



## Children and Families Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### Report from the Director of Children & Families

For Information

Wards Affected: All

### Report Title: Kingsbury and Stonebridge Integrated Service Programmes

#### 1.0 Summary

This paper aims to provide an update on progress and to summarise key achievements in the Kingsbury and Stonebridge Integrated Services Programme since the report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

That members note progress made to date.

#### 3.0 Detail

3.1 The introduction of the 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme' and The Children Act 2004 has seen the implementation of the Kingsbury and Harlesden Integrated Service pilots. The pilot programmes have been running for over a year and this new way of delivering services to children and young people, its change process for staff, schools, partners, and families, have been greatly welcome. The pilot programmes continue to ensure that children with additional unmet needs who live and attend school within the pilot localities are quickly identified, assessed and given support in a coordinated manner through the Integrated Services Coordinating Group (ISCG).

#### 3.2 Brent Model

Integrated Working continues to operate mainly from the primary and secondary schools in the borough. The Integrated Services team work with schools, children's centres and health centres to identify children who may be a cause

for concern. The officers, along with other professionals such as health visitors and school nurses, carry out common assessments of the needs of children and young people.

3.3 The 'assessors' use the outcome from the assessment and present a summary of strengths and needs, with recommendations for action, to a multi-agency Integrated Service Coordination Group (ISCG). The group agrees packages of support for children and families who are judged as having additional unmet needs (level 2). The group also agrees on an appropriate officer to take the role of the lead professional for children and they monitor the quality of provision and review cases on a three monthly basis.

3.4 Nominated lead professionals then coordinate the agreed package of support for children and their families and they become the single point of contact for all agencies on behalf of the family. They maintain a single overview of the progress of a child who might be receiving services from several agencies.

3.5 The programme has made steady progress and the model piloted has given frontline practitioners a new way of identifying vulnerable children. Without early intervention these children may develop complex needs that will require intensive intervention from statutory services. This new way of working with children has proved to be creative and cost effective. It is perceived by the families and professionals involved to have improved outcomes for children.

### 3.6 Principle Achievements

- More than 291 children, young people and families have been identified with unmet needs and been able to access additional support through the Common Assessment route. Of these 18 have been tier 3 cases e.g. social care and have been able to access more intensive statutory support.
- Over 400 practitioners have attended the initial training on integrated working with a further 110 attending the specialised Assessor training.
- The speed of delivery of service is on average 4 weeks from identification to service delivery and can, in some instances, be quicker than this depending on the group meeting cycle.
- Services have been commissioned from over 20 community and voluntary groups and agencies. This has enabled capacity to be built and different models of services to be evaluated.
- On the whole clients are satisfied with the assessment by the assessors with over 89% being satisfied or fully satisfied and 48% indicated as being fully satisfied.
- Every child, including disabled children in Brent, identified as having additional unmet need have an assigned lead professional, who has coordinated services on their behalf.

- A Brent eCAF solution (linked to Social Care Framework) is in place. All information gathered on each child is stored securely on the electronic CAF database which is managed by the programme coordinator.

3.7 In June 2007 a second independent evaluation of the integrated services model was carried out that highlighted a number of key successes and areas for developments. Key learning from the Phase 2 evaluation report includes:

- This model offers good practice examples of joined up working. The model also demonstrates the need for Integrated Working and has identified benefits for users, voluntary sector organisations, staff and services.
- It has brought about clarity in referral processes in a number of services areas. For example, the threshold criteria document developed helps practitioners to decide which children should be referred to Social Care and those who should not. This process will eventually help reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to Social Care.
- Children who are not eligible for Social Care support or services are now able to access services via the CAF route which will ensure that their needs are quickly identified and addressed to reduce future disaffection.
- The model promotes a strong sense of professional accountability. Most professionals are beginning to accept that in some cases they may not be able to make referrals to services outside their home agencies without carrying out Common Assessments.
- The Common Assessment leaves very little room for professionals to make assumptions about the family's needs. This has ensured that service provision is more needs led. This way of working has greatly enabled the provision of culturally appropriate services in addressing families' individual and specific needs.
- The multi-agency composition of the Integrated Services Coordination Group membership has resulted in the sharing of knowledge from both statutory and voluntary/ community. It has also provided more co-ordinated, focused and appropriate services to children and families thus cutting out duplication.

3.8 The success of the pilot programmes has required commitment from a wide range of partners. Examples of this include the Integrated Service Coordination Group (ISCG). This is a multi-agency panel responsible for discussing CAF summaries and assigning lead professionals. The training sub group also has membership from a number of partner agencies. They develop the training materials and have trained over 400 professionals throughout the borough.

3.9 Following the positive outcomes provided by this model, the Integrated Services programme has now been rolled out to all five localities in the borough and Brent is on target to meet the government roll out deadline of April 2008.

3.10 Next steps – Meeting the Challenge

The nature of this agenda requires a radical change in how we deliver children services in Brent. This has major implications in terms of job roles and responsibilities for those who work within the children's workforce. As a result, implementing the change agenda, in particular the 'assessor' and lead professional function continues to be a challenge.

- 3.11 Although professionals see the value and the benefits of this new approach of working, many continue to find completing the common assessment and taking on the functions of the Lead Professional role time consuming. Some are concerned that by taking on the Lead Professional role they will be overwhelmed by the process and they might not be able to fulfil the duties of the post for which they were appointed.
- 3.12 In response to these concerns the Children and Families department has established an Integrated Services Team to provide training, guidance, and support to staff in different service areas in the Local Authority, voluntary and community sector organisations in Brent.  
As part of this team the Department has appointed 12 Integrated Services Support Officers who carry out common assessments on behalf of schools and children's centres, provide intensive support to targeted practitioners, and act the lead professional role for some of the children identified as level 2.
- 3.13 However, in time there will need to be a commitment from all agencies to complete common assessments and nominate Lead Professionals. With ongoing training opportunities, work shadowing, guidance documents and staff available to provide intensive support, we will continue to work with all agencies to ensure staff are skilled and knowledgeable in developing these new ways of working.
- 3.14 In parallel with this training and support the Children and Families department has carried out a series of consultation sessions with schools and partners on future models for delivering locality-based services. As a result of this a Transformation Board will be established in March with senior representation from the Council and other agencies to create a clear vision and action plan for taking this work forward.

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