



CHILDREN'S SERVICE WORKING LOCALLY
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE
(REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)

29TH JANUARY 2007

KEY ISSUE

A report from the Children's Service due in September 2006 was postponed due to the recent restructure and outstanding key vacancies along with new staff addressing new priorities. Social care provision for Children and Families is complex and varied but a business plan is now under consideration and the new Locality Manager for Reigate and Banstead is attending the committee meeting to give an overview of local arrangements, to receive Members' comments and to feed them back into the process.

SUMMARY

For some time now the Children's Service has been working towards integrating Social Care with Education, as these frequently overlap and officers from both disciplines work with the same family at different times. It is more productive for professional colleagues to liaise with each other so that the family has continuity of care, rather than sporadic interaction with a number of officers who may not necessarily be aware of other interventions. The new structure has put in place Locality Managers in each borough/district towards making this process more robust.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the report and reflect back to the service any local issues of concern or interest, and
- (ii) Offer continuing support to local projects and make suggestions concerning what they would like to see in the new business plan.
- (iii) Monitor progress of the new service targets and receive feedback from officers on targets and outcomes at an agreed time.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Children's Service has recently restructured and as part of this process, specialist functions such as Complex Needs (Disabilities), Adoption and Fostering have been separated out under one senior manager and are now delivered countywide from bases in the east and/or west of the County.
- 1.2 The former Area Team Managers are now known as Integrated Service Managers and have responsibility for setting up and maintaining integrated Social Care and Education provision to children and families on an area basis.
- 1.3 Although integration of services is not a new concept, its implementation requires significant cultural change in order to make it work effectively at the point of delivery. The recent restructure has created an opportunity to move this forward, with the introduction of Locality Teams in each district/borough.

2 SPECIALIST TEAM WORKING

- 2.1 The specialist teams cover a wide area and are also undergoing review. The Fostering team is in the process of an assessment due to be completed in late January 2007, and the outcomes will be available to Members shortly thereafter.
- 2.2 The Disabilities team, which was previously split into four area teams coterminous with the Children's area teams and reporting to each area manager, has reverted to two teams countywide covering the east and west and now reports to a Specialist Manager.
- 2.3 The primary concern of the specialist teams is to work with Looked After Children.

3 LOCALITY TEAM WORKING

- 3.1 Surrey Children's Service co-located Education and Social Care teams into Locality Teams in August 2006, and appointed a Locality Manager for the Reigate and Banstead Team who commenced in November 2006. The team is based at the Omnibus Building, in Reigate.
- 3.2 The Locality Manager is responsible for ensuring that a fully integrated, locality-based, targeted service, for defined vulnerable young people and children and families in Reigate and Banstead, is identified and delivered at the earliest point by its multi-professional team.
- 3.3 These vulnerable young people will include children with special educational needs, children with English as a second language, children with emotional/behavioural difficulties and children with school attendance issues.

- 3.4 A significant amount of the work of the Social Care part of the team is with children who are significantly at risk of harm at home, and whose names have consequently been placed on the Surrey County Council Child Protection Register. The remainder of the direct work with children and families is largely with children at a high level of need, and a small number who are Looked After by the Local Authority.
- 3.5 The Locality Manager is also responsible for ensuring effective performance management for both individuals and the team, and that action to meet targets and improved service delivery are met, as well as appropriate risk management of all cases and effective management of the local budget.
- 3.6 As the designated complaints officer, the Locality Manager deals with stage one complaints in accordance with Departmental and Children Act 1989 criteria. The Local Education Officer addresses parental complaints about schools.
- 3.7 This is a challenging time for the locality teams on a number of levels:
- Professionals have had to adopt a different way of working, sharing their knowledge and best practice with colleagues from other disciplines;
 - Moving to the area office in Reigate has increased the distance between base and the schools and families that the team works with; and
 - The facilities for parking or providing family friendly rooms have diminished.
- 3.8 However, despite some initial misgivings, there is a positive approach by members of the team with an acknowledgement of the benefits of a multi-professional team sitting alongside each other.

4 STRUCTURE AND WORKLOAD

- 4.1 The Reigate and Banstead Locality Manager is supported by three Assistant Team Managers, who are responsible for the monitoring and supervision of 'open cases' allocated to Social Workers and Family Support Workers. They are also responsible for the timeous movement of cases between different parts of the organisation, for example from the Locality Team to the Children's Team, and from the Assessment Team to the Locality Team.
- 4.2 In addition to managing the work of the Assistant Team Managers, the Locality Manager is responsible for the management of the Education Welfare Officers and Educational Psychologists who are allocated to the locality, and the Lead Professional for the South East Area's Behaviour Support Teachers.
- 4.3 The Locality Manager works with the Manager of the Home Tuition Coordinators, to ensure an integrated approach for all children in need of special support, either in or out of school.

- 4.4 The team also provides:
- 10 Social Workers
 - 4 Family Support Workers
 - 4 Trainee Social Workers
 - 6 Educational Psychologists
 - 2 Learning and Language Teachers
 - 1 Behaviour Support Area Specialist
 - 1 Behaviour Support Teacher
 - 2 Behaviour Support Assistants
 - 3 Education Welfare Officers
- 4.5 All posts are filled by permanent staff, although due to workload pressures in the Social Care part of the team, (for example, maternity leave and commitments to ongoing training for social workers), locum staff are appointed, on occasion.
- 4.6 The bulk of the work comes into the Locality Team through the Contact Centre and the East Assessment Team although work also comes from other Local Authorities (for example children on another local authority's Child Protection Register), and from direct referrals from within the team (for example from one of the Education Welfare Officers).
- 4.7 The Education Welfare Officers currently have 184 'cases' open to them. Reigate and Banstead will have 5 truancy patrols in the borough in the first half of 2007. There are 16,613 pupils registered at schools within Reigate and Banstead. Of these, 516 children have a statement of special educational needs and another 1,107 are on School Action Plus.

5 LOCAL KEY SERVICE PROVISION AND INTEGRATED WORKING

- 5.1 The unitary management structure of the team, and the close proximity of colleagues from different disciplines, is beginning to realise its potential benefits.
- 5.2 One of the barriers to this aim is that current administrative processes do not assist in flexible allocation of resources. For example, if an Education Welfare Officer needs to make a referral for Social Care assistance, the referral has to go out of the Locality Team, to the Contact Centre, for allocation. Anomalies such as these are being addressed as and when they become apparent.
- 5.3 The team is in the process of creating a Team Development Plan, which is intended to be finalised by April 2007. This will provide the blueprint for the ongoing development of seamless and complementary provision of service, both within the team, and in relation to partner agencies and other teams within the Children's Service.

- 5.4 Close working with schools, other teams and specialist education resources is achieved by a regular panel meeting to consider children's needs in an integrated way, as well as regular meetings between Managers of the Locality Teams and the Specialist Teams in the area.
- 5.5 The Locality Manager coordinates the regular termly meetings which are held by the two established confederations in the area - Horley Learning Partnership, and the North Downs Federation, which covers schools in the Banstead area. The schools in Reigate, Redhill and Merstham have not yet formed a confederation, although the Local Education Officer is working with them towards this. The staff from the Locality Team attend meetings as necessary to discuss resource allocation and specific school and individual student issues.
- 5.6 Positive feedback has been received about the more responsive and seamless provision of assistance under the new structure. A very recent example being from a Surrey Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), when a young person currently on the Child Protection Register (because of concerns about violence at home), moved temporarily to an adjacent Local Authority. The Head Teacher, whose expectation was that administrative barriers would be raised to the young person's continued attendance at the PRU, which was seen as the main focus of continuity for the child, was positively impressed by the child centred approach taken within the locality to ensure ongoing attendance at the PRU.
- 5.7 Members have received an anonymised vignette of a case which further illustrates the advantages of integrated working.
- 5.8 It is anticipated that other benefits will become apparent both to service users and to referring professionals over time. Members may be able to assist in the process of highlighting the new arrangements and it's benefits in contact with both constituents and other agencies.

6 LOCAL FOSTERING

- 6.1 As noted above, Fostering services to Reigate and Banstead Locality are now provided by a Fostering Team which covers the East of the County. The Team is based in the Omnibus building in Reigate, which assists close communication and liaison with the Locality Team.
- 6.2 The fostering team provides support and supervision for 133 foster carers, who care for approximately 200 children at any given time – this number of children has increased by 15% over the last year.
- 6.3 Demand for foster placements can be unpredictable, and there is a need for ongoing recruitment of carers for the children and young persons of Reigate and Banstead. In particular, there is a need for the recruitment of black and other ethnic minority carers.

- 6.4 Foster homes cater for emergency, short-term respite, bridging, task centred and long term placements, for young people ranging in age from birth to twenty-one years of age.
- 6.5 The current focus of recruitment is on finding carers for teenagers, ethnic minorities and young persons who have a disability
- 6.6 Currently, it is not possible to guarantee that all young persons who become Accommodated, will be found a placement in the Reigate and Banstead area. On occasion, placements have to be sought from the West Fostering Team, and where absolutely unavoidable, from the private provision. In every instance, great efforts are made to ensure continuity of education provision, wherever the young person is placed. Again, the integration of education and social care represented by the Locality Team, helps to ensure that responsive and flexible packages for education are identified and put in place, (in the instances where a young person may have special educational needs, or a history of non attendance at school), prior to becoming Accommodated.
- 6.7 The team provides carers with support in a number of ways. This includes evening and daytime support groups, regular training and a buddy scheme.
- 6.8 Any assistance which members can provide in raising the awareness of the need for foster carers, particularly among ethnic minorities would be extremely helpful in ensuring that in the long run, all Reigate and Banstead Looked After Children can be placed in their local area.

7 PRIVATE FOSTERING

- 7.1 Members will be aware that following the implementation of the Children Act 2004, and related Private Fostering Regulations, there is an increased emphasis on the identification and management of Private Fostering placements. In Surrey, responsibility for this has been devolved to the Locality Teams.
- 7.2 Currently there are only two such placements in Reigate and Banstead, but there tends to be a general issue of under identification and reporting (as highlighted by the Victoria Climbié Report).
- 7.3 The integrated nature of the Locality Teams provide an excellent opportunity to address the issue of under reporting, particularly through close liaison and raising awareness with schools

8 CHILD PROTECTION

- 8.1 There are currently 23 children's names on the Surrey Child Protection Register (CPR) under the responsibility of Reigate and Banstead Locality Team. This represents 37% of the children on the CPR in South East Surrey (Reigate and Banstead, Tandridge and Mole Valley).
- 8.2 This represents a drop from 52% of the total registered in South East Surrey the previous months. There is no obvious reason for this proportional change, but given the small data set involved, these changes can be volatile and need to be treated with caution when drawing any conclusions.
- 8.3 Tracking on a Borough basis over a further period of time will determine whether or not there is an underlying trend, either upwards or downwards.
- 8.4 The above figures, however, do not represent all of the children from Reigate and Banstead Borough, as a number of other children are the responsibility of the Assessment Team, Children's Team and the Complex Needs Team which covers the East of the County. It is not possible at this time to extract the information in regard to these teams from the Child Protection Register on a Borough basis.
- 8.5 The Reigate and Banstead figure appears disproportionately high in comparison with the population of the Boroughs, however it will be necessary to compute the registration rate per 10,000 population for each of the three South East Boroughs, in order to determine whether the rate of registration is in fact higher in Reigate and Banstead.
- 8.6 The absence of Borough based Management Information is a general issue, arising from the relatively new current arrangement, and the resultant need to reconfigure systems.
- 8.7 This Management information is kept under regular review, as is the need for improvements in the collection and analysis of the data, by the South East Safeguarding Children Board (part of the South East Strategic Partnership).
- 8.8 The Surrey Local Safeguarding Board undertakes the overall strategic management and development of the safeguarding function in Surrey. The local South East Safeguarding Board consists of key members of the South East Strategic Partnership Board.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 It is too early to state what impact the new structure has had on the local community, but there is good collaborative working between the Reigate and Banstead Locality Team, LEO (Local Education Office) team, confederation coordinators, Headteachers and PCT (Primary Care Trust.)
- 9.1 The priority is safeguarding children. An integrated team ensures that the most effective resources are targeted and delivered, thus ensuring the best outcomes for children/young families. A prompt response is ensured through information sharing, resulting in allocating the appropriate professional.
- 9.2 Any concerns can be raised through the Contact Centre, Locality Team Manager, Integrated Services Manager or Local Education Officer and will be dealt with promptly.
- 9.3 The Locality Team Manager will be formulating a business plan for the locality at the earliest opportunity and would welcome input from Members at this early stage.
- 9.4 Data focusing on borough or locality boundaries is not yet refined, but is a priority in assisting with focus for the service and clear target setting and measuring of outcomes. Processes for collecting and managing this data are underway and members will be kept updated on the information available.
- 9.5 Any support that Members can give to existing or future initiatives would be most welcome.

The Local Committee is asked to:

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- (ii) Offer continuing support to local projects and make suggestions concerning what they would like to see in the new business plan.
- (iii) Monitor progress of the new service targets and receive feedback from officers on targets and outcomes at an agreed time.

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