

ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SERVICE PLANNING 2010/11

Service...Children's Social Care

SERVICE PLAN UPDATE

Brief Description of the Service

Children's Social Care Services provide a range of services:

- ◆ Adoption services, including post adoption support.
- ◆ Children in Need – assessment of need and planning services
- ◆ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- ◆ Safeguarding Children – child protection services for children and young people.
- ◆ Family Support for children in need and their families.
- ◆ Children in Care Service – care planning services and the provision of care placements.
- ◆ Services to young people leaving care and other vulnerable young people.
- ◆ Services to disabled children and their families.

Broad Service Objectives

The overall aim for Children's Social Care Service is:

To ensure that a range of services are available in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the Borough who are in need, and to promote the upbringing of children and young people within their own families where safe to do so.

Our Service Objectives (in no order of priority) are:

- To protect children from abuse.
- To offer support to the most vulnerable children in the Borough and their families, to improve their life chances.
- To improve the life chances of children in care of Rochdale Borough.
- To provide high quality care for children in the care of Rochdale Borough, sustaining children within family type environments wherever appropriate.
- In partnership with other services and agencies, to provide and commission a range of child and family support services, which will help children/young people to remain within their natural/birth families.
- To help and assist vulnerable young people through the transition to adulthood, paying particular attention to those young people with complex health needs and young people leaving care.
- To provide a range of social care services to children and young people with disabilities and their families.
- With partners, to provide a range of short break activities that enhance the life experiences of children with disabilities and their families.
- To provide and commission services to offer support to children and young people, to maintain their emotional well-being.

PART A Review of the Year

Achievements and Headlines 2009/10

Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referrals and Assessment was undertaken on 1st and 2nd December 2009. The inspectors identified three priority areas for attention, namely :-

- The service does not manage the assessment of potential risk of harm effectively at the point of first contact. Three out of ten closed contacts sampled by inspectors had been closed when risks to children had not been adequately addressed. These cases have been brought to the attention of the local authority.
- Child protection investigations are not always progressed in a thorough and timely manner, potentially leaving children at risk of harm. In one case seen by inspectors, the child protection investigation had been significantly delayed despite information having been received indicating a high level of risk.
- A large proportion of initial child protection case conferences are held outside the required timescale, very significantly below those of similar authorities.

Following the inspection we temporarily revised our structure to improve and enhance oversight of Duty Team case management decisions. We also conducted a regional comparison exercise in order to ascertain whether our social work staffing levels were adequate to meet demand. As a result of this exercise, the council has invested an additional £580,000 into Children's Social Care's staffing budget from April 2010 onwards.

In 2009 the majority of indicators were in line or better than the latest England average published figures:

- 100% of child protection cases were reviewed with required timescales (NI 67). Rochdale has implemented a system which has contributed to consistently achieving a 100% on this indicator over the last 5 years (which includes this year) and remains above the national average.
- 81% of initial assessments for children's social care are carried out within 7 working days of a referral (NI 59). This level of performance is higher than the national average of 72.0 and is a significant improvement on performance last year which was also 72%.
- Stability of placements of looked after children with regard to length of placement is 75.2% (NI 63). This is very good performance and is a significant increase on last year at 69.8%. Rochdale is above both the national and regional averages with its performance.
- Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales are at 98.2% (NI 66). This is excellent performance and is above last year's performance of 96.4% and ensures that children and young people have care plans in place which meet their needs and are effective. It also demonstrates that there are occasions where it can be in the best interest of the child to delay a scheduled review.

Support to children who are affected by domestic violence is now co-ordinated via the MARAC process, and Duty Team social worker services meet police representatives several times a week to identify and plan interventions where appropriate.

The newly formed Holding Families project is actively engaging with professionals from a number of agencies in relation to supporting children whose families have drug and/or alcohol problems. Again, it is too early to report on the success of this team at this time.

Children Looked After

- Again, another increase in the number of children in care, with an increase of 12% in 2008/09 to a further 13% from 2009-10 building on the previously reported 18% increase over 3 years. This has increased the pressures on case-holding social workers, support workers, carers and their workers, plus independent reviewing officers. This is referenced within the Children's Social Care Resource Report submitted to Cabinet in March 2010.
- A lower percentage of new admissions to care for over 11's is maintained. Only 23% of our admissions into care in 2009/10 were aged over 10.
- 53% of newly admitted children in 08/09 are 4 years and under, reflecting the priority in safeguarding the most vulnerable children.
- Sustained reduction in the use of external residential placements, but significant increase in the use of external foster care placements (to meet the increased number of children coming into care).
- Successful work of the Young People's Support Team and Specialist Children in Care Team in supporting young people locally, rehabilitating children home and resettling young people coming back from external placements.
- Fostering Service inspected by Ofsted retains its evaluation as outstanding in all respects, this is an excellent outcome.

- Improved GCSE results for children in care with 54% achieving 5 or more GCSE's in 2009. Levels of non attendance at school still too high.
- Our residential children's homes continue to obtain good inspection ratings from Ofsted.
- Supervised contact continues to present a significant service issue in 2010. Staffing of this service increased threefold in 2009/10, but we still need to add sessional staff to the staffing establishment to meet the demands placed on us by the courts.
- Successful co-location of Young People's Support Team with Access and Support Services at Crossfield Mill.

Vulnerable Children

- Significant increased demands upon the service in the form of contacts received, initial and core assessments completed and child protection investigations completed. Numbers of child protection conferences and reviews held and numbers of children requiring a child protection plan have increased significantly, with just over 200 children being subject to a Child Protection plan at the end of 2009/2010, representing an increase of **60%** over a 15 month period.
- Increased demand for services has increased workloads and pressures on staff
- Services within the in Access and Support Service have been structurally revised to ensure they are fit for purpose. Child and Family Support staff now work more closely with front line duty social work teams at Crossfield.
- Increased levels of service provision have been provided via Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Children with Disabilities services. Aiming High for Disabled Children funding facilitated the provision of short breaks for an additional 100 children with disabilities between 2008 and 2010.
- Again we report disappointing progress on integrating social care and health provision for Children with Disabilities. However, we have enlisted the support of peer advisor support via C4EO, and the initial scoping meeting with the C4EO representative will take place in June.
- We have re-organised the provision of services at Bridgefold Lodge and established the new outreach service.
- The Early Intervention Panel has been established, looking at providing timely interventions to children deemed to be at risk of entering care.

Resources

- Sustained reduction in use of external residential care placements for children in care. Significant increase in the use of external foster care placements directly linked to the increased numbers of children coming into care.
- Delivered "lessons from SCR" briefings to Social Care practitioners. Attended by more than 160 social care practitioners to date.
- In 2009/10 Children's Social received additional budget allocation of a net £960,000, in order to meet the increasing demands on the Service. With this additional funding the Service has kept expenditure within the budget in 2009/10.
- Children in Care and Access and Support Services fully operational.
- Reduced level of retention and recruitment difficulties persist in relation to social workers, resulting in the use of some agency staff. Recruitment difficulty currently focuses on attracting experienced as opposed to newly qualified social workers.
- Training and development of staff increases. Attending at training has increased to 88%. 1630 training days have been made available to CSC staff. 19 staff on Level III NVQ, 18 staff on post qualifying training route for social workers. 19 social workers are active practice teachers.
- Sickness absence levels continue to fall to a current level of 10.65 days per full time employee. The levels achieved in 2009/10 38% lower than 2006/0 levels.

- Joint working successes include:
 - Family workers recruited to operate within primary schools and sure start centres
 - Multi agency Sexual Exploitation Specialist Team, the Sunrise team, became operational.
 - Aiming high for Disabled Children Programme jointly devised and agreed between Local Authority and Health. More than a 100 extra children have been able to access services.
 - ContactPoint and shielding arrangements established.
 - Integrated Child & Family Support Strategy agreed between local authority and voluntary sector service providers.
 - New Rochdale version of the CAF developed, for use from April 2010.

PART B Key Changes to Service Plan proposed for 2010/11

Children Looked After

- Reinforce focus on numbers of children coming into care to ensure that the right children are coming into care and are making progress.
Therefore we will:-
 - Review the effectiveness of our Early Intervention Panel and our current arrangements for early support, decision making, rehabilitation and placement support
 - Make the necessary changes to improve practice.
- Reduce the use of external foster care placements by recruiting more RMBC foster carers. Improved marketing, especially following up initial contacts to the service.
- Sustain reduced use of external residential care placements to under 20 children in 10/11. Overall percentage of children in residential care remains at 10%. Sustain our successes in reducing the number of 11+ youngsters coming into care.
- Investigate option of inter-authority waiting in relation to fostering and adoption.
- Improve joint work as a result of newly integrated Children in Care Service.
- Reduce non attendance levels for children of school age and target our support at those children in care with additional difficulties.
- Increase expectation/aspiration levels for young people in care and emerging from care.
- Further develop Contact Service to improve quality of service to children and families.
- Commit extra resources to the service in order to respond effectively to increased demands and maintain good quality services.
- Create and recruit to posts recently funded by the local authority.

Vulnerable Children

- Ensure the new structure works in practice, focussing on children and families most at risk in the community.
- Review Access and Support Service structure to ensure effective oversight and management of risk.
- Review and improve safeguarding practice across all parts of the service. Consider implications of Social Work Taskforce recommendations.
- Review the Family Workers based in schools initiative.
- Review effectiveness of integrated referral mechanism for child and family support services.
- Create the new extended hour's service within the Access and Support Service.
- Continue to implement the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme extending short term breaks and support provision for these children and their families.
- Support joint work initiatives with the police and health agencies in relation to domestic violence, hidden harm and sexual exploitation of children. This work is linked to reducing health inequalities across the Borough.
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- Create and recruit to extra posts following the commitment of extra resources to front line operational teams to ensure an effective response to service demands and provision of good quality services.

Resources

- Provide new interim base for children with disability service, and develop longer term plans for accommodation of the service.
- Provide increased value for money, particularly in relation to external foster care placements for children in

care.

- Continue to respond effectively to the outcome of Serious Case/Single Agency Reviews and necessary practice improvements. Respond to new Working Together 2010 requirements.
- Further organisational change and improvement.
 - Extended hours service launched in 2009
 - Amendment to permanent structure of Child and Family Support Services
 - Reorganisation of Admin Support provision.
- Ensure effective utilisation of resources. For 2010/11 the Service has received a further additional funding of/£580,000
- Prepare for the CAA regime including unannounced /announced inspections of safeguarding practice and children in care provision in local authority social care services.
- Enlist the assistance of C4EO in relation to our Children With Disability Services, and ensuring longer term planning takes place for our Children in Care services
- Prepare for an announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services.
- Further improve attendance at work levels. Target for 2010/11 is 10 days per wte per year.
- Invest in developing our staff by:-
 - Extending modern apprenticeships
 - Improved continuous professional development for social workers (including CWDC pilots)
 - Ensuring access to new level 3 qualifications for residential care, family work and fostering.
 - Continuing with our "grow your own" approach to recruiting new social workers.
 - Enhancing use of graduates and apprenticeships.
 - Enhancing career progression across the service.

Aiming High 2007 – 2010

The "Making Sure Every Child Matters" priority in "Aiming High" is the basis for the work of Children's Social Care Service and the "How We Work – our principles" reflect the approaches across this service. In particular, we know that valuing equality and diversity needs to be considered throughout our approaches and interventions in order to meet individual children and young people's needs, enabling them to improve their life chances. The service is continuously looking to increase representation of all minority groups within the service's workforce, e.g. gender, disability, race and age. Whilst the work of the service focuses in the needs of individuals, it also contributes to working in partnership. For example, Children's Social Care staff work with the Police and Health staff to deliver the work of the Sunrise team to in tackling sexual exploitation of children. This work links to reducing health inequalities across the Borough.

Each of the teams within Children's Social Care Service will identify their own areas for improvement and will produce a service improvement plan which will be supported by specific targets and actions to achieve their outcomes. These will correlate with the national indicator set and social care statutory indicators.

Commissioning is a growing area of work, now supported by the appointment of a Principal Commissioning Officer which works across Children's Services and is an integral part of the development of joint commissioning with the NHS.

Aiming High Targets – Making Sure Every Child Matters

AH2.C Increase the percentage of young people leaving care with 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C, or a GNVQ, from 0% in 2006/07 to 20% in 2009/10. Our progress is promising, with the outturn figure for 2009 being 21%.

AH2.D Educational qualifications of children looked after (interface indicator with education services) by reference to the percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grades A*-G, or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ)

AH2.E Increase the percentage of adoptions of looked after children from 6.9% in 2006 to 9.1% by 31st March 2010. Our outturn figure is not as high as we had predicted at 5.5%, although the number of children adopted rests stable at 21 per year for last year and this year. This same level of adoption appearing as a smaller percentage reflects the demands placed upon the service as a whole, largely due to the significant increase in children being brought into care. The number of children adopted rests the same at 21 per year; it is just their statistical outturn compares a very different scenario to the situation faced last year.

C63 The number of children and young people who communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews as a percentage of the number of children and young people who had been looked after at 31st March for more than four weeks. This remains at a high level of 94.9%, although we are still awaiting information on 4 young people re review information.

Stepping Up

Maximising the potential of our people.

- NVQ and level 3 qualification routes for foster carers, family workers and residential child care workers are to be continuously pursued.
- Management and leadership development at different levels is given priority e.g. there is to be a specific Enterprising Leadership Programme for Children's Social Care Managers
- There is a specific training plan for the service which is relevant and addresses the right priorities and needs.
- Staff and carers are able to access multi agency training opportunities via bodies such as the Safeguarding Board
- The Bursary scheme continues as a "grow your own" route to social work qualification.
- Children's Workforce Development Council pilots for social workers are fully supported by the service.
- Safe working practice is implemented across the service.
- Additional modern apprentices were recruited in 2009 to the service and this will continue in 2010 to the service administration arm.
- CPD and practice skills development remains a focus in 2010.
- Staff are continuously supported, guided and developed from within the service.
- Targeted supervision training for children's social care managers and supervisors will be provided within the first half of the 2010/11 financial year.
- ICS training is available and accessible to new and existing staff members on a rolling programme.
- All staff have regular supervision sessions to identify how to develop and extend their skills.
- Children's Social Care Service are involved with the Change for Children programme both strategically and through the involvement of staff in training and workforce development programmes.

Customer Focus

The Children and Young People's Charter sets out the service expectations for children and young people in care. The Children in Care Council comments upon the progress that is expected. Our aim for 2010/11 is to provide children and young people with more opportunities to offer customer feedback to managers within the Children's Social Care service.

LAC Reviews – There is a specific indicator to monitor the number of children and young people who communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews and allows them to express their views by an appropriate method.

Additional information regarding the views and considerations of children receiving Children's Social Care support is provided by the annual LAC Annual Survey undertaken by the Children in Care's Children's Rights Service, the Listen Up group and the Big Listen.

Also, 68% of parents who responded to a children with disability satisfaction survey reported that they feel involved or fully involved in decision making regarding the needs of their children. However, the number of respondents was low to this survey. Further work is required to assess how significantly the needs of vulnerable groups are taken into account when planning developments across the Borough.

Value for Money

Reduce the use of external foster care placement by continuing to invest in in-house provision.

Reduce the use of external residential care placements

By smarter commissioning and procurement, reduce the cost of external placements for children.

Further develop Contact Service to improve quality of service to children and families.

Ensure that multi-agency support and resources are available to children with continuing care/complex needs, accessible via the Multi Agency Placement Panel.

Review the performance of the specialist children in care team arrangements.

Performance Management 2010-2011

The work of the Children's Social Care Service is largely monitored by a wide range of performance indicators. These are largely established within the National Indicator set that includes stability of placements, timeliness of assessments and educational achievement of children in care. Locally we also monitor effectiveness of our interventions by ensuring that visits to see the most vulnerable children take place with appropriate regularity.

Due to the fluctuating nature of performance in relation to the aforementioned Aiming High targets, and the fact that they do not lend themselves to the creation of an overall cumulative total, it would be appropriate to report performance against each of the stated Aiming High targets.

Township Devolution

Whilst individual townships have recognised the work of the Children's Social Care service, we have not specifically been referenced within any Township plans. However, we now produce a six monthly report for children looked after, whilst we have started to publish township data indicating where looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan originate. Due to the need to offer at times intensive support to children in care or to children who are subject to child protection plans, Townships have tended to focus on bringing specific case issues to the attention of the Head of Children's Social Care rather than request division of safeguarding services into unmanageable small sections.

Financial Planning and Budget Update

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

2009/10 REVISED ESTIMATE £' 000		2010/11 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000	2011/12 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000	2012/13 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000
	<u>Budget by Service Area</u>			
	Service Management			
200	<i>Expenditure</i>	70	71	73
0	<i>Income</i>	0	0	0
-26	<i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i>	-40	-41	-42
16	<i>Contribution to/-from a reserve</i>	16	16	27
190	Total	46	46	58
	Children in care			
13,971	<i>Expenditure</i>	13,857	14,896	15,193
-282	<i>Income</i>	-282	-282	-282
1,221	<i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i>	1,222	1,298	1,306
14,910	Total	14,797	15,912	16,217
	Access and Support			
4,492	<i>Expenditure</i>	4,841	4,920	5,013
-290	<i>Income</i>	-290	-290	-290
574	<i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i>	478	487	488
4,776	Total	5,029	5,117	5,211
	Children with Disabilities			
2,989	<i>Expenditure</i>	3,743	3,777	3,835
-553	<i>Income</i>	-1,123	-1,123	-1,123
330	<i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i>	356	360	360
2,766	Total	2,976	3,014	3,072
	Safeguarding Unit			
1,004	<i>Expenditure</i>	1,171	1,190	1,213
-147	<i>Income</i>	-147	-147	-147
106	<i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i>	117	120	120
963	Total	1,141	1,163	1,186
23,605	Net cost of providing services to the Public	23,989	25,252	25,744

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

2009/10 REVISED ESTIMATE £' 000		2010/11 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000	2011/12 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000	2012/13 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000
	<u>Budget by Expenditure Type</u>			
9,749	Employees and related expenses	10,274	10,471	10,680
817	Premises related expenses	829	845	860
404	Transport related expenses	396	401	411
7,370	Supplies and services	7,795	8,677	8,831
4,086	Agency and contracted services	4,155	4,243	4,328
230	Depreciation	233	217	217
0	Management cost redistribution	0	0	0
22,656		23,682	24,854	25,327
2,231	Central departmental and support services	2,175	2,267	2,276
-26	Less internal service departmental recharges	-42	-43	-44
2,205	Net effect of internal service recharges	2,133	2,224	2,232
24,861	Total Service Expenditure net of Internal Service Recharge	25,815	27,078	27,559
	<u>Income</u>			
-165	Rents, Fees & Charges	-165	-165	-165
	<u>Grants</u>			
0	Dedicated Schools Grant	0	0	0
-1,107	Other Grants	-1,677	-1,677	-1,677
-1,272	Total Income	-1,842	-1,842	-1,842
16	Contribution to/-from a reserve	16	16	27
23,605	Net cost of providing services to the Public	23,989	25,252	25,744

Improving Health and Well Being and Tackling Health Inequalities

Meeting the health and emotional well being needs of children in care is regularly monitored within the Children in Care social work teams, whilst adults who care for children in care are able to gain additional support via bespoke psychology time.

Tackling Deprivation

Many of our services are, by their very nature, targeted towards meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children in the Borough. A large number of children and young people referred to us are referred because of neglect, whereby worklessness and the resultant lack of income contribute significantly to a family's ability to care for child(ren).

Children's Social Care staff are working within the Total Place pilot, focussed within one of the most deprived areas in the Borough, aimed at providing a more joined up service approach to supporting children. The New Deal for Heywood NDC Families Project lists poverty as one of its key indicators, and works with both children's and adults' services to work with families to address this and other issues.

Collaborative Working

We have co-located two of our child and family support teams within children's centres, and placed seven (schools based) family workers within clusters of primary schools. We have also linked up voluntary sector child and family support services with our own services to employ common referral mechanisms, a collective interpretation of the Children's Threshold model and jointly agreed caseload management scheme.

Across the region, we are working with other local authorities to see how we might employ joint approaches to some of our fostering and adoption work.

The Single Equality Bill

Current expenditure commitments are based on meeting statutory demands placed upon us. These demands focus on identifying risk and protecting the most vulnerable children within the Borough. Much of the work that we undertake is focussed on supporting families who are financially disadvantaged care for their children, including ensuring that the children are not subject to neglect. As with other services, we achieved Equality Standard 4 in June 2008, and are awaiting guidance related to the new framework.

Legislative Changes

Working Together 2010 has enhanced specific responsibilities for Children's Social Care's safeguarding functions, building upon the previous guidance issued in 2006. It also places clearly identified additional responsibilities onto the Rochdale Children's Trust and the Rochdale Borough Children's Safeguarding Board. Both the Trust and the Safeguarding Board are amending their membership and their functions to ensure that they are Working Together 2010 compliant. This includes development of identified performance reporting and needs assessment frameworks.

Key Improvement Activity 2010/11

- Development of Children's Social Care services in line with the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan objectives
- Creation of additional in house fostering placements
- Improved performance in relation to completion of high quality assessments within agreed timescales, particularly in relation to Initial Assessments and Core Assessments
- Development of appropriate and timely assessment processes within the Children With Disability service, particularly in relation to requests for short break services in line with Aiming High for Disabled Children guidance
- Work collaboratively to ensure improved educational achievement for children in care, including ensuring improved attendance
- Enhance capacity of the Children's Social Care service, in line with recently approved Cabinet proposals.
- Explore joint service provision opportunities with other services within Rochdale, and with neighbouring local authorities
- Improvements in quality of services for children in care and their outcomes achieved.
- Apply consistently good practice for children/young people and their families at risk in the community who require social care services.
- Successfully implement the restructure of children's social care establishing the new Children in Care and Access and Support Services, and establish our new Duty Team systems.
- Continue to progress the integration of services to children with disabilities. Successfully apply the Aiming High programme.
- Continue to improve our ability to support and develop our workforce.
- Make further improvements to our performance assessment and management arrangements.
- Improve our customer care.
- Further develop our value for money activities, whilst reviewing current service activity levels across the Service.

Asset Management

The service is working with asset management plans to rationalise its use of buildings, including planning on placing a significant part of the workforce within the new Municipal Offices. We are also planning to retain services that are accessible across the Borough, and will continue to explore co-location opportunities to enable delivery of this objective

Sustainable Development

Living within environmental limits is one of the key drivers of sustainable development.

The UK sustainable development principles identify that respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity are necessary to improve our environment and ensure that natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

The Council is committed to the above principles and therefore all services will ensure that when making decisions about spending and service delivery, they consider the effects purchases and service delivery have on the environment and the depletion of natural resources. There is also an intention to reduce services' reliance on carbon based products e.g. electricity, gas, fuel and oil and make progress in reducing the carbon footprint in line with the Carbon Reduction Commitment.

Approved by Portfolio Holder

Cllr Teresa Fitzsimons.....

Opposition Member

Cllr Donna Martin.....

Head of Service

Steve Garner.....