

## **Lancashire County Council**

### **Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 17th January, 2013 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston**

#### **Present:**

County Councillor Geoff Driver (Chair)

#### **County Councillors**

A Atkinson  
M Perks

Mrs J Hanson

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Susie Charles and County Councillor Tim Ashton.

#### **2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non Pecuniary Interests**

None declared.

#### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2012 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Working Together With Families - Progress and Funding Arrangements**

Gail Porter, Working Together With Families Coordinator, Directorate for Children and Young People presented the report and gave a presentation on the progress and funding arrangements in place for Working Together With Families (WTWF).

Gail explained the reasons why the County Council is working differently with families: Reduce duplication, reduce dependence, reduce cost and reduce and manage risk.

Gail explained what is different about WTWF:

- Strengths based (what can, not what can't do)
- Child and family centred/focussed (looking at whole)
- Earlier support (proactive)
- Evidence based (what works)
- Sustainable and whole system change (mainstream not grant funding)
- Focus on financial savings and efficiencies

It is envisaged that the long term aim of WTWF is to integrate it into mainstream services so that it is not reliant on grant funding in the future once the grant funding has been used. In Lancashire 2630 families have been identified as requiring support over a three year period from WTWF, the aim of the service is to provide one lead person as a point of contact for the families, one assessment, one set of outcomes, and one agreed action plan. The intention is to work with/alongside families and *not* doing to or for families.

Gail reported to the Committee the progress that has been made so far:

- Approach has been tested in 4 Districts (Burnley, Lancaster, Preston and Wyre) so far over a period of 6 months – work is now being undertaken to complete a full rollout to all 12 district areas.
- Strong partnership support and commitment – governance is in place.
- The system will be based on district-area based leadership – delivery.
- Information sharing – protocols and systems are in place.
- Lead professionals from across public sector agencies as working together.
- Workforce development
- Close links with national programmes have been created, for example – Troubled Families and DWP Families programme.

Gail explained that the Troubled Families Unit criteria was being used to assess which families would match the criteria for WTWF support, this includes, educational attendance, anti-social behaviour/youth offending and worklessness. All with associated targets for improvement.

The funding available over the three year period is 8.7m (of which £5.2m is from attachment fee (paid upfront) and £3.5m is results-based payment (paid in arrears)).

Gail confirmed that so far 305 families are currently overseen by Local Management Groups. There are also 177 families currently receiving support from the Department for Works and Pensions European Social Fund 'Families Programme', which is a nationally funded initiative which has been closely aligned with WTWF in Lancashire, with a further 83 families pending.

It is anticipated that the numbers will increase as the WTWF programme rolls out across all Districts and lead professionals are identified.

In summarising Gail stated the intended outcomes for the WTWF programme as follows:

- To Improve intelligence about families at risk
- Provide earlier support where issues identified
- To provide better information sharing across organisations
- To have less professionals involved with families
- To reduce families identified as not or just coping
- To reduce the number in custody and care
- To reduce number involved in anti social behaviour and crime

- To reduce numbers excluded from school
- To reduce referrals and re-referrals to Children's Social Care
- To improve attendance levels at school
- To improve outcomes for vulnerable groups, and;
- To increase the number in employment, training or education (children and adults).

The Committee welcomed the report and clarified the information presented at Appendix 'B' to the report showing areas and how many issues (1, 2 or 3) each family identified has. The Committee also sought assurances that once the funding for WTWF has been used in three years time that mechanisms are put in place to continue providing the support to families. Helen Denton, Executive Director for Children and Young People confirmed that the working practices put in place from WTWF would be integrated into existing services to ensure continuity of support once the funding has been used.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement resolved to:

- (i) Note the report and presentation and provided comments on the progress made on the WTWF programme particularly the improvements for the families already being supported;
- (ii) agreed the measures/results and associated targets for the monitoring of future progress; and
- (iii) identify further information required and a timeline for future reporting to this committee. In particular the Committee requested that a breakdown on the delivery of activities used to engage with Young People be provided to the Committee.

#### **5. European Social Fund: Project for Young People who are, or are at Risk of being, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) 2011/2013 - Performance Update**

Mike Heaton, 16-19 Manager, Directorate for Children and Young People presented the report. Mike explained the background to the project and that in November 2010 Lancashire County Council facilitated a 'Partnership' responding to an invitation to tender by the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency for European Social Funding (ESF) aimed at reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Lancashire's response to the tender specification was to bring together Lancashire County Council services with key stakeholders from further education, work-based learning providers and voluntary and community groups to strategically provide an inclusive and integrated model to reducing Young People who are NEET or are at risk of being NEET.

Mike explained that the purpose of this report was to respond to two key actions arising from previous reports overseen by the Cabinet Committee. Those actions are:

1. Providing an update on performance of the European Social Fund Not in Employment, Education or Training Project 2011/13. This update covers the validated data period of 1 September 2011 to 20 November 2012.
2. Provide some example case studies (attached at Appendix 'B' to the report)

Mike reported that progress on the project is positive overall. Of the four outcomes profile targets that were reported against at the end of November 2012, the project is ahead on three and slightly behind against one target.

Mike highlighted actions being taken to ensure all outcomes are met as follows:

Lancashire County Council is ahead of profile for the numbers of young people to have started the programme, from vulnerable groups and progressing from NEET into further learning, training or employment and only slightly behind on the number of young people achieving a qualification.

Mitigating factors for this are as follows:

The Skills Funding Agency state stringent evidence criteria for each outcome. Prior to outcomes being recorded or claimed subcontractors must ensure all evidence is in place, as described by the Skills Funding Agency, and provided in guidance by Lancashire County Council. This is often a paper exercise and is retrospective to the activity. This results in a one/two month lag from activity taking place to being recorded on the Skills Funding Agencies data capture system.

#### **Number of young people from a Vulnerable Group category:**

Subcontractors record this 6 weeks (this timeframe is prescribed by the Skills Funding Agency) after the young person is on the programme, some subcontractors were simply not capturing those from vulnerable groups through their data systems. LCC, via performance management reviews with subcontractors continue to raise this as an issue with subcontractors even though we are ahead of profile.

#### **Number of young people to achieve a qualification:**

As above, subcontractors must meet specific evidence criteria to record/claim the outcome. The Skills Funding Agency requires hard copy certificates of achievements in order for the claim to be made. There is often a delay in receiving certificates of achievement from Awarding Organisations which again, results in a lag from activity taking place to being recorded. Based on subcontractor feedback and performance reviews to-date we anticipate an overachievement with this outcome by December 2013.

#### **Progression into further learning, training or employment:**

Comparatively, the County Council are still in the early stages of delivery with many young people on the programme still being supported. The County Council

is ahead of profile for the number of young people moving in positive progressions (currently 65% of leavers, the national trend tends to be 50% in ESF funded projects).

However, it should be noted prior to being recorded as an outcome a young person must have sustained attendance for a minimum number of hours and weeks in learning, training or employment. Due to the complex nature of progression there is a 13 week window from a young person leaving the programme to commencement in their next destination. This again causes a lag in actual recorded outcomes for progressions.

The County Council is undertaking performance management reviews with all subcontractors and is taking action where there is any underperformance: Providers are informed, following reviews, what action is required. Sustained non-compliance could result in either a variation or termination of their contract with the County Council.

The Committee clarified what is being done, in the current difficult economic climate, to assist young people to find jobs. It was reported to the Committee that several apprenticeship events, involving working with partner organisations have taken place with a large number of young people in attendance where a number of apprenticeships have been available.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement agreed to:

- (i) Note the report and commented on the reported good progress and performance of the project as appropriate;
- (ii) Note that regular performance reports will be provided to the Cabinet Member for Young People and an update on progress will be made to the Cabinet Committee at the end of each calendar year.

## **6. Lancashire Early Intervention Strategy - Best Start Lancashire**

Jonathan Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement, Directorate for Children and Young People presented the report.

Jonathan explained that Best Start Lancashire (BSL) is an initiative delivered through children's centres to provide additional early support for children and their families between the ages of 4 and 7 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). The resources (£2 million) to enable this innovative programme to be implemented in 2011/12 were created through stringent efficiencies. The County Council made a commitment allowing the programme to be continued in 2012/13 at the cost of a further £2 million with £1 million planned for 2013/14. It is anticipated that the DfE funded Pupil Premium for schools, targeted at pupils eligible for Free School Meals, will increase substantially over the next two years allowing schools to maintain the family support programmes from their own budgets in 2014/15.

The early support is targeted at children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). There were 6869 "eligible" pupils in the target year groups in Lancashire primary schools in 2011/12, in 2012/13 there are 7,363 FSM pupils; an increase of 494.

Children's centres have been allocated £250 per FSM pupil as an additional resource to provide an increased early support offer for schools in their area.

Jonathan reported that the current performance of children eligible for Free School Means (FSM) is positive and that in the past year the gap between the Lancashire figures and the national averages has closed with Lancashire showing a significant increase this year. The Lancashire figures are now almost inline with the national averages.

In numerical terms this means that around 350 more children than last year have achieved a good level.

Jonathan also reported that an additional key measure and learning factor is the screening of phonics which gives children confidence in reading and is above the national average for year 1 FSM pupils.

### **Performance Monitoring**

A number of Self Evaluation proformas have been completed by schools and children's centres supported by school advisers and nominated officers. These focus on the impact on the identified outcomes. The initial returns indicate that around 44% of schools are judged green compared with 25% in March 2012, 54% are judged amber compared with 64% in March and around 2% compared with 11% are judged red.

To date (verbal update provided at the meeting), approximately 232 school adviser proformas have been received (more than half of schools) and 69 children's Centre proformas have been received (87% of children's centres).

Any red returns are followed up by a member of the Best Start Lancashire Team to facilitate progress, supported by the school adviser and children's centre nominated officers. Reasons why some may have been judged red can include that the schools does not have any FSM pupils.

The Committee sought clarification as to what happens in some areas where there are smaller children's centres and it may not be possible to provide outreach workers/teachers from a particular children's centre, and also sought clarification as to what different programmes are used to improve performance. It was confirmed that the use of BSL was flexible and, for example, one children's centre could commission outreach workers/teachers from another children's centre, or even, in some instances commission outreach teachers from a local school to support other schools in the area and deliver programmes. It was also confirmed that five specific parenting programmes are used which are nationally recognised which provides an appropriate level of quality.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the report, commented as appropriate and requested that the information provided at Appendix 'A' be consistently presented to provided a breakdown of figures for each District and be circulated to the Committee.

**7. Urgent Business**

None.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement will be held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 2.00pm in Cabinet Room 'B', County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher  
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall  
Preston