

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PARTNERSHIP**  
**Wednesday, 15th January, 2014**

Present:- Joyce Thacker (in the Chair); Councillor Pickering, Ann Clark, Karen Etheridge, Sara Graham, Michael Holmes, Catherine Homer, Carole Haywood, Martin Kimber, Rachel Nicholls, Clair Pyper, Emma Royale, Susan Skalycz, Dorothy Smith, Janet Wheatley, Sue Wilson and Chrissy Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lakin, Steve Ashley, Tracey Blakemore, Julie Mott, Dr. Polkinghorn, Dr. Radford, Sarah Whittle

**246. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, were considered and approved as a correct record.

Arising from Minute No 236 (Sarah Champion MP), it was noted that Clair Pyper had attended a meeting, together with representatives of a number of agencies and Councillors, to discuss Sarah's understanding of the situation in Rotherham with regard to CSE and a particular section of the population. Clair had supplied data which had proven this not to be the case. Discussion had taken place on whether there was more agencies could do to help parents understand the need to keep their children safe and not just with regard to CSE. It had been agreed to liaise with a particular school with regard to future work.

The meeting had also discussed engagement with communities. It was reported from Jason Harwin that funding had been secured for this work and would be discussed further at the CSE sub-group.

Arising from Minute No. 237 (Emergency Hormonal Contraception), it was noted that a report had been submitted to the Local Pharmaceutical Committee with regard to arrangements for EHC.

Resolved:- That an update on EHC be submitted to the March Partnership meeting.

**247. ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The next meeting of the Youth Cabinet was to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2014, where they would be discussing the Lifestyle Survey and proposals around the Integrated Youth Service budget.

**248. WARM AND WELL FAMILIES**

Catherine Homer, Public Health Specialist, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

Aim

- To conduct an indepth exploration of factors influencing the decisions and behaviour of households with children with asthma regarding keeping warm and well at home

#### Design

- Qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups)
- Temperature measurements
- Data collected in winter months
- Framework analysis

#### Who we spoke to

- 17 households
- 13 staff
- Focus groups – 2 staff, 1 school children, 1 young adults

#### Themes

- Knowledge and awareness
- Contextual factors
- Behaviours
- Social support and social factors
- Attitudes and beliefs

#### The world of parents

- Priorities and choice
  - Heat – luxury or need?
  - Needs of family members
  - Roof over head
  - Paying the bills/balancing the budget
  - Food/heating regime
  - Safety of family/possessions
- Perception of risk
  - Child becoming ill
  - Losing home
  - Getting into debt
- Responsibility and blame
  - Child's health
  - Damp/conditions/mould
  - Condition of house
  - Heating regime/equipment
- Fear
  - Losing home
  - Debt
  - Child becoming ill
  - Blame
  - Shame or embarrassment/stigmas/loss of privacy
  - Being judged
  - Losing control
- Knowledge and beliefs
  - Causes of asthma

Causes of mould/damp  
 Cost heating and energy saving measures  
 Preventative action  
 Who can help  
 Who to trust and not trust  
 They have no choice sometimes

Why is fuel poverty an issue?

- It is sometimes the reason children do not attend school
- It is sometimes the reason children are ill
- It is sometimes the reason adults are physically and/or mentally unwell
- It is sometimes the reason people are in debt
- It is sometimes the reason why people are socially isolated
- It is sometimes the reason why houses seem unkempt and not looked after

Discussion ensued on the presentation with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Properties were of mixed ownership
- Families were receiving mixed messages. Through energy efficiency measures, the properties were “wrapped” so well the house could not breathe; families could not understanding opening windows when the heating was on
- Many of the families agencies dealt with through concerns of neglect did not have the funds to heat their properties. Not only was there the increase in fuel poverty but the unsafe methods used by many to heat their homes
- There were links with the Fire Service and their Hot Spot Schemes. When they carried out safety checks they would discuss methods of safely heating the property
- In times of diminishing financial resources, any practitioner visiting families should be encouraged to give simple messages to families on keeping their family safe and warm. Pen portraits were being produced that front line staff could give to families

Catherine was thanked for her presentation.

## **249. CSE UPDATE**

Joyce Thacker gave an update on recent activity including the following:-

- The recent media coverage over the Christmas and New Year period regarding 4 Slovak-Roma teenagers (3 from Rotherham) who had

gone missing from home. The case had been discussed extensively at a meeting of the Local Safeguarding Children's broad Sub-Committee and it was the intention to hold an event in the Roma community to impress the message of keeping children safe etc.

- "A Review of the response to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham" had been published and received a lot of media coverage
- The CSE sub-group had received a viewing of the NWG e-learning product which, subject to revisions, would be used in Rotherham for CSE awareness raising for front line staff
- South Yorkshire Police launch of "Say something if you see something" on 4<sup>th</sup> February
- Vulnerability Conference to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February
- Alexis Jay, Independent Inquiry lead, had been out to visit CSE 'hotspots' in the Borough. A meeting schedule was to be drawn up of the key people she would like to interview
- A multi-agency safeguarding hub was to be established at Riverside House. The Police would close the Public Protection Unit at Maltby and relocate all services, including the CSE Team, at Riverside
- Quarterly CSE plan/monitoring to be submitted to the 5<sup>th</sup> February Cabinet meeting
- Attendance at the Improving Lives Select Commission on 22<sup>nd</sup> January to give an update
- Training had been given to 50 hotel staff on the signs to look for CSE
- The first Parish Council/community event around CSE was to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> January

Martin Kimber reported that a lot of work had been done by the Council and partner agencies during the last 18 months. However, it was important that any information received regarding potential CSE was clearly recorded and information shared.

Resolved:- That the update be noted.

## **250. FAMILY POVERTY AND WELFARE REFORM**

Carole Haywood and Michael Holmes, Policy and Partnerships, gave the following presentation:-

The Big Things

- Child Poverty Act 2010 – national and local Government to reduce child poverty and mitigate its impact
- Welfare Reform Act 2012 – save money, “make work pay” and simplify the benefits system via Universal Credit
- After peaking at 29% in 1992, relative child poverty fell steadily from mid-90s due to rising employment/Tax Credits and, more recently, stagnating wages (i.e. reduced poverty threshold)
- Poverty projected to increase during this decade as a result of benefit changes; Universal Credit should reduce poverty but was behind schedule
- A recent study put the annual cost of child poverty at £29B including £15B in services to deal with its consequences

#### “State of the Nation”

- 2.3M UK children (1 in 6) in relative income poverty, absolute poverty up by 275,000 in 2011/12
- 2/3s of Britain’s poor children – compared to less than ½ in 1997, were now in working families
- Coalition’s approach to deficit reduction was:-
  - Affecting young more than old and those with children more than those without
  - Seeing low income families, especially lone parents, lose out by more than their peers as a proportion of their net income
- Report’s recommendations include:
  - Increased focus on ensuring work pays so that parents who “do the right thing” were able to escape poverty
  - Adapt Universal Credit and wider Welfare Reform Programme to better tackle in-work poverty (e.g. increase funding for childcare within Universal Credit to incentivise work)
  - Work with employers to devise actions for lifting earnings without damaging employment
- Strong focus on emulating Nordic countries particularly in providing “universal, affordable and high quality” childcare

#### Impact of Welfare Reform

- Analysis by IFS suggested increase from 2.3M to 3.4M children living in poverty between 2010/11 and 2020/21
- Welfare Benefits Up-rating Act: 4.4M couples with children and 2M lone parents affected; CPAG suggested this alone would increase child poverty by 200,000
- Cumulative impact: Sheffield Hallam University research estimated loss of income in Rotherham to reach £91M per annum; 37% of this was due to IB/ESA and DLA/PIP changes
- Anecdotal evidence that increased “conditionality” and use of sanctions by DWP was a growing problem – families providing evidence to Council’s Scrutiny Review
- New Policy Institute’s annual report – level of benefits for families with children was around 60% of what the public considered to be a minimum standard of living

### Real Life Reform

- Looking at impact of Welfare Reform on social housing tenants. Findings to date included:-
  - 36% of participants had no money left over after paying for essentials
  - Average spend on food per person per day was £2.10 in October down from £3.27 in July
  - In October, 83% said that benefit changes would affect the health of people in the household (down from 88% in July)
  - Over 60% feared that benefit changes would affect their children's education

### Poverty: the Local Picture

- 22.6% of Rotherham children lived in poverty (2011 figures) – 13,205 children
  - 50% in poverty in 11 most deprived neighbourhoods vs 3% in least deprived
- Latest census: 16.7% of households with dependent children had no-one in work (14.3% nationally)
  - East Herringthorpe/Canklow over 44%
- Lone parents – 42% not working though employment had increased significant due to benefit changes
- Over 30,000 working age people claimed DWP benefits (almost 1/5), 41% of whom had been claiming for over 5 years
- Almost 1 in 3 adults in Rotherham were over-indebted, placing us amongst the highest 8% of local authority areas

### Local Response

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Early Help and response to Welfare Reform all concerned with tackling poverty
- Child Poverty Needs Assessment – last produced in late 2010
- Need to ensure efforts were joined up working towards clearly defined objectives
- Allocation of “anti-poverty” resources should be evidence based with measurable impact/outcomes

### Food Banks

- Demand had increased over the last year; issues with DWP benefits had been a factor
- Estimated that, in total, organisations provided around 600 food parcels and 2,200 cooked meals per month
- Citizens Advice Bureau referred 85 people in November/December many due to benefit delays/sanctions
- More detailed data on food bank users to be collected as part of new scheme with FareShare Yorkshire

### Benefit Cap

- 27 Council tenants affected with weekly benefit loss ranging from £3

to £143. Similar number of non-Council tenants also capped. Most of the Council tenants were in rent arrears

- Direct support had been provided through existing family support structures and NAS Financial Inclusion Team
- Families given budgeting advice and helped to apply for DHPs

#### Housing

- Just under 4,000 Rotherham claimants affected by “Bedroom Tax” – 1,312 had children. Average weekly reduction of approximately £13
- Estimated that Bedroom Tax had increased arrears by £50K per month even with DHPs to mitigate
- Anecdotal evidence of increased stress and families struggling to cope/understand changes
- Joint CYPS/NAS proposal developed for an outreach service targeting families with evictions pending

#### Council Tax

- Under new local scheme, around 11,300 people were now required to pay having previously received full benefit; further 4,400 had to pay more than previously
- Nearly 8,000 of them had dependent children
- Around 6,600 Summons had been sent to the customers and over 4,000 Liability Orders obtained
- Overall significant rise in defaults with 80% increase in the numbers of both reminders and Summons issued and a 57% increase in Court cases for non-payment

#### DWP Sanctions

- Increase in sanctions of – particularly – JSA claimants for not meeting increasingly stringent requirements
- Families for Change, Citizens Advice Bureau, food banks, reporting that this was causing major problems
- From July, 2013 to 014, the Citizens Advice Bureau had dealt with 1,092 clients of whom 313 identified themselves as having dependent children. The total number of clients supported with all areas of law, including benefits, housing, employment etc. was 2,795 of whom 871 identified themselves as having dependent children
- Council’s Scrutiny session with sanctioned claimants outlined problems/stress and importance of support from FRP/FFC
- Exacerbated mental health problems, worried about food and heating, panicked, problems snowballed, harder to find work

#### Laser Credit Union

- Around 4,500 members, large number of whom are single mums
  - Increase in emergency loan requests due to DWP sanctions
  - Estimated 70% in arrears with rent and/or Council Tax
  - Tended to be prioritised over other debts so could be assumed that overall debt was increasing
  - Fund for Change had paid out over 1,100 crisis loans for total of

£140K with 70% needing money for food and bills

- Citizens Advice Bureau had seen 333 people for debt issues since July, around 40% of their clients had dependent children

#### Building Resilience in Newham

- “We need a welfare state that helps grow personal, community and economic resilience so that people are able to overcome life’s challenges and participate in the good life”
- *Life Changing Fund* – interest free, flexible loan fund to help people make a positive change
- *Workplace* – one-stop-shop for careers advice, training, recruitment
- “*Every Child*” Programme – universal provision for primary school children, including music, sport and reading based initiatives

#### Future Policy Direction

- Chancellor: “the next government will want to undertake further reductions in the welfare budget”; housing benefit likely to be targeted
- New welfare cap could see further cuts to working age benefits
- Possible further reductions to benefit cap and child benefits
- Government have axed funding for local welfare provision
- Universal Credit off track and Autumn statement’s freezing of Universal Credit Work Allowance will hit the working poor
- Labour unlikely to change course dramatically though have opposed the Bedroom Tax and, on a positive note, have talked about moving towards free universal childcare

#### Discussion ensued on the presentation with the following raised/clarified:-

- A review had been conducted regarding the advice on money and debt issued in the Borough. In June a contract would be commissioned that brought together all the different elements with 1 provider
- There were some very large families which were substantially affected by current and future benefit cuts and where it would never be worth the parents working because of the number of children they had – greater use of Section 17 payments by families to prop up other means of support
- There was evidence that the Government’s overall aim to change people’s attitude to work and employability was working in Rotherham – the Job Seekers Allowance number had reduced significantly particularly within young people (16.4% from November, 2012 to November, 2013)
- The National Work Programme tended to focus on people closer to the job market and isolated those furthest away. The European Structural Fund was minimal so a long term solution was required. The key was to help more people get the skills they needed to find



employment and not for the Partnership to replace income lost through the Welfare Reform Programme

- Although some of the families were the ones worked with through Families for Change, a number were those that were “under the radar”, never came forward for help and were desperately trying to do what they could with the money they had. They may be struggling financially but socially fine
- Need for the Child Poverty Needs Assessment to be updated within the context of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- To date a lot of the work had been supporting those who were in receipt of benefit when actually the whole picture needed to be considered
- £91M of spending power was being lost to the town. How could the environment be stimulated and jobs generated which would link back to a community moving from dependent to independent
- For many employment was hindered by the payment for child care
- The DWP could assist with preparing CVs, access to the internet and training courses. Universal Job Match was a matching service available to all

Carole and Michael were thanked for their presentation.

## **251. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES ACTION PLAN - 6 MONTH UPDATE**

Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, presented the 6 monthly progress report on the Children and Young People's Action Plan.

Currently there were 26 actions on green, 121 on amber, 7 on red and 2 on blue.

An explanation was given for each of the red actions, the majority of which would have improved by the time of the next update.

Resolved:- (1) That a further update be submitted to the July Partnership meeting.

(2) That a presentation be made to a future Partnership meeting on the actions that were performing well.

## **252. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

Chrissy Wright, Strategic Commissioning Manager, presented the CYPS Commissioning Strategy for 2014-17 which aligned with the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, life stage priorities, CYPS Service Plan and also met the new requirements of OfSTED for a commissioning plan. The commissioning priorities would be refreshed annually to reflect the priorities of CYPS to improve life chances of children, young people and their families.

It was noted that consultation on the Strategy had taken place across the Council as well as with partners in health and the VCS. Comments and amendments had been incorporated where appropriate.

Resolved:- That the CYPS Commissioning Strategy be endorsed.

## **253. YOUTH CABINET**

The minutes of the meeting of the Youth Cabinet held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, were noted.

## **254. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

The minutes of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2013, were noted.

## **255. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **(a) Health and Social Care Information Centre**

A meeting had been held with a representative from the above Centre to discuss a project they had been working on with regard to Child Protection Information Sharing. For a child who was either Looked After or subject to a Child Protection Plan and had a "flag" on the Social Care system, a link would be created between the 2 Social Care and Health systems to populate a "flag" against that child on the Health record. Accordingly, if a child attended any health setting in England, officials would be able to see the record for that child and ascertain if they were subject to a CPP or Looked After. If a child was no longer Looked After/subject of a CPP within a year, the "flag" would be deleted.

Rotherham had agreed to be 1 of the early adopters of the system. The HS-IC had provided the capital outlay.

The HS-IC had created a joint confidentiality agreement and data sharing agreement to cover the whole country.

### **(b) DWP**

Sue Skalycz reported that, due to shrinking staffing resources, unfortunately the DWP would no longer be able to provide representation at the Partnership. Should there be particular issues that would benefit from attendance, a representative would attend.

Sue was thanked for her contributions to the Partnership.

**(c) Director of Safeguarding and Families**

Permanent recruitment would commence for the above post shortly.

**256. DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Resolved:- That further meetings be held on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 21<sup>st</sup> May and 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2014, commencing at 2.00 p.m.