

PERFORMANCE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND IMPACT OF BUDGET SAVINGS MADE DURING 2012-13: REPORT FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

Children's Services committed to significant savings within the 2012-13 round of budget setting and these have now been implemented. The purpose of this report is therefore to review the impact of those budget reductions and also to review the benefit of the use of volunteers due to the volunteering strategies in place within several service areas.

SAVINGS AND IMPACT

The savings made are outlined in this section, together with how those savings have been achieved and the impact they have had on service delivery.

Children's Centres

Following a major review of the role and effectiveness of the children's centres in Trafford in December 2013, combined with the need to reduce the budget, recommendations were made for a re-structured service and for £1,710,000 saving to be delivered from the budget of £3,987,785 which equated to a 42.9% saving. The number of children's centres was reduced from sixteen to six and there was a corresponding reduction in staffing. However, the remaining staff worked in partnership with other services and with children, families and communities, to minimise the impact of the reductions on service users. Staff teams were reconfigured to give consistency within localities and ensure a good local knowledge of each area was maintained. Staff considered there was a positive impact for service delivery and professional development from the relocations and transitional period as there was opportunity to share good practice and mix skills in new ways. The three heads of children's centres worked very effectively to co-ordinate and deliver the changes.

Currently 53.34% of children under five are registered with a children's centre which is a 5% increase in the last twelve months. The implementation of the Early Years Pathway has had a positive effect on these numbers, with registration at 77% in Partington where the pathway has been established since April 2011 and 69% in Stretford where the pathway was implemented in November 2012. The engagement in south and central is not as high and plans are in place to roll out the pathway on those areas.

Children's centre attendance has increased by children under 5 years of age from 6,745 attendances between April and November 2012 to 8,175 child attendances at group activities. Due to the redesign of the children centre model of service delivery creating family support services a further 5,322 targeted 1:1 contacts were achieved, making a total of 13,497 combined attendances and contacts between June and December 2013.

Feedback from parents and carers has remained positive about the quality of work undertaken via children's centres.

Volunteering in Children's Centres

Children's Centres continue to recruit, train and engage volunteers in delivery of services, both to maintain community input into universal services and to give local families opportunities and skills which support their employability.

- There are currently **70** active volunteers in Children's Centres
- In addition to this, there are **20** Breastfeeding Peer Supporters delivering direct support to parents
- The range of volunteers recruited reflects the diversity of our communities and the "target groups" children's centres are tasked with reaching, such as; lone parents, BME backgrounds, fathers, workless households and parents with disabilities or parents of a child/children with disabilities
- Volunteers support the delivery of universal play and stay groups, toddler gyms and baby massage sessions. There are a number who also volunteer their time on Parent Forums and Advisory Boards to support decision making and shape service delivery
- **10** people have attended training sessions delivered in partnership with Trafford College – although this is a slight decrease from those trained prior to the service restructure, this is due to the fact that the course has been developed to provide accredited training which will contribute to future qualification opportunities
- A further **27** volunteers have expressed an interest to attend the next course in the New Year. We plan to deliver this accredited training to 3 cohorts of learners by the end of March 2014
- **65** people have been signposted to other groups and partner agencies in order to boost confidence, gain work experience and begin vocational training in placement (e.g. Teaching Assistant) – this is more than double the amount signposted in the previous period.

Connexions Service

The Connexions service delivers a targeted service to vulnerable groups who are either not in education training or employment (NEET) or at risk of becoming so. In addition the service delivers an independent advice and guidance service around education training and employment to secondary schools and Trafford College on a traded service basis. Both elements of the service have been very successful and the work is undertaken in partnership with a range of other organisations in order to offer young people creative and flexible opportunities that meet their needs. In 2012-13 a commitment was made to make £100K saving from the targeted service which resulted in the loss of two connexions advisor posts and other additional savings. Fortunately, due to the excellent partnership working across services and schools, there has been no negative impact on NEET outcomes so far. The number of young people who are NEET or whose destination is not known fluctuates throughout the year due to the annual education cycle and the chart below demonstrates the position to date for the year 2013-14. It is not possible to evidence whether young people have felt any reduction in the volume of the service, but feedback from young people who have been involved with the service continues to be very positive.

1.2 : NEET Numbers & adjusted %ages (16-18 Academic Age)

Q1-2	Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep	
2012-13	392	5.49%	368	5.26%	358	5.25%	384	5.51%	396	5.76%	255	4.18%
2013-14	330	4.52%	317	4.38%	330	4.54%	310	4.27%	330	4.55%	207	5.16%
Q3-4	Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan		Feb		Mar	
2012-13	293	4.23%	292	4.25%	294	4.31%	292	4.27%	268	4.03%	280	4.21%
2013-14	243	3.56%										

Youth Service

The youth service delivers a range of positive activities and individual support and development opportunities to young people across six local centres, two specialist hubs and using a mobile street based team. A saving £316K delivered for 2013-14. All the centres have remained open with the exception of the Fuse which closed for other reasons. Youth work in Partington was delivered via a street and park based plan over the summer and plans are being progressed for sessions to be delivered from the Moss View school site from January 2014. The reduction in funding was achieved primarily through a reduction in staffing but following the youth service review and restructure in 2011 the management of youth work was already delivered via a hub and spoke model and it was therefore possible to reduce the central management posts further to assist with the savings. However, the reduction in funding has equated to the reduction of youth work sessions at the six local youth centres from three nights per week to two nights per week. The impact of this reduction has been minimised by local partnership working and youth work action plans which were created on a partnership basis as part of the review. Positive activities continue to be available to young people from a range of services and the youth service still plays a key part in this work.

Youth Service Volunteering Strategy.

The youth service worked in partnership with Salford Foundation to develop a clearly structured volunteering strategy during 2012-13 for both adults and young people. The approach created clear standards and systems for recruiting and training volunteers, building on existing volunteering that was in place in the service. The target of training 50 volunteers in the first year was almost met, with thirty three adults and fourteen young people trained. The adults ranged from those offering specific skills around outdoor activities for Duke of Edinburgh Awards or performing arts at Gorse Hill Studios, to those supporting open access sessions. The young people were trained as junior youth leaders and developed their own identity and branding of M.A.D. (Make A Difference) and ran junior youth nights in Sale West and Partington which were very successful. The work of supporting and mentoring volunteers in order to enable them to deliver a good service and continue to develop has been co-ordinated by one Area Youth Worker and this is an on-going area of development.

In 2013-14 to date the positive work of the volunteering strategy has continued. There are now sixty adults trained of whom forty are regularly volunteering with the service. There are thirty young people trained, all of whom come from more needy areas of the borough. They have developed a strong and supportive group identity and are gaining skills for life and for their futures. They contribute significantly to the work of the service and junior youth nights have recently started at Altrincham youth centre and in Sale Moor in addition to those established last year. The figures for the groups established last year are currently as follows:

- Sale West has had 554 contacts with young people aged 8-11, with 87 regularly attending junior youth work sessions, planned and delivered primarily by young volunteers.
- Partington has had 613 contacts with young people aged 8-11, with 145 regularly attending junior youth work sessions delivered primarily by young volunteers

Youth Offending Service:

The Youth Offending Service put forward a two year saving plan aligned to the implementation of the Children and Young Peoples Service Early Help Strategy. The service will continue to monitor the impact of the savings on any upturn in the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice Service (YJS). In 2012/13 there were 71 FTEs, a 27.6% reduction from 2011-2012. In Q1 and Q2 2013/14 there has been 24 FTEs, a 25% decrease from the same period in 2012.

This has been achieved through Pre-Court measures delivered via excellent working relationships with agencies including the Police, Fire Service, Youth Service and the voluntary sector. A key part of the Youth Offending Service delivery model is the use of volunteers. The Youth Offending Service recruited 31 new volunteers over the last year, taking the overall number of volunteers in the service up to 63. The Restorative Justice Team has also successfully trained 11 volunteers and sessional workers in Restorative Justice Training through the International Institute of Restorative Justice. They have also successfully trained two trainers who can deliver Restorative Justice Training.

Use of Custody

In the last 12 months 4 young people received custodial sentences compared to 65 in 2007/8. This reduction in the use of custody is attributable to a number of different factors. Relationships between the YOS and the Court Officers and Magistrates have significantly improved resulting in greater confidence in the work being delivered by YOS. In addition there has been a range of service strategies and service provision such as Intensive Fostering as an alternative to custody provision; the use of robust bail packages to prevent unnecessary remand of young people; the rigorous quality assurance of reports written by the Youth Offending Service outlining the most effective and appropriate alternatives, and how young people can be effectively managed within the community informed by thorough risk assessments and the routine tracking and proactive reviewing of all remands with a view to promoting intensive and creative bail applications, including collaboration with other areas.

Reduction in Re-Offending

In the last 12 months the YOS achieved a 12% reduction in frequency of offending significantly higher than the combine northwest and national average.

Children, Families and Wellbeing: Annual Delivery Plan Performance Measures

Quarter 2 2013-14

The table below outlines performance against the ADP targets for the Directorate. In terms of those measures that are directly impacted by the 2013-14 budget proposals I would highlight the following points;

- Breastfeeding overall rates and closing the gap in our vulnerable localities are both showing a significant improvement at the mid-year point. Children's Centres are an integral part of the Early Years pathway and services delivered through the Centres have supported this improvement.
- 16-18 year olds Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) is highlighted as red and an exception report outlining the reasons for this are also attached. In summary it is due to an increase in the number of 'not knowns' rather than actual number of NEET in September due to delays in receiving destination data from some colleges outside of Trafford. This has now been corrected and actual NEET rate is ahead of target and continuing to decrease from an already low base. The year on year trend is shown in Table 1.2 above emphasising the ongoing improvement.

SERVICES FOCUSED ON THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE								
Ref.	Definition	Freq	12/13 Actual	13/14 Target	2013/14 Q2			
					Actual	Target	DOT	Status
New	Maintain % of eligible population aged 40-74 offered an NHS Health Check who received an NHS Health Check in the financial year	M	10.5%	10.5%	2.97%*	2.6%		G
*This is figure for Q1. Q2 not available until early November. 2.97% equates to 1985 people offered a health check, of an eligible population of 66,819. Of those being made the offer, 1049 (52.8%) had a check. On a straight trajectory this measure is on track to meet target.								
New	Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks: difference from Trafford average of the lowest areas, by Medical Centre catchment	Q	-16.3%	-15.5%	-5.06%	-15.5%	↑	G
Achievement against this measure remains very good this year and significantly above what was seen at the same time last year and remains on track to achieve a challenging target. The figure for the quarter was 54.59%. It reflects work done with and by midwives and Health Visitors to support women to both initiate and continue breastfeeding. Extra support and training has been targeted towards lower achieving areas, and figures, particularly in the West, have improved significantly.								
Whilst this is an encouraging start, it must be noted that the breastfeeding figures can be very volatile with								

significant changes, quarter on quarter.

New	Children in Care Long Term Stability	Q	78.8%	80%	82.0%	80%	↑	G
-----	--------------------------------------	---	-------	-----	-------	-----	---	---

Latest benchmarking data (September 13) shows Trafford's 3 year average for this measure to be the 4th highest in the country. This is an important indicator and the provision of long term stable placements to children in care provides the foundation on which children can grow and achieve positive outcomes.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION								
Ref.	Definition	Freq	12/13 Actual	13/14 Target	2013/14 Q2			
					Actual	Target	DOT	Status
	% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths	A	71.9%	73%	Annual Indicator			
CGV 2c	% of pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths	A	41.5% G	43%	Annual Indicator			
LCA2	Maintain the low level of 16-18 year olds who are not in education training or employment (NEET) in Trafford	M	4.45% G	4.4%	5.16%	4.4%	↓	R
See Exception Report								
New	Maintain Trafford's position within the Top quartile of authorities nationally, with regard to the rate of persistent absence from School	A	Top G	Top	Top		↔	G
Data based on 2 terms (Autumn 12, Spring 13) released 15/10/13, shows Trafford to have maintained its position in the top quartile of authorities with regard to the rate of persistent absence.								

Theme / Priority:	Excellence in Education
Indicator / Measure:	LCA2
Indicator / Measure detail:	Reduce the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment

Baseline:			
Target and timescale:	4.4% Upper target September 2013	Actual and timescale:	5.17% September 2013
Why is performance at the current level?			
<p>The NEET percentage is arrived at from a national formula which takes into account the number of young people whose destination is “Not Known”. The Not Known figure for September 13 was higher than expected which therefore has an impact on the NEET figure. When the actual number of NEET young people is looked at there were 207 compared to 255 young people at the same time last year.</p> <p>Connexions is responsible for tracking the destination of all 16 – 19 year olds and has a process in place which includes receiving enrolment and progression data from schools and colleges to update the current destination of young people. This year it has been more difficult than in previous years to get this information from some schools and colleges, mainly from those in other Greater Manchester local authority areas. There have been changes to the way that some neighbouring local authority areas are tracking young people which has had an effect in Trafford. The usual practice is that the Connexions/LA where the FE / sixth form is based will receive enrolment data for all students and will then share this with the students home LA via the national CCIS website. Where neighbouring LAs have not progressed with this as in previous years this has left a larger number of students to be followed up by phone call or home visits.</p> <p>Trafford Connexions is using a new database to track and record destinations of young people. The new system automatically moves a young person to “Not Known” at the end of their course. This means that some young people will be classed as Not Known in September as their Year 12 course has finished, but they have not yet been recorded as starting on a Year 13 course. The most accurate picture of NEET, Not Known and In Learning will not be seen until all enrolment lists have been updated.</p>			
What difference does this make – the implications of not meeting target?			
The impact is that the most accurate NEET percentage is not available and appears to partners that there are more young people still waiting to be placed in education or training than in effect there are.			
How can we make sure things get better?			
<p>Connexions and Partnerships and Performance are actively contacting FE colleges, schools and sixth forms to get enrolment lists.</p> <p>Connexions Advisers are actively phoning young people and where necessary making home visits to ascertain their current destination.</p> <p>It is expected that an accurate “Not Known” figure will be available at the end of November which will then show a more accurate NEET percentage.</p>			