which is included at Appendix 1. The strategy seeks to ensure that a good range of high quality and cost effective services is available to support parents and families. This report highlights the commissioning intentions outlined in the strategy. These commissioning intentions have informed specific proposals on the future of a number of services currently provided by voluntary sector agencies under contracts which end on 31 March 2011.

Background

2. On 10 March 2010 the Children’s Trust Executive agreed to develop a Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy. The Parenting Commissioning Group has been co-ordinating the development of the strategy. This group comprises representatives from the voluntary sector, the health service, a local Councillor and officers from the Children and Education Directorate. The strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders through a series of workshops. The Children’s Trust Executive endorsed the strategy on 13 October 2010.
3. The commissioning strategy has been informed by a needs’ assessment drawing on demographic data and information included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
4. Section 5 of the strategy includes current expenditure on family and parenting support as at September 2010. This notes a current total gross Council revenue expenditure of £8,548,941 for family and parenting support services.
5. Section 5 of the strategy also outlines the different levels and types of family and parenting support and a summary is provided below:

Universal Family and Parenting Support Services

- Available to all families and parents.
- Parents and families do not require any additional support.

Every parent occasionally has some concerns or worries about their role and/or their child. Universal services would be expected to deal with these everyday concerns and worries. For example, supporting parents to develop strategies for managing a child's behaviour.

Targeted Family and Parenting Support Services – divided into lower and upper levels

Lower level targeted support

- For parents who have one or two concerns or problems which can be addressed by some specific focused and short term support.

Higher level targeted support

- For families and parents who have complex and multiple needs that require long-term support.
- The level of support required might change e.g. sometimes needing lighter touch support, sometimes more intensive support.
- There are concerns that parenting is not good enough – i.e. very close to social care “children in need” threshold or
- Social care might have successfully worked with the child and family, and parents now need support to sustain the changes made.

Specialist Family and Parenting Support Services

- Parents need support so that they can adequately safeguard their child/children.
- In particular parents might need support to change their parenting so that a child/ children in care can return home.
- Parents might need specific support on how to manage behaviour so that their child/children can remain at home.

Initial analysis from a service mapping exercise indicated a lack of clarity on whether some services are working at higher level targeted or specialist level. There are a number of services operating at these levels with the potential to remove overlap and duplication.

Main Considerations for the Council

6. The purpose of the commissioning strategy is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. The aim is to put in place a range of high quality, cost effective family and parenting support services that meet identified needs. This includes ensuring there is sufficient investment in

services which can intervene early to support families as soon as issues emerge and in services which ensure parents can safeguard their children so that there is not a need for social care intervention.

7. Section 6 of the strategy focuses on shaping services to ensure the right range is available. Key issues and gaps identified during the consultation are identified, and a set of outcome indicators outlined that are being developed to assess and monitor the impact of the strategy. Section 6 goes on to set out a number of commissioning principles and commissioning intentions. The commissioning intentions which will affect voluntary service agencies currently providing services are highlighted below.

8. **Commissioning Intentions for Universal Services - Family Information Services 2011/12**

- It is proposed that the current contract for the Family Information Service is extended until 31 March 2012.
- The SENSS contract for providing information for parents with children with special educational needs will also continue to 31 March 2012 as already contained in the existing contract.
- Current 2010/11 funding for these services totals £347,254.
- This funding will be reduced for the financial year 2011/12. The budget for 2011/12 will be agreed by December 2010.

9. **Commissioning Intentions for Lower Level Targeted Support**

As there are significant resources invested in lower level 2 services through the Children's Centres it is proposed that a number of existing services are decommissioned ie contracts will end. These services and the current annual contract value are noted in the table below.

Service Provider	Current Annual Contract Values
Home Start Kennet	£49,031
Open Blue Trust	£10,284
Home Start South Wiltshire	£23,325
Scrapstore and Wiltshire Play Resource Centre (2 contracts to end)	£196,423*
Total	£279,063

*combined annual value of both contracts

In order to allow time for organisations to adjust to this loss of funding it is proposed that the de-commissioning of services is phased with a 50% reduction in funding from 1st April 2011 to 30th September 2011. After this date contracts will end.

After a proportion of this funding has been taken as a contribution to budget savings, the remaining funding will be shifted to contribute to the budget available for a new service described in section 10 below.

10. Commissioning Intentions for Higher Level 2 Targeted

It is proposed that a specification is developed for a new family and parenting support service. This will focus on providing support to parents and families who have complex and multiple needs and who require long term support but who do not reach the threshold for social care intervention.

To allow sufficient time for the procurement process it is proposed that the following contracts with agencies currently providing upper level 2 or level 3 services, due to end 31 March 2011, are extended for 6 months to 30 September 2011:

Service Provider	Current Annual Contract Values
Barnados Family Group Conferences	£60,515
Barnados Tapestry	£73,572
NSPCC Calne Family Centre	£32,280
NSPCC Ashdown Family Centre	£45,754
Action for Children Wessex Children's Services	£53,771
Ask Parenting Wiltshire	£120,689
Total	£386,581

The 6 months extension will be funded at a reduced rate which takes into account 6 months savings required. Savings required will be determined through the 2011/12 budget setting process and taking into account the amount of Early Intervention Grant Awarded. The Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy will provide the framework for decisions on use of the Early Intervention Grant and recommendations for use of this grant will be made by the Parenting Commissioning Group.

After 30 September 2011 these contracts will end and the current budget for these services, less an amount required for savings, will be used to fund the new service.

The procurement process for this new service will begin in December 2010. It is anticipated that contract/s will be awarded in June 2011 with the new service commencing 1st October 2011.

11. It is proposed that Cabinet approve the Commissioning Strategy for Family and Parenting Support and agrees the implementation of the commissioning intentions, including the proposals outlined in paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 above.

Environmental and climate change considerations

12. The main environmental consideration from this report relates to the operation of Children's Centres. Section 6.4.6 of the "Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy (April 2011-2014)" highlights that the role and function of these facilities will change, potentially resulting in them becoming more carbon intensive. Currently an incomplete picture is available of energy consumption from these centres. In order to comply with the requirements of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), it is recommended that Department for Children and Education actively assist Strategic Property Services to monitor energy consumption at each site helping to identify a baseline profile and the subsequent impact of operational changes.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

13. The strategy provides a framework for developing family and parenting support services. This framework will ensure a co-ordinated approach which will ensure that the needs of all parents and families are addressed.
14. Families are diverse and have a range of needs. The implementation of the strategy and commissioning intentions will enable them to more easily access the services they need. The strategy acknowledges and considers the needs of services for groups at a potential disadvantage such as travelers, teenage parents and service families.

Risk Assessment

15. Budget savings will be required in 2011/12 and in future years. The strategy facilitates these savings being achieved in the most effective way. If this strategy is not approved there will be insufficient funds to continue current services as they presently exist. Families will continue to have access to services based on historic patterns of expenditure rather than an analysis of need and the type and range of services required. Lack of clarity over "who does what" will continue and this will make it difficult for parents and families to know which service will best suit their needs. Duplication will remain, which is not cost effective.
16. If the strategy is approved, there will be a framework and a set of commissioning intentions which can guide how resources are distributed and how services are developed over time. The commissioning intentions will also ensure that service specifications are clear and that there is good alignment between services with no overlap and duplication.
17. Some family and parenting support services provided by voluntary sector organisations under contracts which end on 31 March 2011 will be de-commissioned. Other services will end on 30 September 2011 with a new service starting on 1 October 2011. This will have implications for a number of agencies. Early communication with affected organisations will help mitigate this risk and support can be offered to these agencies on seeking alternative sources of funding. It will also be important to ensure

that there is a transition plan for parents and families receiving services through contracts which will end.

18. Future funding for Parent Support Advisors (PSAs) is uncertain and they are a key element of delivering the lower level support for families with children aged 5+. Funding for these posts has been delegated to networks of schools.

Financial Implications

19. The gross expenditure identified in section 5 of the strategy is based on current budget levels. The analysis includes the total spend within Children's Centres although it is recognised that direct expenditure on parenting and family support will only represent a proportion of the total. Children's Centres are subject to a separate procurement exercise which is currently under way. The financial analysis in section 5 also illustrates the reliance of these services on external grant funding. Indications of future levels of grant funding will be given in the Comprehensive Spending Review.
20. At this stage, therefore, the budget available for family and parenting support services in the financial year 2011/12 is not fully clear. However, the specific recommendations in the strategy will, if approved, enable the allocation of available resources against clear priorities.

Legal Implications

21. Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires information advice and assistance to be available for parents and families. The Families Information Service (FIS) is provided by a voluntary sector agency under contract.
22. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) require the local authority to provide an information service for parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This service is provided through a contract with the same organisation that delivers the FIS
23. The family and parenting support strategy recognises the statutory requirement for information services and outlines plans for reviewing and tendering these services during 2011/12.

Options Considered

24. The main options considered were:
 - **Do nothing** – This was discounted as parents and families would not receive appropriate support. This might lead to more incidences of support required at a higher tier of need and potentially more children requiring child protection plans or increased family breakdown with children becoming looked after by the local authority. This would not be cost effective and would have a detrimental impact on outcomes for children and young people.

- **Continue existing contracts with a reduced level of funding** – This was discounted as this would mean continuing with historic patterns of funding and services which do not meet current needs. Overlaps, duplication and gaps would continue.
- **Exploring different services models** – During the development of the strategy 52 participants took part in one or more of the stakeholder workshops. During these workshops participants explored different services models and used evidence based research to inform discussion on future options.

Conclusion

25. The approval and implementation of this strategy, including the commissioning intentions, will provide a framework for shaping services over the next 3 years. This will ensure there is a good range of high quality and cost effective services with sufficient investment in services which intervene early preventing the need for more costly service interventions which are less likely to deliver good outcomes for children and young people.

Name of Director Julia Cramp
Designation Service Director Commissioning and Performance (DCE)

Report Author: Jane Shuttleworth

Name, title and contact details Jane Shuttleworth, Interim Head of Joint Commissioning,
jane.shuttleworth@wiltshire.gov.uk
01225 718221

18 October 2010

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy
