

Report to:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Relevant Officer:

Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director Children's Services

Date of Meeting:

24 June 2021

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To receive an update on Children's Social Care Improvement including an overview of the Children and Families Partnership Board and relationships with third sector partners.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To challenge the update provided and identify any areas for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of Children's Social Care improvement.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 Children's Social Care Improvement – Overview of the Children and Families Partnership Board.

The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive of the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Chief Superintendent have established the Children and

Families Partnership Board as primary partners in Blackpool to bring together the collective strategic aims of services in Blackpool and ensure that there is unified vision for children and families. It brings together key members of public, private and third sector organisations with a focus on family life in Blackpool. The primary responsibility of the Board is to develop meaningful and productive strategic oversight to the key challenges facing children and families in Blackpool and drive their respective organisations to developing innovative and shared approaches to addressing these with a joint sense of responsibility and ownership.

The Board's ambition is that by working together across the public, private and third sector we can deliver a transformed Blackpool, where all children and families thrive, are happy, engaged in their local communities, are healthy and safe and have fun.

The Board meets quarterly and receives updates from other boards such as the Getting to Good Board, SEND, Blackpool School Improvement Board and Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership.

There are three priority areas, which are:

Inclusion

- How we as partners make sure that our universal and targeted services meet the needs of a varied population- making sure there is equality of opportunity. Inclusion means levelling up – not reducing opportunities that already exist.
- This is not just about education (though it is a key lever) but exposure to employment, skills development, safe and inclusive communities, accessible services, good quality housing, lifelong learning, relationships within and across communities, perceptions and engagement with public services (Health, Schools, Police, Council)

Literacy

- Whole life and community wide literacy – not just children and young people.
- Digital literacy is a factor we need to address for families.

Social Impact of Poverty

- How do we support our already deprived communities collectively to cope with the economic, health and social impact of Covid19 alongside our levels of deprivation?
- How do we address the symptoms of poverty within communities and work with them to develop resilience, strength and improve outcomes?
- How do we support our families, children and young people to live well?
- How do we increase employment opportunities for our communities, and make sure they can access them and prosper?
- What (more) can we do to address the impact of poor quality housing – so that it is less of a feature in our communities?
- How do we reduce NEET for our young people?
- How do we ALL support “second chances” for our young people who have been failed by the system?

6.2 To receive an update in relation to relationships with Third Sector partners

At a strategic level, the third Sector is represented by Mike Crowther (CEO Empowerment) who is a board member on the re-established Children and Families Partnership Board. At an operational level, the Blackpool Families Rock Implementation Group meets monthly and as well as including agencies, parents and young people and carers, there is third sector representation from Blackpool Carers Centre and Empowerment.

The group has a future focus upon neglect, a revised Child in Need offer and the launch of an Early Help Strategy.

An Early Help Strategy is planned to be implemented across Blackpool, the responsible officer Joanne Stewart will be engaging with the voluntary sector in order to support them in the delivery of Early Help.

6.2.1 Family Hubs/Early Help

The Family Hub board benefits from wider representation of organisations large and small that work with children and families in Blackpool including the football club, Boys and Girls Club, Magic Club, local churches, Fulfilling Lives and New Routes. As services plan Covid recovery, it is anticipated that there will be more organisations operating services from Hubs or spokes, as Horizon, a drug and alcohol support service, have done who plan to deliver drop in sessions for parents from Hubs in June.

Through the A Better Start work, the Council continues to work with NSPCC as one of the key delivery partners to deliver bespoke programs (such as For Baby's Sake).

6.2.2 HeadStart's work with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Blackpool:

Collaboration Work:

The Resilience Revolution is a collaboration between the HeadStart Team, and two VCS organisations: 'boingboing' and the 'Centre of Resilience for Social Justice'. The Resilience Revolution is founded upon the original concept of 'Resilient Therapy' and its associated inequalities-related research. The Resilience Revolution is a whole town approach to resilience, and in Blackpool, there is an open invitation for all VCS organisations to get involved. Organisations are supported to embed a resilience approach, and there are a number of organisations who have successfully done this, which include The Grand Theatre, Blackpool Football Club Community Trust, Aiming Higher and The Carers Centre.

Apprenticeships:

HeadStart Blackpool offers the opportunity for VCS organisations to apply for a funded apprenticeship, for a young person aged between 16 and 21. The funding enables the organisation to recruit an apprentice, and the apprentice is offered opportunities to link in with the Resilience Revolution, for example – training, attending conferences, being involved

in co-production groups. Two young people have completed an apprenticeship and have gone on to secure full time employment. There is one young person who has just commenced an apprenticeship.

Resilience Resolution:

This project supports young people and VCS youth organisations to work together to bring about meaningful change across Blackpool. The project supports young people to challenge injustice and campaign for change. A team member from the HeadStart Team, plus some young people, will work alongside the VCS organisation. Funding is available for organisations to recruit a Sessional Worker, who will work alongside young people to develop a youth change movement. To apply for the Sessional Worker role, the applicant must be aged between 16 and 21, and is an opportunity for a young person who has previously been supported by the VCS organisation to step up and make the transition into a worker role. There is also funding available to support the identified campaign.

Youth Engagement:

HeadStart's Youth Engagement team work alongside VCS organisations to offer a range of opportunities for young people who are aged 10 – 16. Examples of this include:

- 'Open up the Mic' is delivered alongside ShowTown, and is a project that used stand-up comedy as a means for engaging young people, to develop their confidence.
- 'Digital Arts Award' is delivered alongside The Grand Theatre and a local college, where young people develop their skills around the use of digital technology, in completion the young people will leave an accreditation.
- 'Blackpool Youth Network' – brings together professionals and young people from a range of Blackpool youth organisations to link in with each other and identify opportunities for collaborative working.
- 'Blackpool Youth Climate Group' – this is a group of young people and professionals from various organisations who developed a Citizen Assembly for Blackpool young people to attend. From this, they are now an established group who are looking to engage communities, families, businesses and decision makers to educate and change perceptions and attitudes around climate change and the environment.

6.2.3 Training/Workshops

The team offer a number of different training sessions, which are free for VCS organisations to attend. The organisations can attend open access training, or bespoke training is available if an organisation would like to have their whole staff team trained. Training includes Introduction to Resilient Therapy, Practitioner Resilience, Academic Resilience Approach, and Building Resilience in Parents/Carers. Organisations are offered free spaces on a four day training course, which aims to increase their knowledge on Resilience Therapy and empower them to feel confident in being a co-leader in the Resilience Revolution.

Third sector organisations continue to take up Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership training opportunities. There has always been good third sector take up for our training – in 2020/21, 279 out of 1,271 attendees were from the third sector (this is across the whole Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire area).

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.