

SAFEGUARDING SUB COMMITTEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Thursday 1 October 2020
Presentation by

Sandra Bruce	Assistant Director Early Help & School Readiness
Tony Decrop	Assistant Director Social Care & Safeguarding
Julien Kramer	Interim Assistant Director Education & Inclusion

Agenda

- **Impact of Covid-19**
- **Early Help**
- **Education**
- **Social Care**
- **Ofsted Update**

Children's Services as a whole

Impact of Covid-19

- The pandemic has affected day to day activity but we have robust systems in place to deliver services
- Staff and Services have engaged in a substantial programme of adjustment and support.
- Early Help Teams have successfully worked with families to provide advice & support as well as with schools to track children most in need
- Statutory Social work processes have been maintained
- Schools have reopened and are managing a difficult and changing picture re Covid infections
- Staff morale has remained positive with very low numbers of sickness
- We are now having to manage staff who need to care for children who need to isolate and continue to work flexibly
- We have managed a focused visit from our regulator Ofsted

Early Help & Early Years

Managing the pandemic: Success Measures

- At the height of closures we were able to ensure that every key worker and vulnerable child had a place at nursery
- We have continued to monitor numbers in nursery and make returns to DfE. We now have 1810 children back into provision
- We have had several outbreaks of Covid both in children and adults but our nurseries have managed this well and all but one remained open to other children
- Over the summer Early Help staff worked on Fit and Fed. We had approximately 54 of our families attend over the three weeks. We have reported to Cabinet on other summer activity we supported our families to access
- Our Locality Teams have continued to deliver wrap around support to schools and families when needed

Early Help & School Readiness

The current State of Play: What is being delivered

- We now have 75% of settings open, with increasing numbers of children in attendance
- Bespoke support is being provided by Early Years advisors linked to clusters of settings
- We have supported all settings to access the investin Team in Bury or the Growth Hub for financial advice. To date all settings have been able to manage the financial pressure but we continue to monitor through our sufficiency survey
- We continue to support schools and police colleagues regarding domestic abuse notifications and immediate support to families
- We have been able to hold a virtual careers fair this year and have had good media attention -this supports our young people to have clear destinations when leaving college
- We are re-introducing home visiting (with risk assessments)so we can better support our families
- We have received some investment from GM which we are investing in our youth service to increase our detached work

Early Help & School Readiness

What are our ambitions? Success Criteria:

- We want to continue with the regular lines of communication we now have in place through Early Help and Early Years
- We will continue providing a virtual service as well as direct contacts as some of our families prefer this
- Our Early Years advisors are now linked to nursery clusters and we will continue with this
- We have started to facilitate group discussions with nurseries and we will continue with this, virtually
- We have started work to extend our 'team around..' offer to preschool and colleges
- We are developing our integrated family offer which we will start to train and roll out towards the end of the year
- We are working closely with colleagues in Adult Services and Community to develop the integrated neighborhood working model

Early Help & School Readiness

Challenges and Mitigation

- Sufficiency – We need to have sufficient places for our parents – We are
 - Monitoring
 - Providing guidance and support
 - Directing providers to financial support so they can access all available help
- Staff Development - We have an ambitious vision to roll out an integrated Family Offer.
 - It is difficult to engage with staff virtually to build the momentum needed and train on new models of intervention but we are working through this using virtual mean and different platforms
- We have seen more staff affected by local nursery and school closure
 - Reviewing working patterns so we have more flexibility to respond
 - Tracking staffing so we can ensure we continue to provide services
- We have had a visit form our regulator Ofsted
 - We will respond to outcomes to continue to improve services

Children's Social Care & Safeguarding (CSC)

Managing the pandemic: Success Measures

- We have continued to provide an effective Safeguarding 'Front Door' through the provision of MASH/EDT and the Initial Response Teams working closely with partners
- Routine processes and multi-agency meetings for CIN, Child Protection and LAC have continued virtually
- All open cases to CSC have been risk assessed and continually reviewed, children have been physically visited where required
- We have provided extra support to children in care to support their placements where they have struggled with restrictions
- We have continued to recruit social workers and family support workers to the service
- We have supported vulnerable children engaging with the summer scheme
- Dip sampling of cases continues to ensure that risk assessments are appropriate and monthly file audits take place

Children's Social Care & Safeguarding (CSC)

The current State of Play: What is being delivered.

- All services continue to operate with some teams now office based attending on a rota basis adhering to Covid-19 safety protocols
- Increased direct face to face visits with children and facilitated family time with parents
- We have moved to holding Initial Child Protection with parents in attendance
- Hybrid Court Hearings now being held enabling care plans to progress
- Multi agency meetings continue to take place virtually using Microsoft Teams
- Supporting children to attend child care settings, schools and college
- Tracking vulnerable children not in school to ensure their safety
- Fortnightly reporting to the DFE on activity and performance

Children's Social Care & Safeguarding (CSC)

What are our ambitions? Success Criteria:

- To continue to provide a safe and responsive safeguarding service to vulnerable children
- To monitor referral patterns to CSC, between March & August 2020 there were 131 less than in same period 2019
- To progress plans for children which have been delayed and increase permanency planning arrangements.
- To continue to support and maintain children in their care and school placements and track vulnerable children not in school
- To commence roll out of next phase of Signs of Safety training virtually to all staff
- To have a successful Ofsted Safeguarding Assurance Visit

Children's Social Care & Safeguarding (CSC)

Challenges and Mitigation

- To monitor headline number of LAC and safely reduce to pre-Covid-19 averages, 1st March 342, 30th August 359
- To ensure LAC & Care Leavers are supported into education & employment, September 16-18 years at 73% EET
- Placement Stability – Providing help to carers earlier and using creative packages of support.
- Budget Pressures – Month 5 ending CSC reporting £0.4M overspend
- Further Covid-19 Restrictions – Develop and implement further sustainable working practices
- Workforce – Support staff and their resilience through purposeful supervision and training/mentoring opportunities

Learning & Inclusion

Managing the pandemic: Success Measures.

- After the initial disruption of the pandemic, all Bury schools, and the Pru, have remained open, including throughout Easter and half-term holiday periods.
- All schools re-opened as planned at the beginning of September.
- Attendance, at 90% is below what would be expected and non attendance is being followed up.
- Distance learning is being offered for those pupils that are unable to attend school because of the need to self-isolate.
- Regular briefings are issued to schools.
- Weekly meetings of the Heads Advisory Group take place, as do meetings with unions and associations and of the School Cluster Groups.

Learning & Inclusion

The current State of Play:

- What is being delivered

- Robust Risk Assessment Guidance with support from the Local Authority has supported risk assessment from every school, with quality assurance process in place
- Continuation of programme to provide laptops to vulnerable children that are subject to lockdown and would have difficulties accessing distance learning
- Multi agency identification and support of vulnerable groups of children and young people including those with EHCPs and children in the LAC system
- National 'Wellbeing Return to Education' programme will be rolled out over the Autumn term

Learning & Inclusion

What are our ambitions? Success Criteria:

- Re-setting the Education Service. Supported and progressive return to learning for all pupils
- Re-setting of all school improvement programmes
- Facilitating and supporting the recovery curriculum
- Commissioning a review of distance learning and sharing good practice

Learning & Inclusion

Challenges and Mitigation

- The ongoing management of the impact of COVID on schools
- The Education Service needs to be re-set and recovered during a period of continuing risk to physical and mental health and well-being
- We need to complete the financial recovery programme, and manage within our means
- The Lean Service Review should be completed, in order that we can become a modern education service; schools-led, and with a resolute focus on Family Around the Child, and School

Learning & Inclusion

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Recovery

- £20m DSG overspend reported to Council and DfE
- DSG Recovery report to Cabinet approved September 2020
- All General Fund services removed from DSG and included in council Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- All education support services subject to lean service reviews and efficiencies
- Developed partnership arrangements for Education Psychology
- Early Help strategic approach to integration with SEND support
- Banded funding model for EHCP top-ups being developed
- Review of investment into Inclusion Partnerships, Hubs and school practices, to assess benefit/outcomes, being developed
- DfE DSG Management/Recovery template received September 2020, to be completed and signed by all stakeholders
- Spending controls and governance reviewed and applied

Ofsted Update

Verbal Update – Tony Decrop