

Service Review – Children & Families

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Children and Families Service has undergone transformational change over the last 2 years, the service has shown ongoing improvement through inspection. The need for a service review was identified following a negative Child Protection inspection in 2011, the publication of the fatal accident inquiry report in 2012 and the joint children's services inspection in 2013.

In reviewing its model of service delivery a benchmarking exercise was carried out and national performance information was considered. After extensive consultation with staff, elected members and partner agencies three models of service delivery were developed - two locality based models and one model based on specialisms. A locality based model with a new senior manager post was approved by elected members at the Community Services Committee on 8 May 2014. The new model reconfigures the existing posts and job roles, creating an increased number of frontline posts which will ensure social worker's caseloads will be reduced and provides an enhanced service across evening and weekends to vulnerable children, families and young people. There have been some redundancies as a result of this service redesign, the costs of which are outlined within the paper. All redundancies have been achieved within the savings target agreed and in line with Council payback procedures.

The implementation of the Children and Families Service Review is nearing completion and staff are being recruited to the new posts. The new service model moving forward provides a localised service, improved quality assurance and has been achieved within current financial budgets, delivering £480,000 savings across 3 years. This report provides an update for members on the implementation.

The recommendations for this report are as follows:

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee notes the approach being taken by Children and Families to implement the new structure.

Service Review – Children & Families

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update for elected members on the implementation of the Children and Families Service Review which is nearing completion.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee notes the approach being taken by Children and Families to implement the new structure.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Following a negative Child Protection inspection in 2011 and publication of a Fatal Accident Inquiry in 2012 (relating to an incident from 2009), the Council put in place an improvement plan within the Children and Families Service. The plan introduced new processes, procedures and 5 additional new staff on a temporary basis to build resilience and promote good practice. At this stage, agreement was reached that the configuration of posts would be considered as part of a wider service review of the Children & Families service.
- 4.2 The Children & Families service has undertaken transformational change over the last 2 years. It has achieved improvement across all services confirmed by achieving improved gradings by the national inspection body, the Care Inspectorate. In 2013 a Joint Integrated Children's Service Inspection outlined key strengths and areas for improvement across 9 quality indicators. The service achieved 1 very good, 5 goods and 3 adequate grades. All non-area team services have a grading of good or above and work has been ongoing within the service review to improve the arrangements for assessment and care planning undertaken by the area teams.
- 4.3 The final stage of this transformational change to service delivery is the implementation of the Children & Families Service Review. Benchmarking with comparative local authorities was undertaken and national performance information was considered. This analysis informed the development of 3 models. After consultation with staff, elected members and partner agencies, the service recommended and elected members approved a locality based model which included a new senior manager post. The new model provides a unique model of management - the first to be devised in Scotland and other authorities are keenly waiting to evaluate its success. Adding and reconfiguring posts and budgets has allowed Social Worker's caseloads to be reduced in line with benchmarking comparators and a service offered across evening and weekends to vulnerable children and young people.

- 4.4 The implementation of the review was managed in association with colleagues in HR using the recruitment and selection procedures currently in operation across the council. All existing managers were interviewed for the new posts and nine were successful in securing a post in the new structure, five managers opted for a redundancy package and a very small number are being offered redeployment opportunities. The new appointments are detailed in appendix 1. Four of the existing frontline staff secured promoted posts which, although being very positive in response to the growth and development of staff within the service, present some immediate challenges with vacancies at social worker level. A targeted recruitment campaign will be carried out by the service including adverts in national press and specialist publications.
- 4.5 The revised staffing structure has been critical to the establishment of a new model of service delivery. The new model of service delivery and revised staff structure are key to the delivery of the budgetary savings for the next few years. Although the revised staffing structure is cost neutral it underpins the realisation of savings in other areas of the Children and Families budget. A total saving of £424,000 has been estimated over the next 3 years as a result of the service review. This is the limit for redundancy costs in terms of achieving a 3 year pay back. Five of the staff have chosen to take redundancy at a cost of £331,375. However, there is a possibility that this figure could rise to £376,797 should the remaining staff choose not to take up the redeployment opportunities offered. The redundancy costs can be met within the 3 year payback policy agreed by Council.
- 4.6 To ensure a smooth transition into the new structure and ensure the service continues to offer a high quality service for our users, a number of short term agency staff are being recruited to cover any immediate vacancies. A Risk Register has been developed for the implementation and will be monitored by Children and Families Management Team.
- 4.7 In addition, to meet the aspirations of the service moving forward an extensive training programme has been developed for all staff. This programme will be delivered across Argyll and Bute and will offer ongoing support to the staff and clarity on the roles and responsibilities in the new model. The training programme runs during 2014/15.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The implementation of the Children & Families Service Review is nearing completion. It has taken 18 months to undertake a comprehensive review with extensive consultation with staff, elected members, young people and the Trade Unions. The new model offers localised service, improved quality assurance and has been achieved within current financial budgets
- 5.2 Vacant posts will be filled through a targeted recruitment campaign and the transition to the new structure will be supported by short term agency staff in the interim. A Risk Register has been prepared and will be monitored by the Children and Families Management Team. Staff will be supported in their new roles with regular team meetings and supervision and an extensive training programme has been put in place.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The Service Review offers greater opportunity to deliver on Council statutory responsibilities. It has followed Council policies for redundancy and redeployment.
- 6.2 Financial – The revised staffing structure underpins the realisation of savings in other areas of the Children and Families budget. A total saving of £424,000 has been estimated over the next 3 years as a result of the service review. Five of the staff have chosen to take redundancy at a cost of £331,375. However, there is a possibility that this figure could rise to £376,797 should the remaining staff choose not to take up the redeployment opportunities offered. The redundancy costs can be met within the 3 year payback policy agreed by Council.
- 6.3 Legal - None
- 6.4 HR – Staff were interviewed for ring-fenced posts to allow appropriate skills to be matched to appropriate posts. Five staff have chosen redundancy with a further two staff being offered a redeployment opportunity. A national advert is being processed for remaining vacancies.
- 6.5 Equalities - None
- 6.6 Risk – Additional risk for the service whilst Service Review is being implemented will be managed through close monitoring of the Review Risk Register.
- 6.7 Customer Service – The service review offers improved service to clients and future clients of the service.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services
Policy Lead: Councillor Mary Jean Devon
31st July 2014

For further information contact: Louise Long, Head of Service – Children & Families, Kilmory, Lochgilphead. Tel: 01546 604256. E-mail: louise.long@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES: Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh	MAKI	OLI	CARM*
Locality Manager x 1	Locality Manager x 1	Locality Manager x 1	Locality Manager x 1	CARO**
2 x Practice Leads (1 vacancy)	2 x Practice Leads (2 vacancies) Temp Team Leader cover	2 Practice Leads (1 vacancy) Temp Team Leader cover	1.75 Practice Leads (0.75 vacancy)	B&C – 1 CARO OLI – 1 CARO
10.5 Social Workers (4 vacancies)	10.25 Social Workers	7.25 Social Workers	7 Social Workers (1 vacancy)	H&L – 1 CARO MAKI – 1 vacancy
3 Social Work Assist	3 Social Work Assist	2 Social Work Assist	2 Social Work Assist	
1.7 Foster & Adoption	1.3 Foster & Adoption	0.5 Foster & Adoption	1.5 Foster & Adoption	
1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Worker	

*CARM – Care Assessment & Reviewing Manager

**CARO – Care Assessment & Reviewing Officer

Vacancies to be progressed:

Practice Lead x 5: (Mid-Argyll, Dunoon, Oban and Helensburgh x 2)

CARO: MAKI