



# **Meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday, 21st January, 2015 at 6.00pm  
In Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley**

## **Agenda - Public Session (Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To report the names of any substitute Members serving for this meeting.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.
5. Children's Centres (Pages 1 – 4)
6. Early Help and Support (Pages 5 – 10)
7. To answer questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 11.8 (if any)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. Z.", is written over a faint, larger signature.

**Director of Corporate Resources  
Dated: 13th January, 2015**

**Distribution:****Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor Mottram (Chair)

Councillor Cooper (Vice Chair)

Councillors Attwood, Barlow, C Billingham, Bradley, Islam, Jones, Marrey, C Perks, Scott-Dow and one vacancy; Mrs Ward and Reverend Wickens; Mr Qadus and Mr Tinsley.

**Please note the following important information concerning meetings at Dudley Council House:**

- In the event of the alarms sounding, please leave the building by the nearest exit. There are Officers who will assist you in the event of this happening, please follow their instructions.
- There is no smoking on the premises in line with national legislation. It is an offence to smoke in or on these premises.
- The use of mobile devices or electronic facilities is permitted for the purposes of recording/reporting during the public session of the meeting. The use of any such devices must not disrupt the meeting -Please turn off any ringtones or set your devices to silent.
- If you (or anyone you know) is attending the meeting and requires assistance to access the venue and/or its facilities, please contact the contact officer below in advance and we will do our best to help you.
- Information about the Council and our meetings can be viewed on the website [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk)
- Elected Members can submit apologies by contacting the officer named below. The appointment of any Substitute Member(s) should be notified to Democratic Services at least one hour before the meeting starts.
- The Democratic Services contact officer for this meeting is Richard Sanders, Telephone 01384 815236 or E-mail [richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk)

## **Minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 at 6 p.m.**  
**In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley**

### **Present:**

Councillor M Mottram (Chair)  
Councillor I Cooper (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors M Attwood, N Barlow, C Billingham, P Bradley, Z Islam, J Martin,  
C Perks and R Scott – Dow; Mr Qadus.

### **Invitees:**

J Sinden and Mrs Coulter.

### **Officers:**

D Channings (Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services – Lead Officer), P Sharratt (Interim Director of Children's Services), J Prashar (Divisional Lead - Looked After Children), K Cocker (Children's Services Finance Manager), C Gordon (Fostering Service Manager), H Maybee (Adoptions Service Manager) – all Directorate of Children's Services and I Newman (Treasurer) and K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer) both (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

### **Also in attendance**

Councillor C Crumpton – Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning;  
Councillor S Turner – Cabinet Member for Finance;  
R Sims (Assistant Director Housing Strategy and Private Sector) (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services).

---

#### **16      Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors L Jones and I Marrey. The following Invitees also apologised; Mr Lynch, Mr Nesbitt and Mr Ridney.

---

#### **17      Substitution**

It was reported that Councillor J Martin was serving in place of Councillor I Marrey, for this meeting of the Committee only.

18      **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the following interests were declared:-

Declarations of non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 5 – Medium Term Financial Strategy were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated below:

Councillor Attwood – Member of the Management Committee for short stay schools within the Dudley Borough.

Mrs Coulter – The parent of a child who was in receipt of Direct Payments.

Councillor Mottram – Governor of Christchurch Primary School

Councillor C Perks – Governor of North Road Primary School.

Mr Qadus as a Governor of Wollescote Primary School, Chairman of Lye Community Centre, Member of the Patient Participation Group at Wychbury Medical Centre and Russells Hall Hospital and a full Member of the Conservative Group.

Mr Qadus declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item number 5 as his wife was employed by Wollescote Primary School.

---

19      **Minutes**

Resolved

That subject to the deletion of the words “there was a conspiracy against them in so far as child sexual grooming was concerned” from minute number 15, paragraph 3, page CSSC/17 and the insertion of the words “authorities were allowing cases to stack up and that action should be taken when cases arose” therefore the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

---

20      **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

A joint report of Officers was submitted on the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2017/18.

In presenting the report submitted, the Treasurer referred to Appendix B of the report, outlining the proposed savings in line with the terms of reference of the Committee.

Arising from the presentation of the report and Appendices to the report submitted Members asked questions and Officers responded as follows:-

CSSC/20

In relation to the increase in savings year on year, these were necessary in order to provide the Directorate with more time to make the transformation in services, which would result in the efficiency savings required.

That in order for the Directorate to continue to provide services, work was continuing in relation to commissioning various services in order to embark on a restructure, that could deliver services in different ways including services to strengthen families.

In relation to home to school transport, that work was taking place in a number of areas in order to make children more independent at an earlier age and that included work on investigating different ways of providing transport to early years and specialist needs children, and that each individual case would be assessed separately.

That different arrangements could be investigated for those who were in possession of motorbility vehicles in conjunction with home to school transport.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning referred to the consultation that was taking place with all interested parties and advised of a travel training scheme which supports children to use public transport in order to encourage and promote independence.

In responding to a question in relation to pressures should the numbers of looked after children continue to increase, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning referred to the increased number of contacts that had impacted upon referrals to children's social care. Meetings have taken place with health, police and other partners to accelerate an integrated model service of delivery to promote early support for children and families.

The Interim Director of Children's Services responded to a question in relation to the increase in looked after children, advising that following the original estimates there had been an increase during the preceding 12 months. The priority is to ensure that children are safeguarded but there are some opportunities to consider different ways of commissioning placements to meet children's needs and reduced costs.

Concerns were raised that those who could not access main stream education provision due to complex and special needs would be unable to access specialist provision without Local Authority transport.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning responded to those concerns and advised that there would be a consultation in relation to redesigning the service provision in order to deliver the efficiency savings.

The Interim Director of Children's Services added that children would not be denied access to services, however there should not be an automatic assumption that home to school and college transport would be available and it may be more cost effective to provide parents with their own sources of funding in order to procure their own transport provision. It may be that some parents would welcome the opportunity of travelling with their children to school. It was also necessary to examine areas of provision in order to reduce travelling distances throughout the Borough.

In responding to concerns relating to the restructure of youth service provision, the Interim Director of Children's Services advised that targeted youth services would be maintained in house but that the Directorate is currently exploring opportunities to commission universal provision from the voluntary/community sector.

The Interim Director of Children's Services reported that the Children's Centres restructure had been undertaken which had resulted in a revised model of delivery and no further cuts to the service were anticipated at the present time.

It was also noted that redesigning the early help and family support service would explore alternative methods of delivering the service.

The Interim Director of Children's Services advised that the Committee would be updated in relation to the new Children's Centres proposals and integrated Youth Services at the first two meetings in the new year.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning advised of the difficulties in relation to the Dudley Performing Arts Service in the context of traded services, and that discussions on how to continue to deliver the service through traded service income, grants, partner contributions and trust status would continue. It was noted that staffing costs had been particularly high in relation to the service as set against the budget.

Resolved

That the Cabinet's proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2017/18, as set out in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted be noted.

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services on the Dudley Local Authority Adoption Service for 2013/14.

Following the introduction of the Heads of Service for the Fostering and Adoption Services, the Adoptions Service Manager presented the report submitted, referring to the 37 children placed for adoption prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April, advising of the six sibling pairs including sibling boys that had been successfully adopted.

It was reported that the Looked After Children Psychology Service was now in house and had proved to be a strength to the service with this providing specialist support to families, enabling young children to join their families on a timely basis and prior to them commencing their primary education.

The Adoptions Service Manager referred to the success of the historic work in continuing the search for places for children and that during the year additional capacity had been added to the Family Finding Team, including the appointment of a Family Finding Social Worker and the creation of one further new position in the Team.

The three successful Adoption Events in order to encourage recruitment of first time adopters and the more timely completion of the approved adoption process were referred to together with the new Black Country Media campaign.

It was reported that Adoption in the Black Country had been successful in order to create diversity, which had resulted in over representation of black ethnic parents.

The Adoptions Service Manager referred to the new initiative entitled “Never Forget Birth Parents”, the contact after adoption entitled “Letterbox” in order to help children understand their adoption and the work that was taking place in relation to Life Books.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted Members asked questions and the Divisional Lead for Looked After Children and the Adoptions Service Manager responded as follows:-

- That adoption extinguished birth parents parental responsibility whereas Special Guardianship would result in a small proportion of parental responsibility remaining with the birth parent(s) and that Special Guardianship was a method of placing a child with another member of the family.

- That between 32 and 35 adoptions were anticipated during 2014/15.
- That adoption resource grants enabled the Directorate to recruit additional staff in order to meet the demand for children to be appropriately adopted.
- It was noted that work was conducted with neighbouring Authorities in order to maximise resources to place children for adoption.
- That there remained careful consideration of children's heritage when considering adoptive parents in order to ensure that they had the capability of meeting those needs.
- That once an Adoption Order was made the Council retained no powers to ensure a child's heritage and religious needs were being met.
- That there were detailed assessments and matching processes in place prior to Adoption Panels assessing whether prospective adoptive parents would fulfil those needs and how those needs would be met.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning thanked the Divisional Lead for Looked After Children and her team for the valuable work undertaken in relation to adoption services and in particular ensuring that children were placed safely and securely in order to provide for their long term future.

The Chair thanked the Interim Director of Children's Services and her team for their work in relation to the provision of the adoption service.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Dudley Local Authority Adoption Service for 2013/14, be noted.

---

## 22 **Fostering Service Annual Report**

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on the Fostering Service in Dudley for 2013/14.

The Divisional Lead for Looked After Children introduced the report submitted, advising that there were 350 children placed in 348 Foster Care Homes, which highlighted the enormity of the service and the amount of children that the service was dealing with.

The Fostering Service Manager presented the report submitted, highlighting the current issues for the team advising that there were new time constraints on issuing Care Proceedings, which had impacted on the number of assessments that had been carried out.



The Fostering Service Manager advised that the team were actively promoting Child Arrangement and Special Guardianship Orders which would result in children being removed from the care system.

It was noted that there was a dedicated member of the team who dealt with assessments for Special Guardianship Orders in order to recruit additional carers.

It was reported that there was extensive collaborative working with neighbouring Black Country Authorities in order to provide accessible training courses to carers and that there had been good progress in Foster Carers final assessments being undertaken upon a timely basis.

The “Staying Put Arrangements” were outlined which assisted those who wished to remain with their current carers once they reached the age of 18.

It was noted that there had been extensive work undertaken in order to provide high rates of placement stability, with a high proportion of children remaining with their carers in excess of 12 months, which had impacted positively on their educational achievements.

The Fostering Service Manager reported on the out of hours service offered to foster carers, which provided a telephone contact advice service every day of the year upon a 24 hour basis.

It was noted that retention rates of Foster Carers in the Dudley Borough were high and the courses offered to family and friends who wished to become carers were outlined.

The Divisional Lead for Looked After Children advised of the initiative, that was to be publicised by the Council’s Communications Team in order to promote a campaign to encourage local people to become involved with providing services and care for the children of the Borough.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted, Members asked questions and the Fostering Service Manager responded as follows:-

- That respite care for children with learning difficulties was a service that the Directorate provided;
- That children were placed with carers outside the Dudley Borough for varying reasons with one third of the Borough’s carers residing outside the Borough.
- Advertising would focus upon support to foster carers and fostering local children.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Lifelong Learning advised upon the reliance on outside agencies to provide instant places for children, who required urgent places of safety however, negotiations were continuing with outside agencies in order to provide more cost effective services.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Divisional Lead on Looked After Children advised that some of the Borough's foster carers resided within a 20 mile radius of the Borough.

In responding to concerns raised regarding supply and demand as far as foster carers were concerned, the Interim Director of Children's Services advised that this had resulted due to the sudden rise in looked after children, and this had impacted upon increasing costs due to reliance upon outside agencies to provide emergency care.

A Member suggested that recruitment exercises could take place at religious festivals, and the Divisional Lead for Looked After Children advised that the recruitment of versatile carers would form part of the Directorate's strategy and referred to a couple of mixed race who advertised recruitment on behalf of the Council on a local radio station.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report submitted on the Fostering Service in Dudley for 2013/14 and reported on at the meeting, be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.

CHAIR

---

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015**

**Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services**

**Children's Centres**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update Children's Services Scrutiny Committee of the progress of the Children's Centres remodelling.

**Background**

2. The provision of Children's Centres is a statutory requirement under The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The Children's Centres offer is also underpinned by law in the Childcare Act 2006.
3. The Local Authority is the accountable body responsible for the delivery of the Children's Centres offer.
4. The latest statutory guidance was issued to local authorities in April 2013. The guidance requires Children's Centres to focus much more effectively on those families in greatest need.
5. The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:
  - a) child development and school readiness;
  - b) parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
  - c) child and family health and life chances.
6. In Dudley the twenty Children's Centres have been directly managed by the Local Authority since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.
7. The overall aim of remodelling was for Children's Centres to continue to identify, reach and help the families in greatest need of support by providing a range of both universal and targeted Early Help services to those children and families most in need, in partnership with both statutory and voluntary agencies within a context of achieving £2.3 million saving against the revenue budget for 2015/16.
8. A Public Consultation was launched in October 2013 on the redesign of the children's centre offer. The proposals contained within the consultation were based on the redesign of the Management of the twenty children's centres into a five Cluster Model ensuring the continuation of access to children's centre services across the borough.
9. An implementation process followed staff consultation with the first phase remodelled service becoming fully operational by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. Staff reductions were kept

to a minimal level supported by voluntary redundancies and redeployment. A total of 9 employees were made compulsory redundant during the remodelling. The final phase of the remodelling process involving the cleaning and caretaking staff is under current review for implementation by the end of the Summer term 2015.

10. All children's centres have remained open and offer some basic accommodation but vary considerably in size. The 3 initial Sure Start local programme buildings (Brierley Hill, Kates Hill and Sledmere and Butterfly) are the most extensive as their funding was the most generous. Phase 1 Centres offer additional accommodation in the form of full day care provision. Standard accommodation for all centres includes:
  - Defined entrance and reception area
  - Multi-purpose room (for training, meetings etc)
  - Interview room (with facilities for health staff and others to do 1:1 work)
  - Small office
  - Kitchen
11. The centres offer the opportunity to provide services from the buildings and these facilities are increasingly being used by a range of agencies for the delivery of activities and core business for example health visitor and GP clinics are held in some centres.
12. Increasingly Children's Centres staff deliver their services in a variety of different places which allows greater opportunities for families to access services in other community venues. Much of the one to one family support is provided through outreach in the families' own homes and some services such as Stay and Play sessions are delivered in primary schools sited within their Reach areas.
13. Each of our Children's Centres has a defined 'reach area' which is made up of a cluster of 'super output areas' (SOAs) containing around 900 children under 5. These areas are not intended to restrict access of parents and children to services. Parents are able to access services at a location which is most appropriate to their needs. However, priority is given to children and families living within the Reach area and also family support/outreach workers are allocated according to Reach.
14. The numbers of under 5's are rising in the borough year on year and there are currently 15,095 families registered and activity engaged with children's centres.
15. Children's Centres provide significant support to children who are subject to Child Protection Plans and who are assessed as Children in Need. Family Support services within Children's Centres are developing skills and knowledge in order to offer targeted effective Early Help and Step Down support to families to enable them to meet their child(ren's) previously unmet need and where possible safely divert these children away from the need for protective action by the Local Authority in order to safeguard them.
16. Children's Centres have been established with the principle of Working Together with partner agencies to ensure that a 'joined up' approach is taken to meet the needs of the children and families with whom they work and maximise efficiencies. Due to the re-focussing of service delivery towards more targeted work with vulnerable families partnerships have become even more important as a means of identifying and engaging with these families through the universal services that partners are delivering in Children's Centres e.g. Health Visitor clinics.

17. The commissioning of health visiting services for 0-5 year olds will transfer to the Local Authority in October 2015. This affords a significant opportunity for the consolidation of health visitor and children's centre services to promote even greater integration, reduce duplication and ensure that the resources have maximum impact for children and families in the borough.
18. The recruitment of volunteers is of significant importance to the work of the Children's Centres and all of the centres have a thriving volunteer network.
19. Children's Centres are required to evaluate the impact of the services they are providing. They are performance managed against the Local Authority service specification and Ofsted's framework.

In Dudley there have been 20 Ofsted inspections to date. Two were judged to be **Outstanding**, fourteen were judged to be **Good**, one was judged to be **Satisfactory** and three judged to be **Requiring Improvement**.

20. The early indications from the remodelling exercise indicate that the numbers of families accessing children's centre services has been maintained. The impact of the changed arrangements is already enabling the Local Authority to deliver a more consistent service across the borough and allowing greater opportunities to compare service delivery and assess the impact of specific activities on outcomes for children. As a result the service will be more flexible to local and developing needs and enable us to have a more robust commissioning process to deliver value for money and improved outcomes.
21. The Local Authority recognises that rising 5's population, demand for services in the current economic climate and a need to provide services at the earliest opportunity will be challenging. Children's centres will remain a key component of our integrated family support and early help offer.

## **Finance**

22. The Children's Centre controllable budget for 2014/15 is £4.163m, included within this is income from the Dedicated Schools Grant/Public Health of £0.640m. The controllable budget for 2015/16 is £3.293m, including income from the Dedicated Schools Grant/Public Health of £0.992m. The 2015/16 budget includes a budget reduction of £0.800m as agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## **Law**

23. The provision of Children's Centres is a statutory requirement under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Children's Centres service delivery is also underpinned by the Childcare Act 2006.
24. Section 5D(1) of the Childcare Act 2006 stipulates that the Local Authority must conduct appropriate consultation.

## **Equality Impact**

25. Children's Centres provide a range of services to every child under 5 and their family. The needs of the local community are clearly identified through consultation and

partnership engagement and central analysis of data and ongoing needs assessment.

**Recommendation**

26. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee receive and comment on the report.



.....  
**Pauline Sharratt**  
**Interim Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Annette Callear  
Divisional Lead – Family Support  
Telephone: 01384 81 4292  
Email: [annette.callear@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:annette.callear@dudley.gov.uk)

---

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015**

**Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services**

**Early Help and Support**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on Early Help and Support

**Background**

2. The provision of Early Help and Support to Children, Young People and their families is the responsibility of all partner agencies; this shared commitment is reflected as a single priority in the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 17, endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing board and entrusts Partners to provide:
  - a) high quality universal services as early as possible in the lives of all children and young people to help them to optimise their potential and to live healthy lives in the future.
  - b) effective targeted and specialist early help and support to vulnerable children and young people and their families will help to reduce the risks which this group face of suffering harm, neglect and poor health, with all the negative consequences of such experiences for educational attainment and social and economic well being.
  - c) early help and support services that are more effective with the aim of reducing the number of inappropriate contacts to children's social care and enabling children and young people to remain safely within their family by preventing problems escalating further.
3. How the Local Authority delivers early help and support is a key judgement in the Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Dudley Local Authorities last inspect was 2011 and we are anticipating a further inspection in 2015.
4. This shared priority is illustrated in the collaborative work currently in progress focussing upon the redesign of the Early Help offer and the development of an integrated approach to access arrangements for service delivery via an integrated 'One Stop' access hub for children's services, a 'Single Front Door' model. A multi-agency colocated team will receive and screen referrals from the public and professionals for an Early Help assessment, redirect to universal, targeted or refer on to specialist services diverting inappropriate referrals away from Children's Social Care. It is envisaged that this service will go live from the 1st April 2015.
5. Children's Services Family Support are progressing a service delivery model consistent with Early Help and Support for children aged 0 – 18 years (or some eligible groups to

25). Services are working together and in partnership to provide vulnerable families with consistent responses to identified and assessed need. The aim is to identify and respond to problems early, help families strengthen their resilience, improve effective parenting skills to prevent problems escalating and divert families away from high cost public services.

## **Children's Centres**

6. A redesign of Family Support Services is now required to bring about this whole system change, to one that embodies Early Help and builds upon the success of the Troubled Families Programme. The aim of the whole system change is to develop multi agency teams who are able to work across agency and professional boundaries, focussed upon tackling whole family problems in order to help families address unmet health and social need, improve their parenting skills, improve school attendance, attainment and aspiration, reduce anti social and offending behaviour and help adults get into work therefore reducing the associated social and financial cost.
7. Central government guidance requires Children's Centres to focus much more effectively on those families in greatest need with an emphasis on:
  - a. Child development and school readiness
  - b. Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
  - c. Child and family Health and life chances
8. Children's Centres deliver services on a cluster basis, and are specifically targeted to engage families from most disadvantaged areas taking into account the specific needs within the population. Robust data systems are in place to support identification and engagement of vulnerable or at risk groups referred to Children's Centres and risk assessments are undertaken and monitored regularly.
9. All children who access children's centre services have an Early Help assessment and where there is emerging or unmet need, a support plan is developed with the parents in order to help the development of parenting skills and tackle problems as they emerge in order to prevent these problems escalating or becoming entrenched.
10. Direct one to one family support is provided within the family's own home, as well as supporting parents to access group activities and support within the Children's Centre and local community for example Stay and Play and Family Links Nurturing Parenting Program. Each Children's Centre has an identified lead officer for Family Support and Parenting.
11. Positive Parenting Program (PPP) practitioners are based at Kateshill Children's Centre within the Family Intervention (Troubled Families) Team and Health visiting team. Parenting practitioners have delivered evidenced based parenting programmes with parents / carers from across the borough for parents with children aged between 2 – 11 years and a group teen program for parents with children aged between 11 – 16 years.
12. Children's Services and Public Health are currently delivering further PPP training to professionals across the Borough to increase the pool of practitioners and maximise programme delivery to strengthen and increase the delivery of this programme to targeted parents.



13. A health strategy is in place with Public Health to reduce obesity and improve healthy lifestyles within families, using evidenced based programmes for example 'Get Cooking' in order to support and encourage healthy eating within families.
14. Strong links are developing between Children's Centres and Family Learning, they are increasingly working together to provide adult learning courses for parents to facilitate the development of key skills and improve their employment chances.
15. Other partnerships include Family Nurse Partnership, Respect - Young Parents Group, and services provided through Citizens Advice Bureau and Job Centre Plus are all targeted to meet identified needs of families.
16. Children's Centre staff work alongside Social Care staff to offer enhanced support to children when their unmet need increases and may require intervention as a 'Child in Need' or as a child who is subject to a 'Child Protection Plan'. Children's Centre staff provide additional support to children and families as they 'Step Down' from Social Care intervention and support.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

17. The purpose of funded early education for two year olds is to improve the educational outcomes to some of the most disadvantaged two year olds living in the borough. Local authorities have a duty to secure early education for eligible two-year-olds and as far as possible early learning for two-year-olds is delivered by providers who have achieved an overall rating of 'outstanding' or 'good' in their most recent Ofsted inspection report.
18. Local authority early years advisers and nationally recognised early years experts have provided professional development opportunities for staff working with two year olds in order to improve the quality of childcare provision. This has included central training and on-site support through audits and coaching and modelling sessions for staff in order to increase their professional knowledge and confidence particularly in the areas of child development, observation and assessment, planning and resourcing.
19. There is an expectation that each setting assesses the level of development of each child in terms of his/her personal, social, emotional, physical and language developmental progress, plans activities and interventions to address any areas of concern and ensure that children are supported to reach appropriate age-related milestones in order to ensure as many as possible are 'school ready' in the future by tracking and reviewing their progress and amending plans accordingly.
20. Central Government provide funding based upon take up of funded two year old placements. In the autumn term of 2014, 39% of eligible places were taken up by parents in Dudley, contrasting with the England average of 55%. A marketing campaign is underway to improve this take-up of the funded educational entitlement.

### **Multi-cultural Support Service**

21. Multi-cultural Support Service (MSS) provides children and families newly arrived and minority cultural groups with support focused on achieving school engagement and improved attainment.
22. The local authority has a statutory duty to:
  - a) make available education for all nursery and school age children resident in their area whether permanently or temporary

- b) facilitate continuity of a child's education through Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families –or Children Missing Education (CME) officer support
  - c) ensure that eligible two-year-old children, and all three- and four-year-old children moving to England from another country can access a place on the same basis as any other child in the local authority area.
  - d) promote equality and inclusion
  - e) encourage take-up of early education places and undertake outreach activities to identify children who are not taking up their full hours and support them to do so
23. Once a school placement is identified the team provide support to students as they transition into school, and can provide targeted support to teaching staff to enable students to access the curriculum and improve their attainment.
24. Multi Cultural Support Service staff supported 58 pupils in their school setting in the 2013/14 academic year from seventeen different nationalities. The team also received referrals for 37 Newly Arrived Families (NAFs) seeking school placements, 17 children were from 7 Eastern European countries, indicating a demographic profile change that is impacting locally upon schools. The duration of support to students will depend upon the complexity of each child's circumstances, ranging from a few months up to 18 months.
25. Multi Cultural Support Service work in partnership with other services including Social Care, Housing, Children Missing Education, DACHs and Connexions to provide support to families.
26. Family Learning and Multi Cultural Support Service work together to ensure that Newly Arrived Parents are enrolled on appropriate adult learning provision including basic English to improve parent's key skills and therefore their employment chances and community engagement and access.

### **Early Help Assessment Support**

27. Early Help Assessment Support (CAF) Officers continue to support partners with assessments and support plans, as we move forward into the Early Help single front door operating model in April 2015, these officers will be colocated within the Early Help hub to offer partners and professionals advice, support and signposting to services.

### **Early Intervention Social Workers**

28. Early Intervention Social Workers (EISW) provide targeted Early Help to Children in Need and their families to enable more persistent and established problems to be resolved by a coordinated Child in Need assessment, planning, intervention and review in order to divert children and families safely away from Social Care.
29. Early Intervention Social Workers work closely with social workers in Social Care to enable children and young people to 'Step Down' from Child Protection Plans and to support a return home for Looked After Children where reunification is in the child or young person's best interests and identified within the Care Plan.
30. Early Intervention Social Worker's are to be line managed by a Children's Centre Cluster manager from February 2015 and will provide social work support, advice and guidance to the five Children's Centre Clusters and local schools. A duty rota will enable an Early Intervention Social Worker to be available at the Early Help hub to offer referrers and partners professional advice and guidance.

## **Integrated Youth Support**

31. Currently, services within Integrated Youth identify, engage and assess young people from aged 13 years (Youth Offending Service from aged 10 Years) up to 18 years (up to 25 years for young people with a learning and/or disability). Individual services within Integrated Youth Support accept referrals mainly from schools and intensively support young people 'at risk'. Professionals will always work hard to prevent young people from being stepped up into more targeted services such as Social Care.
32. We are re-shaping Integrated Youth Support to become one service a strand of the new service will be Targeted Early Support. This team will be split into five cluster areas and professionals from each of the disciplines within Integrated Youth Support will be placed so a multi professional team will be operating within each area. In some circumstances young people will be stepped up into the targeted team. Also young people who have been supported by the targeted team can also be stepped down into the Early Help Team. This is to ensure we have sufficient pathways to support young people at all times.
33. The team will receive referrals in a number of ways these being:
  - Through the one door duty team where appropriate. A member of the Integrated Youth Support Team will be supporting the one door duty desk and will feed appropriate referrals through into the Targeted Early Help Team.
  - It is also envisaged that a current identification tool be developed to capture all the needs of 'at risk' young people. This tool is currently called a RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) and used in all secondary schools.
  - Self referrals and referrals from parents/carers.
34. The new team will start receiving referrals from aged 11 years (Youth Offending Service function from aged 10 years). There are questions at the moment as to whether the new team should support young people up to 25 years instead of up to 18 years (25yrs if the young person has a Learning Difficulty or Disability).

## **Finance**

35. A number of funding streams are available to the Directorate of Children's Services to deliver the Early Help and Support provision, as detailed in this report.
36. The grant funding streams available include the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) Troubled Families Grant, the Department for Education (DfE) Two Year Old Nursery Education element of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Youth Offending Grant.
37. The partner funding streams are from Public Health, Police & Crime Commission, Probation Service, Police Service, Dudley College and STEMNET (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network- Education Business Partnership).
38. The remaining element of the programme is funded by the Directorate of Children's Services through their recurrent base budget provision.

## **Law**

39. The provision of Early Help and Support to Children, Young People and their families is the responsibility of all partner agencies; this shared commitment is reflected as a single priority in the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 17, endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Equality Impact**

40. This report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **Recommendations**

41. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee receive and comment on the report.
42. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee identify any other areas of community work which they consider could contribute to this area of work.



.....  
**Pauline Sharratt**  
**Interim Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer:       Annette Callear  
                                  Divisional Lead – Family Support  
                                  Telephone: 01384 81 4292  
                                  Email: [annette.callear@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:annette.callear@dudley.gov.uk)