

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th March 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Children's Hub Performance

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Children's Hub Performance Report Quarter 1 / Quarter 2.

The report provided information on the first six months' Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 performance of the North of Tees Multi-Agency Children's Hub which became operational on 1 June 2016. The staffing structure was attached to the report.

During this time Stockton Local Authority had its four week Inspection of Children's Services (SIF) – it was noted by Ofsted:

“The Children's Hub provides Stockton-on-Tees, in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council, with a new single point of entry to children's social care. This new initiative brings together key agencies across the North Tees area which deliver services jointly to both boroughs. The Children's Hub benefits from partner agencies being co-located. This is already leading to earlier and more effective identification of risk, improved information sharing and joint decision-making. While contacts remain high, the number of strategy meetings and cases transferred for assessment have been reduced in the first two weeks of implementation. Information sharing and decision-making are effective, but the new arrangements currently lack evidence of recorded management decisions.”

Since the Hub became operational regular Multi-Agency meetings had taken place to monitor the performance and quality of the work in the Hub.

The Multi-Agency Strategic Management Board (SMB), which was set up to establish the Hub, had continued to meet regularly alongside the meeting of operational partners – known as the Partner Review meetings.

The membership of the two meetings was attached to the report.

A key set of performance indicators had been agreed by the SMB, and Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 performance was attached to the report. The performance indicators where possible were measured against baseline performance information for 2015/2016. The key areas to highlight in Q1 and Q2 performance were as follows:

- The percentage of enquiries passed to the Assessment Team that were closed as No Further Action prior to assessment has reduced from baseline of 10.2% to 4.77%.
- The percentage of Social Care Assessments resulting in No Further Action has reduced from a baseline of 21.83% in 2015/16 to 8.77% up to Q2.
- Percentage of dashboard cases resulting in No Further Action is 27.82%.
- Percentage of cases leading to Pathway to Early Help 13.77% – this has reduced from 2015/16 figure, and needs to be considered alongside number of cases referred direct to Early Help.
- Percentage of cases resulting in Pathway to Single Agency is 4.45%.
- Percentage of Re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral is 19.8%.
- Percentage of all Referrals, including Early Help with an outcome/decision within one working day is 72%. A piece of work is to be undertaken to ensure all Social Care cases are responded to in one day.
- Police Chub attendance at Strategy discussions/meetings is 96%.
- Health Chub attendance at Strategy discussions/meetings is 88%.

A number of Qualitative Audits had also been undertaken over the first 6 months of the Hub becoming operational.

The first Audit which was undertaken by Stockton Borough Council staff was in response to the recommendation in the Ofsted SIF report regarding the lack of evidence of management decision making on the Hub referrals.

As a result of this recommendation new processes were put in place and

an audit of cases in November 2016 confirmed that management oversight was now evident in all of the Hub cases that went to the Social Work Assessment Teams.

This was not the case however of all cases that went to Early Help. A further more recent audit of referrals to the Hub to the Early Help Team did identify that in all cases there was now management oversight evident.

During the month of September 2016, all agencies undertook a 20% dip sample of cases to ensure that the referrals and action that had also been identified were completed.

In Stockton's case this sample included 37 children where the cases then went to the Assessment Teams (Social Work Teams) and 23 cases where the cases went from the Hub to the Early Help Team (cases which did not meet the threshold for Children's Social Care).

In relation to the 37 cases which were referred to the Assessment Teams, the Service Manager for the Teams confirmed the following:

- All children sampled were appropriate to transfer to the Assessment Teams.
- All thresholds were agreed by both the Hub and Assessment Team Managers.
- All referrals were responded to in a timely manner.
- There was written evidence of management decision making in relation to all children.

In relation to the 23 cases referred to Early Help, the Service Manager for Early Help confirmed the following:

- In 16 of the 23 cases it was appropriate for cases to go to Early Help, in the 8 cases where this was not felt to be appropriate, the view in these cases was that 5 cases could have gone from the referring agency straight to Early Help and did not need to go via the Hub, the remaining 3 should have been considered on the dashboard for social care assessment.
- In 21 of 23 referrals the Hub referral was clear, and the reasons for the referral clearly outlined.
- There was limited reference to the threshold document in the

referral with only 4 of the 23 evidencing that.

- Only 4 of the 23 also had dashboard information currently (this is due to partner agencies' capacity to check their systems and records). The CHUB Team Manager rates the referral on initial information only higher levels go on the dashboard the partners do not give information or support decision making on these referrals.
- In 20 of the 23 cases 86% the referral was appropriate to be passed from the Hub to Early Help Team. The remaining 3 should have been considered for social care assessment

Since the Hub was established a dispute resolution process had been introduced – there had only been a small number of cases where agreement had not been reached on cases. Future performance reports would provide exact numbers.

The Hub also asked all partner agencies to confirm that when the Hub had referred to single agency partners that actions had taken place on the cases as recommended.

The following findings came from this Audit:

- In 100% of the referrals to CAMHS actions had taken place.
- In 80% of the referrals to NTHFT actions had taken place.
- In 100% of the referrals to Schools actions had taken place.
- In 15 out of 62 (24%) actions had taken place with Harbour. Noted this was not because Harbour did not make contact with families, it was because families would not engage – this information has been passed to Harbour and a more detailed piece of work is taking place to understand why families have not engaged.
- Police – 100% of Police referrals action was taken.

Alongside this work all referrals received into the Hub that were No Further Action (NFA) or where advice and guidance was offered were sent back to the referring agency to consider if the referrals had been appropriate.

The following was found (note these are single children, some would be families):

- A & E – only 15 out of 30 were felt to be appropriate
- CAMHS – 4 out of 8 (50%)
- Education – 8 out of 35 (23%)
- Health – 5 out of 15 (33%)

- Probation – 100% = 10/10
- GPs – 4 out of 5 (80%)
- Police – 57 out of 76 (75%)
- Adult Mental Health – 3 out of 8 (38%)
- Harbour – 6 out of 6 (100%)

Since the Hub was established regular meetings had taken place with the Hub staff and school representatives, including attendance at the termly Safeguarding Schools Forum. The Designated Education Officer role in the Hub (DEO) also had been contacted on a regular basis to give advice on cases and guidance on when to refer cases into the Hub. Further work would continue in order that schools understand thresholds more fully and also referrals to Early Help Service.

A further piece of work was also being undertaken by the previous DCS, looking at a sample of the Education No Further Action referrals and the outcomes. The outcome of this work would be reported in next performance report.

Stockton Borough Council also undertook an audit of all referrals received into the Hub by North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). There were 12 in total:

- On 9 out of 12 the referral was clear
- In 11 out of 12 the reason for referral was clear
- In 7 out of 12 this was an appropriate referral to

Another piece of work undertaken was the analysis of school referrals and time that these arrived into the Hub.

Hartlepool Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council together checked 22 referrals of which:

- 46% arrived into the Hub after 3.00pm
- 41% arrived into the Hub after 3.30pm
- 27% arrived into the Hub after 4.00pm
- 23% arrived into the Hub after 4.30pm
- 18% arrived into the Hub after 5.00pm and not referred by school to EDT

and a number of referrals arrived after 4.30/5.00pm – as a result of this piece of work, further work was taking place with schools to ensure they refer any concerns into the Hub promptly and that they were aware of the need to contact EDT if it was after normal working hours.

During the first six months of the Hub, one complaint was received in

relation to the Hub – this was being adjudicated on at the Independent Investigation stage.

The Hub had also requested an External review of the Hub arrangements and colleagues from North Yorkshire Local Authority had agreed to undertake a review in early March with a view to making any recommendations which would improve the processes within the Hub and with partners.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The performance report be noted.
2. Six monthly performance reports be reported to Cabinet.
3. Reasons for the Decision

Best practice indicates that a multi-agency approach is the most effective way of making decisions about how best to deal with children and their families to secure the best possible outcomes.
4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.
5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Children’s Hub Performance as he was on TEWV NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor Mrs Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Children’s Hub Performance as she was on TEWV NHS Foundation Trust.
6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A
7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 24 March 2017

Proper Officer
20 March 2017