

Report of the Director of Children & Families

Report to Executive Board

Date: 25th July 2018

Subject: Leeds Children’s Services Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice: Update Summer 2018



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with a summary of progress in the Children and Families Directorate’s Innovation Programme and an update on Leeds’ support for sector led improvement as a ‘Partner in Practice’
2. Since 2015, Leeds has been recognised as a high performing authority and is one of a small number of Council working with the Department for Education (DfE) to promote national reform and support children’s services with challenges and weaknesses. This has enabled Leeds to access considerable financial support, both directly from the DfE and also from other sources. In total this has benefited the city by close to £20m through securing funding through the Innovation Programme, Partners in Practice, ‘Troubled Families’, Stronger Families and other smaller initiatives. However, it is important to note that support from central government is reciprocated – additional funding is provided in the expectation that Leeds plays a strong role supporting the national agenda.
3. This investment has helped secure the city’s status as a national leader in children’s services and has enabled the Directorate to move further and faster with its strategy for change. The Innovation Programme has been vital for continuing to change and improve local services. The £9.6m funding received last year has been invested in four projects: Restorative Early Support Teams (RES Teams); Rethink, Futures and the Leeds Relational Practice centre. RES teams are social work led multidisciplinary teams that are strengthening practice and early help in the seven highest needs

clusters (these align with wider corporate work on the highest need neighbourhoods). These are all now operating and initial evaluation is positive with great feedback from local schools and families. Rethink is a way of developing better practice for front line workers through a range of training, engagement and review. This project is initially focusing on working with adolescents where local research has shown challenges for workers. Again, initial evaluation is positive with good signs of engagement from across services and evidence of growing impact on day to day work. Futures will provide support for parents who have had a child removed by the courts, working to reduce the risks of recurrent child removals. This responds to national and local research that shows some parents, particularly young and care experienced, are at risk of multiple removals.

4. The final element of the Innovation Programme is the Leeds Relational Practice Centre (LRPC) which is designed to strengthen Leeds' work in sector led improvement through offering a wide range of training and networking events and activities. The aim is to promote the model of restorative and relational practice used successfully in Leeds and other areas and to share the learning from Leeds' improvement journey. This has proved very successful, attracting over 40% of Councils to Leeds for events over the past year.
5. The LRPC strengthens Leeds' contribution to Partners in Practice and sector led change but this area of work includes more intensive projects as well. Leeds is helping to pilot and promote key national reforms, and is engaged in supporting Councils in their improvement work. Leeds has supported a number of Councils already such as Manchester and Sunderland and the current major project in this area is work in Kirklees through the Improvement Partnership. Kirklees is now making good progress after a period of change and challenge, as leadership and staffing changes have been stabilised. A permanent, experienced and settled leadership team is now in place and is working well to drive the Improvement Plan forward. Staff recruitment and retention have been improved and as such pressures and caseloads on front line teams are falling each month. Improved management and better practice are enabling more confident decision-making, helping children and families be supported without recourse to care or child protection plans where they are not needed e.g. the proportion and numbers of children and young people in care and with Child Protection Plans is now being markedly, and safely, reduced.

Recommendations

6. Executive Board is recommended to note progress made in Leeds' children's services Innovation and Sector Led Improvement work.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with a summary of progress in the Children and Families Directorate's Innovation Programme and an update on Leeds' support for sector led improvement as a 'Partner in Practice'

2 Background information

- 2.1 After the positive inspection of children's services in Leeds in 2015, the city was selected as one of a small number Councils that are 'Partners in Practice', working closely with the Department for Education (DfE) on national reform and providing support to Local Authorities experiencing difficulties. Leeds is still the only Core City that is a DfE Partner in Practice.
- 2.2 Leeds' status as a high performing Local Authority and a Partner in Practice has helped the city access important additional funding to support our work with local children and families. Leeds has won over £14 million of funding from the DfE Innovation Programme over the two stages of the initiative – firstly £4.5 million for 'Family Valued' which helped the city invest in Family Group Conferencing and restorative practice and then £9.6 million in 2017 for a wide ranging programme of change that is the subject of this report. This was the single largest sum of funding provided through the national programme, reflecting national support for the Leeds strategy.
- 2.3 In addition to this funding from the DfE, the status of the city and the service has helped gain wider funding including £3.5 million for Stronger Families to support families with worklessness; funding from the NHS and Adults & Health for key services such as MindMate and the children's mental health strategy; the Intensive Positive Behaviour Service, which will work to reduce the need for residential placements for young people with severe autism and challenging behaviours; and finally, joint investment in work to support parents at risk of recurrent care proceedings.
- 2.4 There are clear expectations from central government that the support and status of the Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice should be reciprocated with a high level of support from Councils, such as Leeds, for DfE priorities such as national reform and sector led improvement.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Leeds Innovation Programme has four main elements:
- *Restorative Early Support Teams*: these are social work led multi-disciplinary teams that are designed to look for new and improved ways of working with children and families to reduce the need for statutory social work and also to try new and improved ways of building cooperation, capacity and expertise in clusters/schools.
 - *Rethink*: this project is looking at developing new, stronger models of practice for front line children's services workers and new ways of building cooperation

between frontline professionals. The idea is to promote a more evidenced way of working and planning, and developing a shared language and understanding of children and families. The initial focus of this work is on improving work with adolescents.

- *Futures*: this is a new therapeutic service that will provide intensive support for parents where they have had children removed and they are at risk of future care proceedings for further children. The need for this service has been highlighted by both national and local research, with particularly high risks for care experienced and young parents. As such this will be the target group for our initial work.

Restorative Early Support Teams

- 3.2 The idea of restorative early support grew out of an initial pilot of social work in schools and a coincidental opportunity to utilise some staff differently in one of our high need cluster areas (2gether) in the east of the city.
- 3.3 The work has a clear remit of bringing social work closer to schools and the services tied to schools as well as offering more immediate and tailored, targeted interventions. This is with the overall aim of improving relationships, increasing access to service at the right time and reducing bureaucracy surrounding these processes. It is enabling a true sense of Right service, Right family Right time. The RES teams can be seen as the jigsaw piece between cluster/schools services and area social work teams. There will be an overlap at times as some families do need to move through different arenas but RES teams will predominantly offer non statutory input .
- 3.4 The past two years have seen this RES team as central to the development of a new working model- now the Leeds Practice Model, that can be used in any practice area, and most recent months have seen the set-up of RES teams in 6 additional high needs cluster: Seacroft Manston, JESS, BCM, Armley/Farnley, Bramley and Inner west and Inner East.
- 3.5 The RES team's Ultimate aims are to :
 - Reduce the numbers of families progressing through statutory intervention
 - Improve families experience of services and enable their own utility
 - Improve and enable professional working partnerships and relationships
 - Connecting the right family to the right service at the right time.
- 3.6 The teams are made up predominantly of social workers and family support roles but with a view to creating more multidisciplinary teams all told.
- 3.7 The setup of the teams is supported using elements of Implementation Science to ensure solid embedding of the Leeds Practice Model, change, effective training and coaching and sustainability. The teams experience a twenty week programme of support to 'skill up' all workers and equally to get their feedback and input into ongoing developments of teams and the model. Support to these teams will

continue indefinitely through regular space for consultation with all the managers, as well as regular top up training and coaching events.

- 3.8 2Gether, JESS, BCM, Inner East and Armley /Farnley are all a considerable way into their twenty week programme and are already demonstrating commendable commitment and enthusiasm for this newly developing way of working despite some of the challenges it is bringing them. Initial evaluation of the work is both positive and promising.
- 3.9 Looking forward we will continue to engage in implementation processes as already described to continually improve and develop the work in the RES teams. Seacroft Manston and Bramley/Inner West will be commencing their programme proper towards the end of July, but team managers in these areas are already part of thinking and managers groups.

RETHINK

- 3.10 The development of the RETHINK project was parallel to the development of the RES teams and was initially driven by a multiagency working group looking at the increasing numbers of adolescents becoming looked after (2016). Initial and immediate impressions around this issue assumed a lack of service for teenagers, but this group very soon established that there were numerous services across the city but they often times lacked connection, shared purpose, or language and largely viewed teenagers as people apart from their families. So, if we could develop a single way of understanding family problems as specific and relevant to all parts of that family and could simultaneously create opportunity for all services to come together and share their knowledge and experience and get to know one another –we could increase effectiveness of case consideration and joined up working across key agencies so enabling clearer and more helpful journeys for adolescents and their families and so decreased entry to care. This then came together as Formulation Forums and the Leeds Practice Model delivered and supported by a group of practice experts –the RETHINK team.
- 3.11 The RETHINK team of 6 Facilitators were recruited and began work in earnest from January of this year with a specific remit of:
- Developing and embedding the use of the 6PS formulation model within the context of the whole Leeds Practice Model to support a culture of multiagency support and challenge across Leeds.
 - Developing knowledge, skills and confidence in using the single formulation tool (6Ps) across multiple agencies and services through forums.
- 3.12 The team use aspects of Implementation Science to ensure effective impact and appropriate development and continuous learning occurs to embed RETHINK and the Leeds Practice model. To date and notably within a very short space of time, the team have:
- set up and are facilitating Formulation Forums on a daily basis right across the city - these have been consistently attended by practitioners from all areas

of child and family services and also consistently positively appraised by participants;

- established working partnerships with area social work teams to embed formulation in practice and progress events;
- actively supported the implementation of the Leeds Practice Model and skills training within the RES teams (20 week programme);
- developed working relationships at the front door to establish effective ways of using formulation at the first point of contact with families and referrers;
- recruited significant numbers of RETHINK Champions across the organisation to promote and support its uptake;
- delivered a series of HOTHOUSE learning events for senior leaders in social care to accelerate formulation skills;
- supported several other individual requests to apply formulation in different arenas.

3.13 Looking forward the team are also developing different level forums , coaching sets for team managers in the Leeds Practice Model and the use of an adapted formulation model for CIN cases in area social work teams.

FUTURES

3.14 The FUTURES team is our initial response to emerging learning and research in the field of recurrent care proceedings that clearly and rather starkly shows a significant gap in services for parents who have children removed from their care. We know, through work done by Prof Karen Broadhurst at the University of Lancaster, that if a young mother experiences one removal she is likely to experience at least 3 more within as many years. She is also highly likely to have been looked after herself and will definitely have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences. This all then culminates in a particular kind of trauma and sense of loss and complex grief that is not comparable to any other experience or situation.

3.15 There is no directly transferable approach that is recognised or proven to be effective with this group, but we have been lucky to be involved in a change project working alongside 9 other authorities embarking on similar projects across the country. The learning sets have been supported by the researchers from University of Lancaster and the Research in Practice and have been invaluable in the development of Leeds' own ideas and planning of this service.

3.16 Leeds' initial team is made up of only 3 Practitioners-(1 lead and 2 practitioners) but we have been fortunate in receiving some non- recurrent funding through partnership with the CCG and this is enabling Leeds to expand the team to include a specialist role and a support worker as well as some clinical psychology input. We are currently recruiting to these roles and this will significantly increase our scope and ability to respond. We are in ongoing discussions with CCG commissioning around a commitment to funding on an ongoing basis.

- 3.17 We are initially targeting under 25s (mothers and fathers) who have experienced the removal of a child under 12 months, and to date have opened 7 cases since March.
- 3.18 The team are working to the same Leeds Practice Model as RES and as supported by RETHINK but with emphasis on a trauma informed approach, intensive working (small caseloads) sensitive and assertive engagement, systemic working and flexible and responsive interventions that can stretch from housing and benefit support to evidence based trauma focussed treatment.
- 3.19 We have also begun to develop a network of partner agencies across Leeds who are engaged in work with these parents in all kinds of ways .We are hoping that this will develop into an effective HUB arrangement that can allow us all to work better in partnership and learn from one another. We have held one partnership event that was well received and we are planning another one this June.
- 3.20 As with all the projects within innovations we expect to learn and develop as we move forward and consequently adapt what we do as we go.

LEEDS RELATIONAL PRACTICE CENTRE.

- 3.21 The Leeds Relational Practice Centre (LRPC) was established in 2017 with support from the Department for Education's Innovation and Partners in Practice funds. The over-arching aim of the Centre is to promote children's services sector-led improvement through the power of relationship-based practice; sharing learning around the distinctive model for child welfare reform that has had such an impact in Leeds and in other authorities. This includes broad sector-led improvement work such as participating in national programmes and research studies, as well as direct support to other local authorities.
- 3.22 The LRPC offers three tiers of direct support to other local authorities:
- Tier one – improvement and advice, a universal offer for all local authorities, focusing on the dissemination of learning from the Leeds improvement journey and from innovative practice in the city. This is delivered through a series of regular free learning events on a variety of topics, and will be supported by the ongoing development of the LRPC website.
 - Tier two – modular support, more in depth than tier one and generally covering similar topics (e.g. child friendly city, restorative practice) as feature in the free learning events, with support negotiated directly with the local authority. This support may include visits to Leeds to see aspects of our work and meet with senior leaders.
 - Tier three – partnership improvement support. This is a more intensive form of partnership support for local authorities in need of improvement. Tier three partnership support is negotiated with the Department for Education in line with our Partner in Practice role.
- 3.23 From October 2017 to date, the LRPC has hosted eleven tier one learning events for colleagues from other local authorities, on a range of topics. Over 50 different

local authorities (more than a third of all of the local authorities in England) have attended at least one of our learning events, and have taken ideas from Leeds back to their colleagues; for example, after attending our event on Child Friendly Leeds, a colleague from Southampton recently secured agreement from their Chief Executive to work towards making Southampton a child friendly city.

Several local authorities have approached us for support at tier two, and Leeds has hosted visits from authorities including Liverpool, Lincolnshire and Rotherham. Emerging findings, for example from Ofsted inspections, indicate that this work is helping to support other local authorities to make tangible improvements. We are currently in negotiations with the Department for Education to agree which local authorities Leeds will be supporting at a tier three level, in line with their priorities for improvement.

PARTNERS IN PRACTICE – SECTOR LED IMPROVEMENT

- 3.24 As a Partner in Practice, Leeds is taking a strong leadership role within the sector, working closely with DfE to promote national reform and sector improvement.
- 3.25 The main area where the Council is helping lead and promote sector change is in workforce development. This is an important element of the government's agenda and Leeds is well placed to support this work through its own local success on workforce development and reform – Leeds is rated best amongst all Councils for social work vacancies, and amongst the best in other key measures such as use of agency staff or social work turnover.
- 3.26 In terms of Sector Led Improvement, Leeds is taking a wide approach, as set out in the section on the Leeds RPC above. At present the major project in this area is our 'Improvement Partnership' with Kirklees, to support their children's services after their failed inspection in 2016. This work has been underwritten by significant funding from DfE and is governed by an independent Improvement Board chaired by the DfE Commissioner, Eleanor Brazil with senior representatives from both Councils. The formal partnership was approved in Autumn 2017.
- 3.27 The strategy in Kirklees has been shaped by the experience of the Leeds' improvement journey, with an intensive focus on getting the basics right and 'creating the conditions of success' for good social work. This has meant that our work has focused on leadership (including secondment of senior Leeds leaders); recruitment, retention and development of social work and other front line staff; developing a restorative culture and practice model; investing in Early Help; and finally in strengthening decision-making and 'management grip', particularly at key points such as the 'Front Door' and around legal proceedings.
- 3.28 Kirklees is now making good progress after a period of change and challenge, as leadership and staffing changes have been stabilised. A permanent, experienced and settled leadership team (including some high quality recruits from Leeds) is now in place and is working well to drive the Improvement Plan forward. Staff recruitment and retention have been massively improved, as such pressures and caseloads on front line teams are falling each month. Improved management and better practice are enabling more confident decision-making, helping children and families be supported without recourse to care or child protection plans where

they are not needed – the proportion and numbers of children and young people in care and with Child Protection Plans is now being markedly, and safely, reduced.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The programme has been shaped by consultation and engagement at key stages. At the outset there was extensive involvement of partners in developing the proposals, and this continues as the new projects work closely with partner agencies to shape implementation and ongoing work. There is also ongoing consultation with families around service design and how the new teams can work better.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 A full assessment of the equality, diversity and cohesion issues of this programme was undertaken at the outset of the programme and through the DDN process. This will be supplemented by two years of work with our independent evaluation partner, the University of Bedfordshire.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 This report is a key element in the Council's priority of making Leeds a Child Friendly City.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 As explained at the outset, the Innovation Programme and our Partner in Practice work have proved vital to securing additional funding to support the Leeds strategy for children and families.

4.4.2 Budgets are reviewed regularly by the programme and local officers and are also subject to quarterly review by the DfE.

4.4.3 Value for money will be assessed through the University of Bedfordshire evaluation.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 None applicable

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice work are rigorously project managed, which includes a detailed risk management plan. This is reviewed regularly by officer and is also subject to external scrutiny by DfE.

5 Conclusions

5.1 As the report makes clear, Leeds is making good progress with both its own Innovation Programme and its work to support the sector through Partners in Practice. These activities are vital for ensuring that we can continue to improve outcomes, the overall strategy for the city can progress, and to secure financial sustainability for the service.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to note the progress made in Leeds' children's services Innovation and Sector Led Improvement work.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.