A Future Delivery Model for Early Year’s Services

Report from the Chief Executives of Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

26 June 2013

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the agreed plan between Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and partners for a future delivery model for Early Year’s services across Scottish Borders.

1.2 The report sets out proposals for an innovative new model of early years provision and seeks approval for the allocation of the Early Years Change Fund to support this transformational change.

1.3 The report acknowledges the importance of the universal services of health and education being at the forefront of early year’s development and that these services need to touch all families. However, it recognises that partners require to target more resources on the families and communities in most need to provide intensive and sustained support. To this end the establishment of early years centre hub and spoke model is recommended.

1.4 The report also provides some background context to the early year’s agenda from both national and local level. It acknowledges that there is a Scottish Borders Early Years Strategy and a multi-agency partnership group driving forward this agenda under the community planning process.

1.5 Scottish Borders are actively engaged in the Early Years Collaborative and this will undoubtedly result in significant improvements to professional practice within early year’s services into the future.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that:-

(a) Scottish Borders Council endorse the agreed plan for future delivery of Early Years services.

(b) Scottish Borders Council agree to align the designated Early Years Change Fund to develop an Early Years Centre and outreach model.
3 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Scottish Borders Council and partners are aware of the challenges ahead in respect to the forthcoming Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, particularly in respect to the 600 hours proposal and have initiated a review of their early years delivery model with a view to both the impending legislation and also ensuring services are run efficiently at a time of diminishing resource. This draft legislation puts a duty on the Local Authority to secure a minimum of 600 hours per annum early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and 2 year olds who have been subject to a kinship care order. The legislation will also place a duty on Local Authorities to consult with parents every two years to identify what patterns of hours best suit parent needs.

3.2 It is assumed that additional government funding will be made available to Local Authorities to enable them to deliver this commitment.

3.3 Delivering the 600 hours alone will not be enough to tackle the inequality of outcomes for some of the most vulnerable families and communities. There is a need to target more resources on the families and communities in most need to provide intensive and sustained support. It is arguable that partners would see a higher return on their investments targeted on the communities and families most in need. There would be less risk of intensive and expensive cycles of care being repeated, outcomes for children and families would be improved and more would be achieved in breaking cycles of inequality in the Scottish Borders. The Council has an ambition to offer 2 full years of pre-school education prior to Primary 1. The current review of early year’s services will explore ways to deliver this.

3.4 In line with the Community Planning Partnership commitment to focus on reducing inequalities in Burnfoot and Langlee, it is proposed to develop Early Years Centres with outreach services initially in these two areas followed by Centres in Selkirk and Eyemouth. Eventually it would be rolled out across all of Scottish Borders. Such a model would:

- Provide a “one stop shop” for children and families in Centres of population and smaller rural communities, which would help to underpin a “whole family” approach to improving outcomes and making best use of both human and financial resources. This would be located within a universal service, probably a primary school.
- Ensure a multi-agency presence in hubs could play a significant role in delivering accessible, localised and personalised support for individual children and families, ranging from those who need only rely on traditional universal services through to families with more complex and challenging needs.
- If designed and delivered with care and sensitivity, local centres could reduce the stigma and alienation experienced by some children and families, who may reluctant or even hostile to engaging with services.
- Improve engagement with families who are hard to reach or “under the radar” might well prove easier and the centres could play a key role in providing early warning of problems emerging among those using universal services, which might require interventions from more specialised services. This could happen rapidly and seamlessly if both types of services are available on the same site.

More detail on the role of an Early Years Centre is contained in Appendix 1.
3.5 Both Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders would work to re-locate current early year’s services into this model. From the Council’s perspective this would include school nurseries, early years teachers (Primary 1 and 2), community learning and development staff, home-school link workers and some of the specialist early years services within Integrated Children’s Services. The Council currently invest around £5.5 million in Early Years services. This includes nursery education, commissioned pre-school places from the private and voluntary sector, childcare partnership, home-school link worker and family support services and more specialist early years services within Integrated Children’s Services.

3.6 NHS Borders could look at how public health nurses, child and adolescent mental health staff, specialist services and elements of the health improvement could be redeployed into a hub and spoke model.

3.7 This Early Years Centre model would also provide a platform for NHS Borders to deliver significant aspects of their Early Years Change Fund programme around Child Healthy Weight, Dental Action Plan and Childsmile, Maternity Care and Infant Nutrition. NHS Borders currently invests £413,000 in these work streams.

3.8 It is proposed that the Scottish Borders Council Early Years Change Fund be allocated against the development of the Early Years Centre and outreach model, in Hawick, Galashiels, Selkirk and Eyemouth over the next two years with a view of that model being rolled out across all of Scottish Borders in the future.

4 THE EARLY YEARS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 National and international research supporting the benefits of investment in the early years is both powerful and convincing. It can improve outcomes for children and generate significant savings to the public purse. These factors have driven a shift of policy within Scotland. There is now a stronger focus on prevention, the early identification of problems and early identification by agencies working together to meet the needs of the individual child and his/her family.

4.2 This shift is visible in key policies such as:
- The Early Years Framework [2008]
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- The National Parenting Strategy

The Children and Young People Bill, published in April 2013, will have wide-ranging and fundamental implications for the planning, design and delivery of Early Years services in the Scottish Borders when the resulting legislation and statutory guidance come into force. Outputs from the Early Years Collaborative will also have a significant impact on Early Years services and how progress is to be measured.

4.3 The Scottish Borders Early Years Strategy 2012-15 sets out the priorities and action for community planning partners in Scottish Borders. This is led by a multi-agency Strategic Early Years Group. It sets out a commitment to reduce inequalities in society and ensure there is equality of outcomes and opportunities for all. There is recognition of the importance, of both universal and targeted services, at supporting vulnerable children and their families. While we need to focus provision on where it is needed most, we
must also ensure that universal services can deliver effectively for the more vulnerable.

4.4 Within the Scottish Borders there are plans to remodel the way early years services are delivered. This is to ensure:

4.5

- Parents receive advice, support and guidance when they are asking for it, regularly and from conception.
- Parents and children get access to locally delivered early education and activities when needed.
- For children where families have difficulties, including mental health issues and substance misuse issues, there are a range of support services to tackle these.
- Within communities the skills and strengths available are used to help parents and children. This includes the use of volunteers and voluntary agencies already doing really valuable work.

5 PROGRESS SO FAR

5.1 Scottish Borders community planning partners are actively engaged in the work of the Early Years Collaborative. A Programme Manager and Data Manager have been employed using the £100k contribution from NHS Borders and a range of practitioners and managers are engaged in the four identified works teams across all agencies within Scottish Borders.

5.2 The Strategic Early Years Group has, with the help of Children in Scotland, conducted a review of how Early Years services are delivered at locality level and are currently considering a range of emerging recommendations. This work will help ensure that:

a) Services and locality delivery will follow the early years journey for children and their needs rather than the pattern of service provision.

b) Early Years services will be enhanced and focussed more clearly around children and families with a lessening of professional boundaries.

c) There is a simplification of management and delivery frameworks.

d) There are stronger links between services for children and those for adults.

This work will be linked to the existing Integrated Children’s Services locality model.

5.3 CYPPP have been progressing developments around GIRFEC in collaboration with partners in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Plans are in place to introduce the Named Person role within Health and Education during 2013/14 and work is also underway to develop understanding of the role of the lead professional and the single children’s plan. There is concern from both partners as to how all elements of GIRFEC will be resourced. If no additional funding is forthcoming NHS will have to consider redeploying existing resources in order to carry out their role as Named Person for all children 0-5 years.

5.4 The establishment of 6 locality early years networks across Scottish Borders are beginning to have a significant impact on local service planning and quality improvement into the future. These networks are chaired by Community Nurse Managers.
5.5 With the recognition that the Early Years landscape is a potentially complicated one, a revised governance structure is proposed to ensure that all elements of work are co-ordinated and resourced appropriately and that the work is fully embedded into the community planning process. This is attached as Appendix 2 of this report and shows the direct links between the CPP Strategic Board, the Early Intervention and Prevention theme group, a new Strategic Early Years group which will include Directors and Heads of Service from both Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders along with relevant partners and a series of work streams which the strategic Early Years group will oversee.

5.6 The Community Planning Partnership, through the Children and Young People’s Planning Partnership are also actively linking their early year’s strategy with the emerging local parenting strategy.

5.7 There has already been some work undertaken within the Council to look at how resources might be reallocated to focus on early intervention and early years. The review of Community Learning and Development when community based literacies and adult learning programmes were re-focussed to support early years, early intervention, parenting, family and community empowerment is an example of this. This revised service has been embedded into Learning Communities, with resources invested where there is greatest demonstrable need.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial
The costs of establishing the four early years centres will be met by the change fund
In the longer term a transformational change to Early Year’s services will have an impact on Council budgets with less spend being required for acute services. The process of delivering transformational change within Early Year’s services will, in itself, identify efficiency savings.
Any capital implications arising from this report remain to be qualified. If investment is required this will have to be evaluated and prioritised against other proposals for expenditure as part of the roll forward of the capital investment plan.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations
(a) A failure to deliver the Early Years agenda may result in the Council and partners spending more resource on acute and expensive services when children are older.

The implementation of this report and its recommendations would mitigate these risks.

(b) Lack of progress in delivering on the early years agenda would place the council and partners at odds with both national priorities as well as the refreshed corporate and community planning priorities. The implementation of these recommendations would ensure the Council.
6.3 Equalities
(a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Scottish Borders Early Years Strategy prior to its approval by Scottish Borders Council. As all work undertaken is inline with the Early Years Strategy there should be no anticipated adverse equality implications.

6.4 Acting Sustainably
(a) The successful implementation of the recommendations of this report should result in a positive economic, social or environmental effect. It should have an impact on local communities and support parents both within and looking to enter the workplace.

6.5 Carbon Management
(a) There are no effects on carbon emissions.

6.6 Rural Proofing
(a) The Scottish Borders Early Years Strategy was subject to rural proofing prior to its approval by Scottish Borders Council. As all work undertaken will be in direct alignment with the Early Years Strategy there should be no adverse implications.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation
(a) There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in your report.

7 CONSULTATION
7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Audit and Risk, the Clerk to the Council and the Head of Strategic Policy have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated in the final report.
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