

Report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 31st July 2003

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Social Services, since my last report to Council.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Children's Pilot Trust

- 2.1.1 On the 9th July, it was announced by the Department of Health that we had been successful in becoming one of the first Children's Trust pathfinders.

- 2.1.2 The aim of the pilot is to bring together all the different agencies' that work with disabled children and get them all working closer together in a more co-ordinated and integrated way.

- 2.1.3 I am delighted that Nottinghamshire has been chosen to pilot this new way of working. This gives us a great opportunity to improve the way services for disabled children are co-ordinated. Our aim will be to ensure that disabled children enjoy the highest quality of life possible and gain the maximum benefits from education, health care and social care.

- 2.1.4 A professional can now be employed whose sole responsibility will be to work closely with all the agencies that provide services to disabled children and will include Social Services, Health and Education and other partner agencies.

- 2.1.5 There are around 6,000 disabled children in Nottinghamshire, with the number gradually rising, following an increase in recent years of children diagnosed with varying types of autism. This number includes children and young people with physical, learning, sensory and/or communication disabilities and disabilities caused by chronic illness or health conditions.

2.2 Extra Care Money from Government

2.2.1 The Government wants to drive forward the development of real choice for older people. Not just theoretical choice, but practical choice.

Extra care housing will be part of a range of services including good quality residential care, flexible home care services and community living options..

This money is available for innovative schemes, involving either the public or private sector. We want to see real partnership coming up with ideas that suit local communities.

Extra care housing can offer flexible care, with 24-hour support from social care and health teams, providing:

- Out of hours services with mobile support to older;
- A familiar and supportive living environment for people with dementia;
- Opportunities for older people to provide volunteer support to the wider community and conversely, local schools and individuals offering help to older tenants; and
- Communal space, facilities and well-being services for use by the wider population; some extra care housing provide GP surgeries, restaurant facilities, alternative therapy centres and exercise facilities

2.3 Mental Health and Learning Disability – Use of Health Act Flexibilities

2.3.1 The Healthcare Trust provide the majority of services for people with Mental Health problems with the Local Authority managing the Social Work service sitting within the multi disciplinary Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), the resource centres and the small Community Support Teams.

2.3.2 The National Service Framework requires the development of a range of new services and the single line management of the CMHTs in order to deliver better co-ordination of services and clear lines of accountability.

2.3.3 In the North we have agreed arrangements for the modernisation of these services with the PCTs, the Trust and our staff. This involves seconding CMHT social work staff to the Trust whilst retaining our provider services. These will be managed by a head of social care who will also act as professional lead for seconded social work staff.

2.3.4 In the South negotiations have been more challenging due to the complexities of the City/Council boundaries. However we have now agreed that the CMHTs will be reconfigured to the coterminous with PCT boundaries which are largely in parallel with the 2 Local authorities. We are now wishing to move on with the development of single line management, agreeing the structures and lead arrangements by November and looking to an implementation date of March 2004.

- 2.3.5 In Learning Disability the opposite is true. The Local Authority is the lead agency for this service area having responsibility for the Partnership Board and the corporate agenda in ensuring social inclusion and employment highlighted in the White Paper, Valuing People.
- 2.3.6 Currently, both the Trust and the Local Authority provide short breaks, day care and assistance to employment. The day services and Short Breaks review highlight the need to integrate these services with specialist Health staff providing support into community settings.
- 2.3.7 In addition, we are looking to introduce lead arrangements and single line management within our Community Learning Disability Teams with the nursing staff seconded to the Local Authority. Again we want to confirm lead arrangements and structures by November 2003 and implement by March 2004.
- 2.3.8 These developments will be taken forward through negotiation with key stakeholders and staff and trade unions in both organisations, with support from senior personnel representatives.
- 2.3.9 Both of these developments will be possible through the use of Health Act Flexibilities enabling us to integrate services, pool budgets and agree lead commissioning.

2.4 The Children's Fund

- 2.4.1 The Children's Fund has been established by Government as part of the drive to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. As with other parts of the government agenda there is an expectation that the Children's Fund Programme will provide 'joined up' solutions across agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to children's problems that often span health, education and social services responsibilities. The Children's Fund is intended to meet needs and develop good practice for services for vulnerable children aged 5 to 13, supporting them and their families in moving out of disadvantage.
- 2.4.2. The Fund is delivered through a partnership involving the County Council, Health, Police, Youth Offending Teams and the Voluntary Sector, Nottinghamshire's Children's Fund is led by the voluntary sector through NAVO (Networking Action for Voluntary Organisations), with the County Council acting as accountable body.
- 2.4.3 Following extensive mapping of need and consultation, it was agreed that our Children's Fund Programme would target three neighbourhoods.
- Worksop South East (Bassetlaw)
 - Devon (Newark & Sherwood)
 - Eastwood South (Broxtowe)

2.4.4 In addition, six specific groups of children across the whole of the County who are particularly at risk of social exclusion.

- disabled children and children with special educational needs.
- children whose race or culture places them at risk of social exclusion.
- young carers.
- children experiencing the effects of domestic violence.
- children living in the traveller community.
- young people aged up to 13 identified as being at risk of offending.

2.4.5 Nottinghamshire has been allocated a total of £6.6 million over the financial years 2003/2006 to spend on the Children's Fund. Through a process of identifying needs and seeking expressions of interest to meet specific objectives, the Children's Fund is funding, or has funded, over 100 different projects, of these 91 are continuing to receive funding. In May, the Children's Fund published its first annual report, which gives details of each of the projects. The projects are spread across the County; some are developing new and innovative practice within the County Council, whilst others are supporting the voluntary sector to enhance their service to prevent needs escalating.

2.4.6 Last summer 26 quick win or early start up projects were developed. These ranged from a series of trips out for children living in a women's refuge, to arts workshops for disabled children to a two-week play scheme at Brookhill Leys School, Eastwood. These projects have recently been evaluated. They were all thought to be valuable and worthwhile. All had positive evaluation from the children and young people using the services. However, one of the challenges facing the Children's Fund is to develop tools and techniques that engage with children's creative imagination to produce feedback that may be very expressive and qualitatively rich, whilst at the same time allowing the information to be analysed to produce easily represented written reports.

2.4.7 The response from service providers about the work of the Central Children's Fund Team was very positive. These staff are line managed through Social Services and were thought to be friendly supportive and helpful.

2.4.8 Children's fund projects are subject to ongoing evaluation to ensure that we learn from the projects and that this learning is integrated into our mainstream services. This is occurring both nationally and locally. In Nottinghamshire, particular areas of focus include:

- Involving younger children in meaningful participation in shaping services.
- Showing evidence locally that early intervention is working.
- Ways of engaging families who do not typically engage with services.
- Presenting services which are targeted in a non-stigmatising way.

4.4.9 This evaluation and the evaluations of our Sure Start Programmes will be invaluable in helping us to develop our Preventative Strategy.

COUNCILLOR ANTHONY
Cabinet Member for Social Services