

**Cabinet - 9 January 2014**

**Report of the Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People**

Electoral Division affected:

All

**Early Action Response**

Contact for further information:

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**Executive Summary**

This report sets out proposals for the establishment of an Early Action Response service, in collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary that will provide enhanced out-of-hours and intensive support to prevent the need for statutory assessment or intervention across children, young people and adults.

Following discussions with Lancashire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), it is proposed that £3m of the Strategic Investment Reserve allocation for the provision of additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) should be re-aligned in order to support this approach.

This proposal supports the county council's strategic aim to place a greater emphasis on managing and reducing demand through new prevention measures and offering earlier help for those who need it, providing a new basis for combining and targeting public services where they can be most effective.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 26 has been complied with.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to agree:

- (i) Re-alignment of a maximum of £3.0m strategic investment reserve allocation towards an early action approach (£1.0m for each of the next financial years subject to review);
- (ii) Development of a multi-disciplinary, integrated early response service in principle; and
- (iii) Support an approach to statutory and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) partner organisations to contribute resource to the early response service.

## Background and Advice

Across Lancashire there are a number of initiatives providing an early approach to the delivery of support services to children, young people (CYP) and adults. This includes:

### Children and Young People

- **Working Together with Families** – designed to reduce the number of services working with families and so reduce the duplication, cost and long term dependence on services. The aim is to work with, rather than doing to or for families, to increase resilience. The project utilises the government's Troubled Families funding to improve information sharing and reduce the number of families 'not coping' or 'just coping'.
- **Early Support** – provides a structure in each district through 'Hubs' which enable agencies to intervene early to support and build resilience amongst CYP and their families, particularly those that may be vulnerable, before poor outcomes develop. Support Panels facilitate better use of the common assessment framework (CAF) and aim to address gaps in service through using resources in the most effective way.
- **Edge of Care** – provides intensive support for families where CYP are at significant risk of being taken into care (fostering or adoption). This LCC commission is currently being delivered by Barnardo's working with up to 90 families across Lancashire.

These activities will be brought together under a single, early help offer to focus resource and ensure efforts impact on the right families providing a single point of contact, a single set of service pathways and a much reduced number of professionals needing to be involved through offering higher quality but more intensive and targeted interventions.

### Health and Well-being

- **Domestic Abuse Commission** – will provide support for CYP, victims and witnesses of domestic abuse and will provide programmes which challenge the behaviour and perceptions of perpetrators not subject to criminal justice orders.

In addition, there is a range of public health commissioned services that could both deliver both an early response to calls for service, and on-going support to increase well-being and resilience.

### Adults

- **Connect 4 Life** - is a form of local area coordination delivered by community connectors working with GP practices to support vulnerable service users with complex needs such as substance misuse, mental health, accommodation etc. working at times of crisis, the aim is to reduce

admissions to A&E, reduce length of stay and to support independent living. The project is currently being delivered in areas of central Lancashire.

- **Help Direct** – is a support and information service for all adults across Lancashire designed to help people get the right practical support, information and advice that they need before a small problem becomes a crisis.

## **2 Service Demand**

Evaluation of information from the police and social care, as shown below in more detail, identifies that there are clear correlations between service demand impacting on the police and referrals into social care. The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) which provides a response to urgent child protection and vulnerable adult issues receives a significant number of referrals relating to Children In Need (CiN) and domestic abuse from the police.

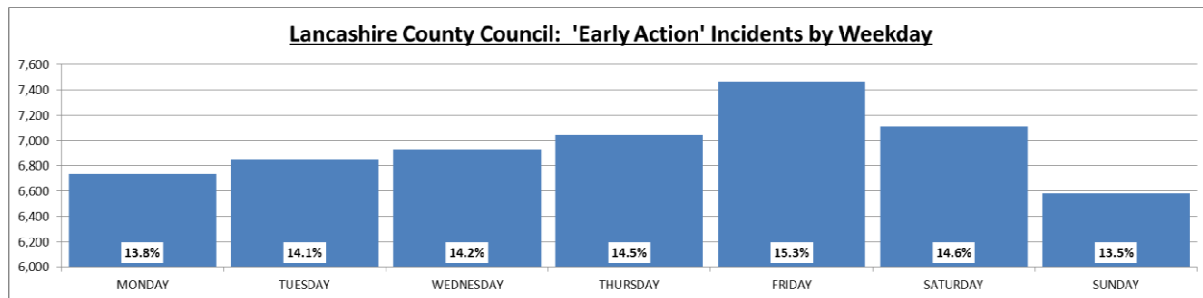
It is felt that the monies originally allocated for additional PCSO's could show a much greater impact if they were used to develop a targeted Early Action Response offer in key geographical locations. This approach will hopefully reduce demand pressures on both social care and the police.

### **Calls for Service – Lancashire Constabulary**

Research undertaken by Lancashire Constabulary has identified calls for service that could be categorised as 'Early Action' incidents. These incidents relate to 'Concerns for Safety' and 'Missing Persons' and those incidents with markers for Vulnerable Children, Vulnerable Adults and Mental Health. A review of Police Incidents over a 12 month period between 1 October 2012 and 31 September 2013 has revealed the following:

- during the period Lancashire Constabulary recorded 406,626 incidents across the 12 LCC Districts
- 48,720 (12%) of these incidents are deemed to be Early Action incidents. This equates to 133.5 Early Action Incidents per day, 936.9 per week and 4,060 per month
- 6,469 (13.3%) of the LCC Early Action incidents relate to Missing Persons
- the majority of Early Action incidents have occurred at Preston (15.5%), Lancaster (14.1%) and Burnley (10.9%).

Research also shows that the peak period in which Early Action incidents are most frequently reported is during the mid to late afternoon up until midnight. Friday's and Saturday's account for a higher rate of incidents with Sunday being the lowest.



## **Calls for Service – Lancashire County Council**

There have been rising rates of safeguarding activity across the county over the last 18 months including a sharp rise in referrals. The rate of referrals to children's social care was running at an average of 1,175 per month in 2011/12 but in the current year (2013/14) has risen by almost 50% to 1,760 per month. Much of the increase has been driven by increases in 'child in need' (CiN) and domestic violence cases. The numbers of children on CiN plans increased in every district over the 18 month period. The largest increases were seen in Preston (up 95%) and Burnley (up 98%).

On week days, the peak time for referrals of both CYP and Vulnerable Adults to EDT occurs between 5pm and 8pm with a further peak between 11pm and 12pm.

Whilst demand for statutory adult services in Lancashire is steady, possibly due to the presence of early action services referred earlier, given the predicted rise in older adults with complex or long-term conditions over coming years it remains a key priority to reduce the need for formal social care services by making sure that the right level of support is available when needed. This includes working with health partners to reduce the number of unnecessary hospital admissions and for vulnerable people who do require hospital treatment, the aim is to ensure safe and timely discharge into services that will help them to recover and regain their independence.

### **3 Proposed Early Response Activity**

An Early Action Response resource will support the management of referrals around families and CYP who are struggling to cope or in the early stages of not coping, and 'crisis' calls for vulnerable adults.

Operating within communities experiencing the most complex disadvantage, this approach will provide intense case work with the most vulnerable children, adults and families within those locations. This early response will prevent escalation by dealing with need before the point of crisis where harm becomes entrenched requiring both sustained and long-term intervention from statutory services across the public sector.

Lancashire Constabulary operates a Graded Response policy addressing both the maximum time required to respond and the type of response. It is anticipated the Early Response resource would operate largely at Grade 3 (planned response within 48 hours of an incident being reported) and at Grade 2 (response within 1 hour) in particular circumstances. In providing a prompt response, activity might include:

- missing person return interviews
- welfare checks for vulnerable members of the community e.g. child protection plans (CP), children in need (CiN)
- joint visits to vulnerable locations such as children's homes, hostels, youth clubs etc
- joint working with police Public Protection Units
- alignment with other initiatives addressing vulnerability and early help e.g. Early Support, Working Together with Families, Edge of Care, Connect 4 Life, Staysafe etc.
- initial liaison with hospitals and other health settings in relation to vulnerable persons admitted, e.g. children with unexplained injuries, adults at crisis point
- identification of household needs and production of relevant risk assessments in response to 'live' incidents
- delivery of key rapid interventions, sign-posting, referral and information sharing
- bridging the gap between core service operational hours and out-of-hours emergency response
- up-skilled operational staff across a range of disciplines and organisational boundaries
- delivery of real-time data sharing to facilitate decision making through access to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs(MASH)/Care Connect/EDT data systems
- enhanced understanding of key service remits and delivery pathways across all relevant services

## **Consultations**

Consultation has taken place with representatives of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and senior officers from Lancashire Constabulary, both of which are in support of this proposal. It will meet the aims of the PCC in minimising long-term harm to our communities, and will support the Early Intervention Pioneer Place status awarded by the Early Intervention Foundation. In addition, the proposal will align with the constabulary's approach to delivering early action and innovation through integrated public sector working. Discussions have also taken place across County Council services to identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration in the development of services which provide early help.

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## **Risk management**

## **Personnel**

It is proposed to create a number of dedicated Early Response posts within the County Council that operate alongside the police Early Action teams and the EDT to be deployed in up to 3 high demand areas of the county, with initial indications suggesting Preston and Burnley and possibly one other to be determined. Further

consideration could be given to drilling down into ward levels to provide a response service, holding case work to deliver an intensive and targeted range of interventions in order to reduce the risk of escalation to statutory services, and ideally to step down to early support. It is anticipated that many post holders will be social work qualified and will receive additional training to enable effective joint working with police officers and staff. Taking account of current social work pay grades and on-costs this will provide up to 27 additional (fixed term) full time equivalent (fte) posts. This is in comparison with the PCSO proposal which would have provided 48 match funded posts employed by Lancashire OPCC. Whilst exact details are yet to be determined, an integrated workforce to deliver an early response service could consist of staff from a range of disciplines including:

- generic social work
- child and parenting support
- youth work
- youth offending
- approved mental health workers
- police

Further development would provide the opportunity to engage other statutory services e.g. the North West Ambulance Service, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, and health partners, and to integrate VCFS provision and commissioned services in order to have the best skill mix available. Discussions are progressing with Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen Councils to identify opportunities for a similar approach.

The Early Response service could conduct joint visits with police officers and if appropriate act unilaterally and provide better outcomes when conducting welfare checks. It is envisaged that the Early Response service would hold a case load for a fixed period with the specific remit of working intensively with service users in order to provide effective support, enable access to appropriate provision, reduce harm, build strengths and independence and develop pathways to permanence or early support. This approach would effectively reduce demand for statutory services, provide respite for social care which has an escalating work load and reduce repeat calls to the constabulary.

Once development of this service is approved, a further report will be submitted detailing staffing proposals and implications.

## **Financial**

This proposal seeks permission to draw down a maximum of £3.0m over the next three financial years from the Strategic Investment Reserve (£1.0m per year). The project will lead to the development of multi-disciplinary Early Action Response Teams commencing in January 2014.

This project can be considered a capacity building and transformation project as it will provide capacity within the county council to address issues such as:

- Reducing demand on children and adult social care services; and,

- Improving outcomes for service users so that issues are addressed earlier in their development and at the "point of crisis" so contributing to demand control within more expensive care solutions.

This type of efficiency is illustrated by the example that there are currently a number of points where calls for service are received which includes the CART, Emergency Duty Team, Adult Intake and Assessment Service and the police Contact Management Unit. Future combination of these access points could provide a key opportunity to hasten both service responses and to improve the multi-agency information available to responding officers in a timely manner resulting in synergies and potential cost savings which have yet to be fully quantified.

It is proposed that the project will result in a number of service alignments within CYP and closer working in other areas. A detailed outcome and performance framework is currently being developed against which financial performance will be measured and against which savings or demand control will be identified. In April 2015 an interim review will be undertaken where initial opportunities to mainstream activities. In order to ensure that this project contributes to the overall strategic re-alignment of the county council the need for funds will be kept under review.

There is a commitment from Lancashire Constabulary to provide a matched resource (non-cash) to accompany the Early Response on deployments. This police resource will be drawn from existing established Early Action Teams and/or from Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This joint deployment approach will enable more effective and timely risk assessment of incidents supporting both the police decision making model and the County Council's commitment to providing early help where possible.

In addition, Lancashire Constabulary will look to facilitate the access of multi-agency data within their Contact Management Unit to provide the Early Response and Police Resource with as much relevant information as possible to effectively deal with the presenting issue.

Lancashire Constabulary is also seeking to support this approach through an application to the Police Innovation Fund to provide capital funding valued at £0.140m. This is a national funding pot aimed at supporting innovative approaches to enhanced collaboration and delivery of efficiencies.

This proposal will be kept under close scrutiny to ensure that it aligns to the county council re-shaping and contributes to the delivery of the overall financial strategy.

### **Crime and Disorder**

This proposal supports delivery against the key priorities of Lancashire Community Safety Strategy Group set out in the strategy assessment. This includes reducing the impact and harm caused by: crime and anti-social behaviour (domestic abuse; violent crime and child sexual exploitation), through protecting and supporting vulnerable people and reducing reoffending.

## List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Report to Cabinet – 'Progress with Implementing Investment Proposals Contained in Budget'	10 October 2013	Dave Gorman, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A