

Keeping Families Together Strategy Update

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Keeping Families Together Strategy was finalised following consultation by Jacqui Jensen, former Service Director – Early Intervention and Integrated Safeguarding, in March 2012 and was agreed by the Authority in April 2012.
- 1.2 The key purpose of the Strategy is to transform operational deliver of family support services, including social work services, and planning for children in care.

The three key priority areas are:

- To provide early help to families to improve outcomes for those who are most vulnerable.
- To better identify those children who are at risk of significant harm and to intervene to prevent escalation of that risk or the need for them to become Looked After Children – in care.
- To make sure that those children who do come into care are planned for effectively, to achieve reunification with their community or timely placement in good quality alternative permanent care.

- 1.3 The Strategy aims to deliver against these priorities through five objectives and a range of actions.
- 1.4 The report attached as Appendix 2 provides the second update of activity and progress against the Strategy. It does not replace the original Strategy document, which continues to provide the vision and direction, nor does it intend to provide a reanalysis of the issues.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For the progress in relation to implementation of the Keeping Families Together Strategy to be noted.
- 2.2 For the next steps in the Keeping Families Strategy to be noted.

- 2.3 For Children and Young People's Board to consider whether any additional activity is required to deliver against the aims of the Strategy.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To inform the Scrutiny Board of the progress that has been made.
- 3.2 To ensure Scrutiny Board members are provided with an opportunity to comment upon the Strategy.
- 3.3 To keep the Scrutiny Board aware of developing strategies within the CYPD.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 There are indications that the Derby approach is beginning to impact, the inspection into the Arrangements for the Protection of Children conducted in December 2012 found that Derby is a 'good' authority. It is one of only four Authorities inspected under that framework to have improved its position. The inspection recognised the strength of the Early Help offer and commended the Keeping Families Together Strategy stating:

'Ambitious leadership is demonstrated by Keeping Families Together, a strategic plan clearly and precisely linked to the needs of the most vulnerable in the area. Sharply focused objectives for early help are set out so that a family's needs can be rapidly identified and met through multi-agency working.' (Ofsted; December 2012).

- 4.2 The Children's Services Peer Review in December 2013 found that there is a good focus on key areas to support prevention and strong commitment to early intervention supported by strong partnerships.
- 4.3 Tracking of changes in patterns of demand appear to indicate that the increase in provision of early help is beginning to reduce demand for more costly specialist options – see impact section of the report attached at Appendix 2. The total number of Looked After Children has stabilised from a previous trajectory of 10% increase over two years, with a current decrease of 21 during the period since implementation began.
- 4.4 The level of investment committed in the Keeping Families Together Strategy is predicated on a further reduction of Looked After Children numbers to 440 over the next two years, thus aiming to safely reduce numbers by a further 19.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Revise or cease strategy- this strategy was commended by Ofsted and is beginning to demonstrate impact. If no action is taken analysis within the strategy demonstrated that the number of Looked After Children would continue to rise and this would create an increasing budget pressure for the Local Authority

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Jane Parfremment, Director Early Intervention & Integrated Safeguarding
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For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Jane Parfremment – 01332 642668 – jane.parfremment@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Keeping Families Together Update Report
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Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Investment Plan is outlined within the Strategy, this has been developed in partnership with Finance section.

Legal

- 2.1 The Keeping Families Together Strategy is compliant with Children Act 1989 and other statutory guidance. The development of early intervention ensures we have an Early Help offer, as required by Working Together 2013.

Personnel

- 3.1 The Keeping Families Together Strategy and Investment Plan has resulted in a number of key actions in relation to workforce development, new teams and career structures. Human Resources have been consulted at each stage of development.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The impact of the Strategy should be a positive one in relation to its focus on groups who are more vulnerable. The focus is on improving life chances for these groups with the resources available.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 There are no significant Health and Safety implications brought about by this Strategy.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 There are no significant environmental sustainability implications brought about by this Strategy.

Property and Asset Management

- 7.1 A reduction in Looked After numbers is an enabler to the LAC Capital Development Strategy.

Risk Management

- 8.1 The Strategy is focussed on managing risk of significant harm to children at a lower level of intervention. There will need to be sound escalation procedures to ensure we are not leaving children in situations of risk too long.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The reduction of Looked After Numbers is a corporate and directorate priority. It is also critical to the delivery of savings plans and a balanced budget.

