



30th November 2020

Agenda Item: 17

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK**

**REMODELLING PRACTICE WITHIN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
DEPARTMENT THROUGH STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides a progress update of the Remodelling Practice programme within the Children and Families Department.

Information

2. On 18th June 2018, the Committee approved funding to support improvements in the quality of social work practice.
3. On 17th December 2018, an update was provided to the Committee on the establishment of a programme of work entitled 'Remodelling Practice'. The purpose of the Remodelling Practice programme is to create a sustainable delivery model for services for vulnerable children and families which is high quality and financially sustainable. The programme aims to develop a positive working environment and provide teams with the tools and support to do their jobs in the most effective and efficient way, enabling the improvement of outcomes for children and families.
4. On 18th March 2019, the Committee approved a proposal to embed strengths-based practice as a consistent practice model within Youth, Families and Social Work. Subsequently, this has been adopted as the practice model across the Children and Families Department.
5. On 16th December 2019, the Committee approved external promotion of the Department's strengths-based practice model.

Embedding strengths-based practice

6. Strengths-based practice is centred on working 'with' colleagues, partners and children, rather than 'doing to', to assess, plan and manage work with children and families.
7. In 2020, work has focused on building on our existing strengths-based practice to create consistency and ensure that processes, workforce development and the way we work with each other reflects this approach. This has included the following achievements:

- group reflective supervision implementation across frontline social care teams, and planning to embed within other youth, families and social work teams. This allows teams to spend time together reflecting on their work through the eyes of a child, using an informed strengths-based approach. The sessions support the building of relationships and peer support within teams to find alternative solutions and progress plans for children.
 - beginning the delivery of a comprehensive training plan which incorporates learning for all staff around strengths-based approaches and how these will be embedded across the service, as well as ensuring that there are learning and development opportunities to gain practice knowledge and skills. This has included a virtual full department development session; further information is provided at **paragraph 8** of this report.
 - successful pilot and implementation of Schwartz Rounds, a multi-disciplinary forum which allows workers to come together to reflect upon and discuss the emotional impact of the work they do. This work has been undertaken in partnership with the Point of Care Foundation and Cardiff University.
 - engaged with children and workers about the language which we use and the impact of this, and development of a plan to embed preferred language into practice.
 - adopted a strengths-based approach to planning assessments across district child protection teams.
 - introduction of revised Personal Education Plans for children who are Looked After which align with a strengths-based approach.
 - consulted with teams about the information they require and included this within the launch of new intranet pages which are a hub for information and tools relating to strengths-based practice, latest policies and guidance.
 - celebrated success of our colleagues and the children we work with through Covid-19.
8. To mark the Department's commitment to embedding a strengths-based practice model, a full-service strengths-based practice development event was held on 7th October 2020; this is the second annual event with the first taking place in October 2019. The event featured a nationally and internationally known key note speaker, Professor David Shemmings, who is an expert in relationally-based social work theory, research and practice and allowed the workforce time to reflect on how they will further embed a strengths-based way of working. The event was attended virtually by over 600 colleagues, including Councillor Tracey Taylor, Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee, who introduced the event and pledged her continued support to this way of working. The event was the largest virtual session the Council has held to date. As of 27th October 2019, 97% of attendees said that strengths-based practice has had a positive impact on their work over the last year.
9. Colleagues who attended the practice development day were asked to identify key learning from the event and how they will embed this in their practice. The feedback from staff will be incorporated into the next stages of the plan to further embed a strengths-based practice model, which also includes the following priority work areas:

- continued delivery of a comprehensive training plan, including an annual full department event
- introducing group reflective supervision for managers
- working with colleagues to further embed a strengths-based approach within child and family assessments
- embedding a strengths-based approach within Child Protection Conferences, working closely with a clinical psychologist from the Education Psychology Service, using learning from other local authorities and working with partner agencies
- building on our existing tools and resources available for working directly with children and families
- working with managers to embed learning into support and supervisions, chairing meetings and ensuring good practice

Other Options Considered

10. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. The report provides an opportunity for the Committee to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

13. Costs associated with the implementation of strengths-based practice are met from the Youth, Families and Social Care budget.

Implications for Service Users

14. Further implementation of strengths-based practice will improve the quality of service to children, young people and families who have contact with the Children and Families Department.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee considers whether any further action is required in relation to the progress update of the Remodelling Practice Programme within the Children and Families Department.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Holly Smitheman
Project Manager
T: 0115 977 4874
E: holly.smitheman@nottscc.gov.uk
Constitutional Comments (LW 13/11/20)

15. Children & Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)

16. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Supporting improvement in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 June 2018](#)

[Update on supporting improvements in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17 December 2018](#)

[Youth, Families and Social Work Framework for Practice – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 March 2019.](#)

[Remodelling Practice within the Children and Families Department – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16 December 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1410