

North Somerset Council

Report to the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 29 October 2020

Subject of Report: Children's Improvement Plan Priorities

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Carolann James, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Support and Safeguarding

Key Decision: No

Reason: This does not meet the criteria for a Key Decision.

Recommendations

Members to note the priorities outlined.

1. Summary of Report

This report identified the key priorities within our Children's Improvement Plan. The Plan was developed and agreed through the Partnership Children's Improvement Board and subsequently submitted to Ofsted in September 2020 following our required improvement grading from Ofsted in March 2020.

2. Policy

Local Authority Children's Services are subject to regular inspection by Ofsted and are expected to continuously improve their services to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families.

3. Details

The key priorities that we are currently working on are:

Front Door to Children's Services

- Designing and implementing an Effective Front Door to Children's Services working alongside our police and education partners and our Partner in Practice, North Tyneside.
- Ensuring clear pathways to effective support for children, young people and their families
- Ensuring clear understanding across all partners of our Continuum of Need/Thresholds
- Ensuring improved quality of referrals from partner agencies into the Front Door
- Ensuring that children and their families receive the Right Help at the Right Time and that help to children and their families is provided at the earliest opportunity

- We anticipate having a ‘first version’ of our Effective Front Door designed and implemented by the end of January 2021.

Early Help

- Further develop and implement the North Somerset Partnership Early Help Offer ensuring Effective Support for children, young people and their families
- Transform the Council’s Early Help Service, which will be renamed to differentiate from early help provided by partner agencies at an earlier level to the intensive level of early help that the Council will provide for our children and families, to increase capacity and improve the offer for vulnerable older children and adolescents and their families – we anticipate having this in place by January 2021.
- Develop and utilise ‘locality children and family hubs to coordinate multi-agency early help activity for children and their families and strengthen relationship and offers of early help support from partner agencies, including the voluntary sector, communities and local businesses on the ground
- Undertake a needs analysis to identify the needs for a more targeted offer of early help to reduce escalation to higher cost statutory services and support children and families at an earlier level, where safe to do so
- We anticipate having a North Somerset Partnership Early Help offer agreed by the end of January 2021 for implementation before the end of March 2021.
- We anticipate having the needs analysis completed by the end of December 2020.

Performance and Quality Assurance

- Refresh our Quality Assurance and Performance Strategy and reintroduce an effective quality assurance effective system within Children’s Services – to be updated and introduced by December 2020.

Corporate Parenting Panel

- Refresh and review the membership, structure and format of North Somerset’s Corporate Parenting Panel to enable our children and young people to be active members of this Panel and ensure that the Panel holds the children’s agenda as a priority within the Council and its partners. – to be refreshed and introduced by December 2020.

4. Consultation

None.

5. Financial Implications

As the Children’s Improvement Plan progresses there will be the need for the Executive to consider the necessary resources. At the time of writing this report the work on possible resources is yet to be finalised.

Costs

See above.

Funding

See above.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

Ofsted regularly inspect Local Authority Children's Services and if sufficient progress is not made, this may result in an outcome of 'Inadequate' which could result in the removal of Children's Services from the council's control.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

No implications.

8. Risk Management

If the Children's Improvement Plan is not delivered to ensure sustained children's improvement across North Somerset, there is a risk that Ofsted will not grade us at a level that is acceptable and needed and that the Department for Education will issue an improvement notice for North Somerset Council.

9. Equality Implications

The Improvement Plan focuses on improving outcomes for the children and families for whom we currently work.

10. Corporate Implications

As in (8) above.

11. Options Considered

No other options considered as this report is for information only.

Author:

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Appendices:

None.

Background Papers:

Children's Improvement Plan September 2020 as submitted to Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny 'task and finish' group in September 2020.

Report of the Chair of Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel titled 'Scrutiny of the Children's Improvement Plan', October 2020.