

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Department of Education Innovation Programme – Brighter Futures
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Portfolio(s)	Cllr Binda Rai – Lead Member Children and Families
For Consideration By	Corporate Parent Committee
Date to be Considered	6 th December 2016
Implementation Date if Not Called In	
Affected Wards	All
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Purpose of Report:

The authority was successful in its bid to the Department of Education Innovation Programme to transform its response to adolescents in care and on the edge of care and their families – The Brighter Futures Programme in 2014-2016. This report updates Members on progress in implementing the Brighter Futures programme between September 2016 – December 2016. This includes feedback on the programme from the recent Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection and plans to extend the programme from April 2017.

1. Recommendations

1.1 That Members continue to review progress on the Brighter Futures programme during 2016/17, as it has significant implications for the way in which we support adolescents in care and on the edge of care and their families and the role of the authority as Corporate Parent.

1.2 That Members note the consultation currently taking place to extend the programme across the wider social care service with effect from 1st April 2017.

2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

2.1 The programme has significant implications for the authority in its Corporate Parent role as it affects children and adolescents in care and on the edge of care and how we support them and their families.

3. Key Implications

3.1 The Children's Social Care Innovation programme was a two year national programme supported by £30m in the first financial year 2014/15 and substantially more in the second – an additional approx. £70m. The programme's key objective was to support improvements in the quality of services so that children who need help from the social care system have better chances in life.

3.2 The government's view is that greater innovation is needed both to deliver better outcomes for adolescents and their families and achieve higher quality and better value for money.

3.3 This opportunity was timely as it not only provided a chance to address critical value for money issues linked to the authority's placement strategy. It also offered an opportunity to develop an increasingly adolescent focused service responding to many of the issues raised in the extensive looked after children and care leavers customer survey undertaken last year and previously reported to the Corporate Parent meetings.

3.4 The authority submitted an expression of interest to the DfE Innovation Programme which was approved. We were then invited to progress to delivering a fully worked up proposal supported by 20 days of external consultancy to build and test the proposal and submit this in October 2014.

3.5 Authorities were encouraged to develop bids with partners to increase the innovation aspects of the proposals and start to develop new alliances. Ealing submitted its bid with two external partners – Catch 22 and iMPOWER.

3.6 Catch 22 are a leading youth charity with significant national expertise in provision of services to adolescents and care leavers who will be providing strategic support and advice to the programme. iMPOWER are a business consultancy who are undertaking wider activity with the council on value for money and managing demand with a particular focus on increasing the supply of local in-house foster carers.

3.7 Ealing's proposal:

Ealing's bid was for £3.5m to transform its support for adolescents in care and on the edge of care.

The proposal had several key themes which included:

- Transforming our placement strategy and recruiting and supporting many more local foster carers to prevent looked after children being placed far outside the borough.
- Engaging more effectively with the needs of adolescents in care and on the edge of care and their families. Responding in more innovative ways to their needs to help deliver better outcomes and improve their life chances.

3.8 The key details of Ealing's programme are built around the following changes to the system:

- **Re-designing how we deliver our services:** We created multi-disciplinary pilot teams that comprise of a range of core professionals with smaller caseloads and more time to work intensively with the young person and their

family/carer. We reorganised their role around the young people they work with and broadening our support package offer, more closely integrating the work we currently do with the third and community sectors.

- **Shifting power and decision making:** We devolved responsibility for decisions where possible to young people, their families and carers (i.e. young people may choose the lead professional that they work with and give feedback, foster carers will make day to day decisions around parental contact, overnight stays etc). Our staff continue to make challenging judgements about risk, learning to let go, trusting parents/carers and listening better to young people.
- **Providing intensive early support to young people, families and carers:** Our multi-professional teams work intensively at an early stage with families whose adolescents are identified as being on the edge of care, to ensure prevention of family breakdown. This approach prioritises foster placements at risk of disruption to reduce placement moves. This work is underpinned by a consistent, intensive, relational approach and we will train staff and carers in this model.
- **Identifying one lead professional, chosen by the young person,** to work closely with the adolescent and coordinate the support plan. This may be a youth worker, peer mentor or teacher and we would like the flexibility to consider delegating the statutory social work function to the lead professional, with appropriate supervision and oversight. Young people's feedback throughout the process and participation will be central to care planning.
- **Providing responsive 24/7 services** delivered from Westside Young People's Centre rather than a traditional social work office. Support may be available to the young person, family or carer at weekends and evenings when crises more often occur for adolescents, and someone who knows the young person and the carer will be available to respond. Peer led support is available and focuses on issues such as gangs and crime, substance misuse, sexual exploitation and safeguarding.
- **Increasing choice and power for the young person, expanding support to adolescents on the edge of care:** Giving them access to the same support as those in care - positive activities, education, training and employment support, specialist services for those at risk of involvement in gangs and sexual exploitation, access to delegated budgets.
- **Radically reshaping our Fostering service:** We are aiming to recruit and retain 45 new local Foster Carers; change the nature of their role requiring them to provide permanent homes supported by specialist training and 24/7 back up.

3.9 As well as delivering better outcomes for our children and young people and their families the proposal is also ensuring the authority achieves better value for money.

The Innovation Fund project is building on the work the authority had previously undertaken with iMPower to transform our placement strategy and deliver significant savings, as well as better manage demand and support more adolescents to remain at home with their families with improved care packages and interventions.

3.10 Whilst the DfE pilot programme was for 16 months only, the £3.5m programme funding enabled the authority to pilot new ways of working and set up all the new processes and procedures required. This included setting up all the relevant systems and processes to transition to a new pattern of service across Children's Social Care by 2017/18. This should be financially sustainable from savings generated through the new placement strategy. Key to this strategy is significant reduction in reliance on expensive long distance residential and independent foster placements and an increased pool of well supported local in-house foster carers. In addition there will be a wider range of local supports and interventions for young people and their families on the edge of care. The model is supported by an intensive therapeutic training programme in partnership with the Maudsley and local CAMHs service.

3.11 Implementation Update: November 2016:

- a) The Brighter Futures service model has been fully operational since the end of June 2015. There are 3 key elements – 2 new multi-disciplinary Edge of Care Teams (MAST Teams) and a new In Care Team (Connect Team) comprising about 60 staff in total. The MAST Teams are based at Westside and the Connect Team based at Perceval House, but interviews and meetings with young people also take place at youth friendly settings, including Horizons. In addition we are transforming the existing model of foster care recruitment to deliver more local placements and significant work has taken place on this, including better engagement with the local voluntary sector and Faith groups.
- b) Suitable cases are being transferred out of the Locality social care teams into the MAST and Connect Teams. By end of November 2016 approx 297 children (176 families) were being supported through the MAST Team and 53 children by the In Care Connect Team and these numbers continue to accelerate as the Teams are close to achieving their full targets.
- c) Ofsted indicated they thought that this model and way of working was strong and that early indications reflect that it is effective and leads to better outcomes for children and families as well as reductions in placement costs.
- d) Decisions have been taken to extend the Brighter Futures model and way of working across the service and extend it to the Locality service, the front door ECIRS and the Early Help SAFE service. This will provide a fully integrated and consistent evidence based model across Children's services.
- e) The approach will require marked changes in current team structures and does have significant staffing implications. Therefore consultation is underway with staff and it is anticipated that the revised structure will be in place by April 2017. Implementation will be subject to the Council's wider formal restructuring and consultation processes in November 2016.
- f) 2 Youth Mentors are in post – one placed in each MAST Team. Their role is engaging with young people who are referred to the Teams to support and advocate for them, ensuring their views are heard and influence the care planning processes. This builds on feedback from LAC Surveys where young people expressed strongly a view that they don't always feel listened to or that their views make a difference in the care planning process. The Youth Mentor roles are ring fenced to young people who have previously either been LAC or

- on the Pathways programme. Better engagement and participation between workers and young people is key to the Brighter Futures strategy.
- g) Structure of the Teams includes Social Workers, Youth Workers, Connexions Workers, Clinical Psychologists, CAMHs Workers, Teachers, Youth Justice Workers plus the young people's Mentors/Advocates.
 - h) Moving forward composition is likely to change based on lessons learnt from the pilot teams and affordability. This is part of the consultation process.
 - i) A consistent approach and training model across all professions has been introduced. The training model is evidence based on what we know works well and underpinned by the Maudsley Helping Families model and the Family Partnership model. In addition there is adolescent specific training being delivered. Extensive training for foster carers and staff is also taking place.
 - j) Business process systems have been set up to identify and transfer appropriate cases into both of the Teams and identify the families most at risk of breakdown without intensive interventions. These are now being extended to plan the wider model.
 - k) 24/7 models of outreach and support for young people and their carers are also being explored. A wide range of external support and positive activities has been commissioned for the pilot project from the local voluntary and community sector including Brentford FC Community Trust, Action Acton, Somali Family Project, ECVS Volunteer Bureau.
 - l) Impower have worked with the Fostering Service to deliver an integrated strategy to foster carer recruitment. This is underpinned by intensive training to support carers to better manage many more young people locally and improve their outcomes. A consortium of local voluntary sector groups is also helping us to recruit local foster carers.
 - m) 12 young people have moved from expensive residential places out of borough, to local lower cost placements. This has achieved a cashable saving of approx. £1m to date.
 - n) In 2015/2016 9 new foster carers were approved. The target for 2016/2017 is 28. 3 foster carers were approved in July 2016 and a further 7 are currently in assessment. 13 existing foster carers have converted to become Fostering Plus carers and are very positive about the enhanced support they are receiving.
 - o) LAC numbers have decreased to date from 371 to 357, due to targeted work and successful interventions. The LAC target for March 2017 is 320 excluding the current 38 unaccompanied minors.
 - p) An integrated performance and finance monitoring system is in place and this is being extended in preparation for the wider roll out.
 - q) An external independent evaluation programme led by the Institute of Education confirmed that the model was at an early stage of development but appeared to be achieving its aims and providing more effective support to service users and their families. This was also confirmed positively in the young people's evaluation undertaken by young people from Horizons who were trained up to use an app, developed by 3H and Dartington social care. This continuously sought the views of young people on what works for them and what doesn't and how the service they receive could be improved. Young people's evaluation of the process took place during December – May 2016.
 - r) As part of the next steps, the Brighter Futures model is also being rolled out more widely to the SAFE Early Intervention service and the front door ECIRS service. This is based on evidence that intensive relationship based work with families, where lead multi-professional workers have smaller caseloads and more time to engage, is effective and improves outcomes. Reduction in LAC numbers to date from 371 to 357 (including 8 children who were Calais Refugees) reflects this early success. Training for staff and an implementation

- programme to deliver the new SAFE Plus model has been taking place throughout the autumn 2016.
- s) A clear project management structure and Executive Board is in place to oversee and monitor progress. There are extensive activities also taking place to ensure business processes and ways of working are clear, safe and effective. Progress is now escalating as we accelerate the implementation phase.
 - t) The service is at a critical stage in deciding how best to scale up the model linked to early positive findings and positive feedback from families through the evaluation process. Consultation on ways forward has taken place across the service.
 - u) Budgets have been reviewed to agree how best to progress from September 2016 when the Innovation Funding ran out. As there is clear evidence of both improved outcomes and financial savings decisions have been made to continue the model in a revised form. Lessons learnt from the pilot model will be implemented and the Locality Teams, ECIRS and SAFE early help will evolve into the Brighter Futures model of working from April 2017. Additional funding of £3.1m has been successfully obtained from the Council's Investment Fund following a Cabinet meeting on 12th July.
 - v) Children's services were recently subject to an intensive 4 week Ofsted Safeguarding Children in Need of Help and Protection inspection. This included a key focus and useful external scrutiny on the effectiveness of the Brighter Futures programme. Feedback from the Inspectors indicated they were very impressed with the model, particularly in terms of better support and outcomes for children and young people and for foster carers. The Ofsted report was published at the end of August and presented separately to the Corporate Parent meeting in September 2016.
 - w) The Brighter Futures model continues to attract a lot of external interest. The programme won a national Award with the Municipal Journal (MJ) Achievement Awards 2016 in June 2016 in the Reinventing Public Services category and was a Finalist in the LGC awards in March 2016.

4. Financial

a) Financial impact on the budget (mandatory)

The authority initially accessed £3.5m from a DfE Grant to implement the programme from January 2015 – March 2016.

Additional funding of £3.1m was approved in July 2016 from the Council's Investment Fund.

The programme is expected to deliver savings over 3 years of approximately £7.6m. This includes a reduction in the LAC population of 30% to 250 children, through prevention and more effective family interventions and a marked increase in numbers of in house foster carers rather than more expensive out of borough residential and specialist foster care.

5. Legal

The proposal is set within existing Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

6. Value for Money

The proposal will enable the authority to work towards delivering increased value for money from the substantial budgets allocated to children's placements each year through increasing the local supply rather than reliance on more expensive out of borough and residential placements.

7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

N/A

8. Risk Management

There will be risks associated in transforming the authority's placement strategy and transitioning to a new structure but these will be reviewed on a case by case basis with the aim of reducing risk whilst increasing protective factors for young people.

9. Community Safety

Increasing community safety and reducing risk of young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour will be part of the proposal as it will target the increasing number of adolescents who enter the care system in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour issues aged 15 and above.

10. Links to the 5 Priorities for the Borough

If none, say so. Please keep to one paragraph.

The 5 Priorities are:

- **Making Ealing Safer**
- **Securing Public Services**
- **Securing Jobs and Homes**
- **Delivering Value for Money**
- **Making Ealing Cleaner**

The programme specifically addresses the key priority to Make Ealing Safer – through intensive work and improved safeguarding of the most vulnerable children and young people. It also prioritises Delivering Value for Money through development of a more cost effective placements strategy.

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

By better responding to young people's expressed views regarding their placements and wish to remain locally community cohesion will be enhanced.

11. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications

These implications are being continuously considered as part of the consultation processes for the wider programme roll out.

13. Property and Assets

There are no property implications.

14. Any other implications:

N/A

15. Consultation

Ongoing consultation with young people, staff and foster carers underpins the proposal.

Consultation with staff is currently happening informally and will cont

16. Timetable for Implementation

The wider proposal will be implemented from April 2017.

17. Appendices

N/A

18. Background Information

N/A

Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				
External				

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
For information	NO
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries: Marcella Phelan
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