

<b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>14 NOVEMBER 2011</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

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### **PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

To provide Members with a progress report from the Children's services Portfolio Holder

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Members' Portfolio by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

One of the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy is Creating Opportunities, Tackling Inequalities, which is within the remit of this Committee

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

The recent Ofsted inspection and the improvement plan arising from the inspection are covered separately on the agenda for this meeting. It is not proposed to duplicate the contents of that agenda item in this report.

#### **5.0 KEY ISSUES**

##### **5.1 Early Intervention and Prevention**

Work is being led by Janet Dullaghan, Assistant Director to bring together into one structure the various services involved in early intervention to address identified needs and the prevention of the escalation of these needs. Services such as the commissioning of Children's Centres, the 8-19 service, special educational needs services, the Family Recovery Project, Multi Systemic Therapy and aspects of the early years service can play a crucial role in supporting families at an earlier point and reducing the number of referrals to social care. However, the services need to operate to agreed thresholds with clear pathways for families to access the right service and with common arrangements for assessment, based on the consistent use of the Common Assessment Framework. Janet has been asked to undertake work that ensures the coherence of these services to families and partner agencies and leaves the Council better placed to ensure that need is being identified and targeted at the earliest opportunity.

##### **5.2 Social Care Activity**

Overall activity in Children's Social Care has increased since the beginning of the year. A total of 1286 referrals had been made to the end of September, approximately 200 more than the target number. There were 181 children with a child protection plan at the end of September, 52 more than at the same point in September 2010. Whilst this represents a significant increase it brings

the number of children with a child protection plan in Peterborough into line with the average for the Council's statistical neighbours. There were 321 children in the care of the Council at the end of September, an increase of 22 compared to September 2010.

These activity increases have put pressure on the indicators for the timeliness of assessment. To date, 55.3% of initial assessments have been completed within seven days during 2011/12 compared to 66.1% in 2010/11 and 64.2% of core assessments had been completed within 35 working days, compared to 68.2% in 2011/12.

### **5.3 Adoption**

I am pleased to report that the Council continues to perform well in respect of adoption. In 2010/11, 27% of looked after children in the Peterborough area were adopted. This was the highest percentage of children leaving care by means of adoption across the Council and a 5 per cent increase on 2009/10. It reflects the hard work of officers in the Adoption Service and the willingness of so many people to take such an important step to adopt a child.

### **5.4 Transition**

Transition from Children's Services to Adult Services is a key time for many vulnerable young people. We have hosted a Parents Forum where the parents/carers of several young people with complex needs were able to meet representatives from adult services. The Adult Service Commissioner, the Transition Team Manager, the Continuing Health Care Lead, the parent of a young person receiving a home support package from Adult Services and an Adult Service psychiatrist with responsibility for learning disability spoke to the parents/carers and other professionals about their roles, teams, experiences and future planning arrangements. There was very positive feedback from those who attended and the forum will become a regular event.

### **5.5 Multi Systemic Therapy**

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) is an intervention with a very strong evidence base for improving outcomes for young people with high levels of need. The MST service has successfully bid to the DfE to support the establishment of an MST service in Northamptonshire. The Service is also being expanded in collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council to support young people with problem sexual behaviour and a Consultant Clinical Psychologist has been appointed to lead the new service from January.

### **5.6 The 8-19 Service**

The 8-19 Service continues to provide an effective range of targeted support to children and young people. The Friday Night Football programme was developed to engage young people and men up to the age of 19 in areas where anti social behaviour had become a particular issue. The programme has proved to be a success and the Central Friday Night Football League was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, the third programme following on from work in East Ward and the Ortons.

The Service also support local democracy week with a range of activities led and organised by Javed Ahmed from the Service. There was a good level of interest from young people in the week.

### **5.7 Youth Offending Service**

The Youth Offending Service continues to perform well against the three nationally monitored performance indicators, the rate of custody, the re-offending rate and the numbers of young people coming into the youth justice system for the first time (FTE). At the end of the financial year 2010 – 11 the rate of custody stood at 4.7% (this is the rate that custody is used expressed as a percentage of all sentences passed by the court on Peterborough young people). Three years ago Peterborough was the third highest user of custody in England with a custody rate of

12.1%. We are now around the national average. In the first six months of this financial year the numbers of custodial sentences has continued to remain low with only 10 having been made in the period. This compares to the same period last year when there were 11. This continued strong performance indicates that magistrates have a great deal of faith in the work of Peterborough YOS, believing that managing an offender's risk in the community can achieve better results than sending them to prison.

In respect of re-offending, this is measured by identifying and following a dedicated group of young offenders for 12 months following their involvement in the justice system to see how many offences were committed by them during that time. The 2005 YOS baseline figure was 1.51 offences per offender but by 2010 – 11 this had reduced to 0.59 offences. In the more recent group 70% had not re-offended at all compared to 60% in the baseline year. This is a strong improvement.

Finally at the end of the 2010/11 financial year, Peterborough had a very high rate of young people coming into the justice system for the first time (FTE). However, following a number of external and internal policy and practice changes numbers have fallen by 50.3% or nearly twice as fast as the national average. This means that over 90 fewer young people have received a criminal record compared to the same period last year.

Overall the YOS in Peterborough continues to perform well. This is reflected in the number of sentences being passed by Peterborough Courts which have fallen from 299 in the period November 2009 - October 2010 to 217 in the same period 12 months later, a 27.5% reduction

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of children and families.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

No consultation has taken place with regard to this report

## **8 EXPECTED OUTCOMES and NEXT STEPS**

Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of children's services.

## **9 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

## **10. APPENDICES**

None

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