

Children's Services Commissioning Plans 2013 – 14

Children's Services vision '**helping children be their best**'

1. 0 The commissioning strategy is based on the five Children's Services priorities:

- Providing children and families with early support;
- Helping Families with problems and keeping children safe;
- Giving the best opportunities to children and young people in care;
- Working in partnership with Schools and others to make sure children succeed;
- Supporting our staff to be outstanding.

2.0 Introduction

Peterborough City Council has the highest aspirations for its children and young people and want them to grow up safe, healthy, happy and fulfilled. We want them to enjoy and benefit from educational and social opportunities that maximise their skills and develop their abilities so that they can realise their ambitions in terms of employment opportunities and general life chances. We believe that children are best nurtured and developed within strong families. We believe families are the foundation upon which resilient and healthy communities are built and our aim is to support them as the main contributor to a child's safety, health and wellbeing, putting them and children at the centre of our communities.

We will continue to develop early intervention to help and support vulnerable families, coordinating the support of the voluntary, private and public sectors and ensuring that delivery of services is joined up. We will collaborate with families to help them find their own solutions so that problems and difficulties do not escalate, and where additional support is required we will engage with other agencies and organisations to commission and secure this help locally. We will adopt an approach that sees prevention and intervention as a continuum so that it is never deemed too late to positively intervene and prevent the deterioration in an individual child or young person's circumstances.

With our key partners we are developing and strengthening our safeguarding services, striving to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect, reducing and where possible eradicating risks to children. We believe that this will be achieved most effectively by working alongside families building on their strengths and enabling them to make the changes that are required. We fully recognise that it is important to ensure that our interventions are focussed, of high quality, timely and responsive to need.

Where children are suffering significant harm and the required change cannot be made, we will act decisively in order to protect them. When children and young people cannot live

with their birth or extended families we will ensure that we are able to provide the next best alternative which we believe is care in a family setting as close to their home communities as possible.

We will ensure that our foster care and adoption service provides a wide choice of alternative carers for children so we can be confident that the individual needs of children from diverse backgrounds will be met. On the rare occasions when children and young people need more specialist provision than family settings can offer, we will ensure it is accessed in a timely way and is of the highest quality. We will make sure that children and young people only stay in public care for as long as absolutely necessary and will focus our attention on speedy and safe returns home or seek the best possible permanent alternative.

Where children are not safe to live at home we will provide the best opportunities for our looked after children commensurate with our Corporate Parenting responsibilities. This means providing our children, who are looked after, with high quality placements preferably in city, stability, excellent health services and the ability to access leisure pursuits.

We will remodel our support to schools in the light of the changing role and responsibilities of local authorities. We remain committed to providing an outstanding education to our children and this will be delivered through developing an effective schools partnership using expertise in the city and bring best practice from across the country. We will take swift and decisive action in schools that continue to underperform. Our school buildings are amongst the best in the country and we intend making sure that we can recruit and train outstanding teachers locally to support the specific needs of the city through developing teaching schools and a school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) centre. We will continue to monitor the growth in pupil numbers and respond accordingly to ensure there are 'local places for local children'. We will revise our approach to special education needs ensuring we are inclusive, creating provision which meets our children's emerging needs and support schools to retain pupils in their communities. Key strategies will be developed around support challenging behaviour and children who have English as an additional language.

Our staff are at the core of delivering excellent services to children and young people and we are committed to achieving this by engaging with our workforce through clear communications, inspirational leadership and creation of a culture which values excellence, innovation and trust. We will develop our workforce within Social Care with clear induction pathways, a targeted training and development programme and the move from Senior Practitioner to Advanced Practitioner status.

We will continue to develop the capability and sustainability of our workforce through effective recruitment, retention, talent management and succession planning activities combined with strong performance management and a focus on creating targeted training and development across the department.

By creating an environment where our staff are provided with the skills, tools, opportunity and confidence to support the department's workforce vision we will ensure that we are doing our very best to enable our workforce to help the children of Peterborough be their best

3.0 Overarching Improvement Delivery Plan Priorities:-

- Delivery of Early Support through the Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy – strands of work:
 - SEN/Disability
 - Emotional Health and Wellbeing
 - Supporting Vulnerable Young people and NEET
 - Early Years and High Need Families
 - Integrated Processes (CAF/TAC)
 - Parents with Mental Health Difficulties
- That every child in need including those in need of protection will have a clear plan of action and support designed to address need and reduce risk within timescales appropriate to children's ages and individual circumstances.
- Ensure children are protected and safe from harm.
- To ensure that children remain in care for the least time necessary and that permanent alternatives are secured on their behalf as quickly as possible.
- To ensure that all children and young people in care have up to date care plans that are robust and personalized.
- To improve placement choice and ensure that placements are matched to the long term changing needs of children and young people.
- Implement proposals following the review of Education Services to ensure fit for purpose local authority and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Deliver an SEN strategy and develop new support offer to vulnerable groups.
- Ensure access to high quality schools which deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure that the qualifications, training and progression routes raise competencies of all Children's Services staff are of a high quality and linked to the service aims.
- Ensure that the work force is safe to work with children and young people and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding.
- Ensure that the work force is confident, respected and valued as professionals.

4.0 Commissioning 2013/14

4.1 Decommissioning/Redesign

The Government's policy for funding Children's Services has changed significantly in recent years alongside changes in wider local government funding.

- The Government has reduced the Early Intervention Grant that funds children's preventative services; including Children's Centres and Play Services
- The Government has two new ring fenced streams of children's services funding:
 - Free child care for two and three year olds
 - Troubled Families Programme

Also, the extended schools programme that the Government funded has resulted in many

before and after school clubs that provide a safe environment for children to play and develop their social skills.

The reduction in the Early Intervention Grant and the introduction of other ring fenced funding streams has resulted in us reviewing our service offer in respect of children and families.

Our priority in Peterborough is to **'help children to be their best'** by supporting families to provide good care for their children and therefore the services we fund have to reflect this

Play services

There is no obligation on the council to provide play services. We are the only council in the Eastern Region to provide free of charge staffed play centres.

The play service focuses solely on individual work with children and does not address the priority need of supporting parents to develop their parenting skills.

Our Troubled Families programme in Peterborough – Connected Families - will more appropriately support the whole family, as we know the greatest influence on children is their parents.

The free childcare offer provides support to parents to engage in work or other activities of their choice – this seems a better approach to supporting families than the narrower play service approach could offer. This supports our commitment to get more people into work and off benefits.

Our play services have been reducing over the last couple of years; in the 2010 budget this was agreed. The centres have only been running a couple of sessions per week for some months now; however we have now decided to close the eight council-run play centres.

We intend to work with local communities in respect of the play service buildings and provision- communities may well want to use these and we will support them to do so.

Saving - £110,000

Children's centres

The Government no longer gives the council a specific pot of money to pay for children's centres or provides funding to open any new ones. Funding comes from the Early Intervention Grant, this has been reduced over the last couple of years, with other new funding streams coming on board – for example the free 2 and 3 year old child care offer.

Children's centres were opened in three phases - phase one centres were opened in the most deprived areas. There are 15 children's centres in Peterborough.

When children's centres were first developed they had a key role in ensuring childcare provision was available. The need for this has decreased with the free childcare offer to parents and parents' ability to access local childcare and pre-school provision more

independently. The number of childcare providers in Peterborough has significantly increased over the last couple of years.

Our Connected Families programme, funded from the Government's Troubled Families initiative, is providing outreach services for families, which again has reduced the need for some previously delivered services from children's centres; particularly for those hardest to reach.

We are reviewing all our early year's services. This will likely mean the closure of some children's centres in our least deprived areas and doing things differently in others.

We are working with all our children's centre providers and early years services to ensure that those families that need our help most still get it. So if we do decide to close any centre we will ensure that families that need our help will have access to services through other services.

Saving - £200,000 year 1

Saving £200,000 year 2

Total £400,000

Direct Intervention Service (DIS)

The Direct Intervention Service supports children's social care by providing family support programmes and parenting assessments. In 2012/13 we increased the number of social workers to support the improvement in social care. These staff now have the capacity and capability to pick up the parenting assessment work and this will deliver savings within the Direct Intervention Service.

Savings £300,000.

MST

The MST service was grant funded from central government and was a four year project this funding came to an end on the 31st March 2012. The service has since this date been fully funded by the councils Children's Services, the service can no longer support this budget pressure. A business case for future funding was never secured from Partners for the continuation of the service.

Reduced pressure £350,000

4.2 Commissioning Intentions

Our commissioning intentions are underpinned by a robust needs analysis that comprises of demographics and citizen and stakeholder views.

We are working with a range of providers and potential providers locally and regionally to inform them of the current and future needs of Children's Services. Our work is focused on supporting children and young people to live at home and in their local communities and

based around the development of pathways and evidenced based interventions focused on early identification, prevention, building resilience and promoting self help and independence. We know that we need to help providers develop their understanding of our needs in order that they can respond to these effectively. We also need to be widening the range of providers that operate in the City to drive up competition and drive down cost.

4.2.1 Children in Care

16 Plus Accommodation

Work is currently taking place to explore working with the market to increase semi-independent living options for 16 and 17 year olds who are looked after, focusing around the availability of providers able to source a range of accommodation and supply flexible support packages that range from 24/7 on-site support to minimal non-resident floating support. Peterborough are leading a scoping exercise in the region to see if a regional approach to market development would be beneficial.

Recruitment of fostering and supported lodgings carers will remain the responsibility of the in-house fostering service; however in respect of supported lodgings placements, specific targets for additional recruitment are to be agreed between the Commissioning Service and the Fostering and Adoption Service.

Care Placements

Greater use of Connected Persons placements and 'private arrangements' between family members:-

- Increase capacity and workforce skill set to make greater use of Connected Persons placements and private arrangements
- Scope the need for additional capacity and training needs to undertake connected persons assessments

Sufficiency of In House Foster Care Service:-

- Development and implementation of a recruitment and retention strategy for In House Foster Carers to deliver an increased number and range of placements:-
 - 0-18 placement approvals
 - Sibling placements
 - Emergency, Respite and Bridging placements
 - Mother and Baby placements
 - Greater diversity of foster carers (ethnicity, language spoken, faith group etc)
- Scope the need for specialist foster carers to manage complex and intensive needs, identifying relevant evidence based programmes and training. (e.g. Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care)

- In the event of continued In House Foster Care recruitment difficulties undertake options appraisal for long term future. (including consideration of partnership arrangement with IFA)

Enhance the range of residential care and school provision closer to Peterborough:-

- Work with providers to address gaps and enhance the range of specialist provision in Peterborough or within a 20 mile area of city boundary where possible.

Review the role of and reduce reliance on IFAs:-

- Review current arrangements with London Consortium (pan London arrangements)
- Undertake options appraisal for regional and sub-regional arrangement for (reducing) number of IFA placements
- Ensure IFAs have resources to meet the needs of a diverse CLA cohort
- De-escalate suitable cases to Specialist In House Foster Carers where appropriate

Develop approved provider framework for residential care / school provision to manage demand and cost.

Develop and implement a monitoring framework for all placement providers.

Ensure resources are deployed as effectively as possible and evaluated for impact through the Peterborough Access to Support Panel. (PASP)

Ensure joint agency approaches to assessment and provision of services for children with the most complex needs are adopted at all times through the Joint Access to Services Panel. (JASP)

Review current CLA in IFA placements to identify:-

- Those suitable for move into In House Foster Care or long term foster care arrangement to secure 5-10% permanency discount
- Those placed more than 25 miles from home address and consider moving into In House or other local placement where appropriate

4.2.2 Family Support

- **Crisis Response:** Spot-purchased flexible services able to operate out of hours and which can help families deal with a crisis that might otherwise lead to family breakdown. The service should then work with the family to support them into accessing less intensive community-based services and/or formalised parenting/family support programmes as appropriate but it should be recognised that some families are characterised by an on-going pattern of crisis flare-ups and so may not be possible to safely de-escalate to lower level services;
- **Intensive Parenting/Family Support:** A programme or programmes based on a 6-12 month period of intervention where a lead worker works intensively with families who have some of the most complex and entrenched difficulties in line with research evidence that these are the programme types that are most effective;

- **Family Group Conferences:** Already a commissioned service, but we will add to the specification that we would want the service to support a small number of families with lower levels of need than only those where children are on the edge of care;
- **Domiciliary Care/on-going Family-Aide Support:** for those families where a low level of support is likely to be needed on a long term basis, for example to stop home conditions deteriorating to an unacceptable level: services to be monitored through the MASG where cases closed to children’s social care;
- **Community Family Engagement Volunteers:** As part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy, we plan to recruit and train a number of community family engagement volunteers to support families with lower level needs to assist them with understanding the services that are available and working alongside them to develop confidence to access the support that is available;
- **On-going as and when support to families as appropriate:** Offering families a telephone-based crisis response service including out of hours for when family relationships seem to be deteriorating once more – most likely to be most effectively provided as part of the crisis support service above;
- **Other family support projects:** include Family Nurse Programme and the perinatal project focusing on maternal mental health;
- **Home to School Workers:** focused on children and young people exhibiting behaviour problems that are adversely impacting on progress in school. This would need to be commissioned jointly with schools.
- **Connecting Families programme:** Continue with the implementation of the Connecting Families Programme and evaluating the cost savings and improved outcomes for families.

4.2.3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- Psychological ‘talking’ therapies for children and young people – we already commission the 3 T’s, we need to increase capacity.
- Children’s bereavement counselling.

Services should be delivered in non-stigmatising community settings such as schools, colleges, Children’s Centres and meet You’re Welcome Quality Criteria.

- Family Therapy resource to work holistically with families where children are significantly affected by parental mental health disorders or where family functioning is reduced by a child with significant mental health problems. This is ideally provided by a mix of suitably trained social care, education, adult and child mental health professionals.
- Provision of parenting education before assessment for ADHD/ASD/LD
- Social care and disability assessment/application support at point of diagnosis (where applicable)

- Parenting and family support based on behavioural interventions, sleep solutions and autism specific techniques

Develop in partnership with specialist professionals a range of training to increase knowledge and skills in:-

- Early identification of mental health and emotional wellbeing problems
- Managing emotions and increasing emotional literacy of children and young people
- Mental health 'first aid'
- Differences between mental health, social and emotional issues as causes of behavioural problems
- Behaviour management strategies for professionals
- Signposting and pathways
- SEAL in Secondary Schools
- Inclusion of attachment styles and basic CBT principles in PSHE material

4.2.4 Sexually Harmful Behaviour

A comprehensive training and support package for professionals working with children and young people who are;

- Highly vulnerable and at risk of exploitation
- Likely to display sexually harmful and inappropriate behaviour.

Discussions are currently on-going with the Cambridgeshire Sexual Behaviour Unit as to how the service could expand to meet the needs of Peterborough Children and Young People.

Peterborough has been a partner in a sub-regional initiative to provide an MST- PSB (problematic sexualised behaviour) programme. The programme duration is 6-9 months and Peterborough is able (subject to eligibility criteria being met) to access up to 7 programmes per year. The cost of this intervention is £45,000.00 per annum. The service however will not accept referrals for young people with a learning difficulty/ASD. Access to the service is via PASP/JASP and all referrals to the service are managed by the Access to Resources Service.

Discussions with NSPCC locally have resulted in the service identifying additional capacity in the city to deliver a range of services to those that have experienced sexual abuse, and to those young people at risk of, or suffering sexual exploitation (Protect and Respect 6 month intervention). Additional funding may need to be found at some point, but the proposed range of services on offer will be at nil cost and funded centrally from within the organisation.

Children and young people who are sexually exploited are best served by having child Centred services that are bespoke and tailored to individual need and circumstance. Providers will need to be able to deliver or access elements of these individualized packages of support and intervention, which are most likely to include:

- Counselling, creative therapies and access to specialist therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy. Direct work may take the form of assertive outreach, individual one to one and group work.
- Family support workers will need to offer one to one support, facilitate access to activities, deliver targeted group activities and help families to understand what CSE involves.

A Cambridgeshire based organisation 'Link to Change' have been funded by the Lottery to provide a worker in Peterborough to work with young people who have been subject to sexual exploitation.

4.2.4 Alternative Education

In partnership with schools and colleges, private, voluntary and independent sectors develop a range of alternative education provision in the City

4.2.5 Short Breaks

Commissioning a range of in house and externally provided short breaks to reduce and delay demand for residential care and out of city placements.

Better provision of good quality information for parents and carers.

Activities for young carers.

4.2.6 Complex Health Needs

Quality continuing care assessments and provision of services assessed to be needed from health and children's social care.

Review of use of the Otters health respite unit.

Improved transitional arrangements between children, adult and health services; including the provision of local accommodation post 18/19.

4.2.7 Domestic Abuse

- Direct work with children.
- Direct work with adults around their understanding of the impact of their behaviour on their children and family as a whole e.g. Stop the Hurt programme funded by the police previously.
- Direct work with mothers to improve their self esteem, confidence and assertiveness.

4.2.8 LAC Transport

Develop a LAC Transport Strategy, focused on use of publicly available options.

4.2.9 Supervised Contact

Develop options appraisal to inform future delivery models.

4.2.10 NEET/Raising the Participation Age

- Increase appropriate range of part time/online courses for 16 and 17 year olds
- Engage with the Local Economic Partnership to ensure that new, and existing, employers to the city understand the need to offer employment with training for young people;
- Increase the number of apprenticeship places in the city and increase the number of apprenticeship frameworks delivered across the city in order to promote choice for young people post 16;
- Improve employability skills in young people through:
 - The creation of pre apprenticeship work/training opportunities
 - Increasing the opportunities for work experience for young people particularly from vulnerable groups
 - Disseminating to young people and their families information regarding labour market information and skills gaps in the city
 - Encourage local business leaders to work with schools in order to raise aspirations and awareness of business

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22nd February 2013

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