



Attendance Improvement Service

Service Review

2012/13

**Extract from Children's Services: Family Services
Service Review Summary**

The full Summary is available at www.torbay.gov.uk/budgetsummary

Service Name: Family Services

Service Contact: Nigel Denning / Nick Hollins
--

Date of review: June 2012

Version No:

This document can be made available in a range of languages, on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats.

For further information please contact 01803 207227.

Introduction

This service review covers the services provided by Family Services within Children's Services.

Included within this business unit are the following services:

- Localities
 - Family Support
 - Attendance Improvement
 - Young Carers
 - Family Group Conferencing
 - Targeted Youth Support
 - Integrated Working Coordinators
 - Hand in Hand Volunteers
- Early Years Children's Centres
- Youth Offending Team
- Housing Needs and Options
- Parkfield and Neighbourhood Youth Service
- Careers South West
- Family Information Service

Background

The services included within this business unit cover a range of specialist functions which work with individual families (i.e. Youth offending Team (YOT) and Housing Needs) and community based / prevention services (i.e. Parkfield and Children's Centres).

These services have historically been described as 'Early Intervention' Services with a mixture of statutory and non statutory duties. The services have undergone a number of reorganisation and transformation processes in recent years. The locality teams were created in 2010 which brought together a number of early intervention services within a revised (streamlined) management structure and co-location arrangements.

For example the Youth Offending Team built youth crime prevention initiatives that were remodelled to create targeted Youth Support as part of the Integrated Youth Support Strategy. Targeted Youth Support has subsequently been mainstreamed into the current locality arrangement. The Youth Service has been remodelled and reduced in size during 2011 to provide the operational capacity to manage Parkfield and create capacity in the voluntary and community sector.

The Childrens Centres have until July 2012 been delivered by the local authority (Paignton and Brixham) with Action for Children being commissioned for Torquay. From July 2012 the Childrens Centres have been brought together into a single specification and Action for Children has been awarded the contract.

Careers South West is commissioned to deliver the targeted transition support for young people to education, employment and training.

Context

Eileen Munro published her final report, 'The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, a child centred system' in May 2011.

Munro looks at the whole system, with a relentless focus on the safety and welfare of children and young people. Her recommendations are wide ranging and support effective practice. Munro notes the growing body of evidence of the effectiveness of early intervention with children and families and emphasises the importance of providing such help, she says:

'Preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services. Many services and professions help children and families so coordinating their work is important to reduce inefficiencies and omissions. Within preventative and other services good mechanisms are needed to help identify those children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm from abuse or neglect and who need referral to children's social care.'

Munro's recommendations have been accepted in full by Government, this is clearly evident within the draft Working Together 2012 document and Ofsted Inspection framework. The effectiveness of Early Help delivery now forms part of the judgement on the effectiveness of the delivery of safeguarding services to children and families.

Financial Benefits of Early Help

Early help is provided to children, young people and families who are struggling and feel in need of some additional support and to those who our research tells us are at a higher than average risk of experiencing problems. The aim of our Early Help services is to ideally prevent but otherwise to resolve any issues before they become more serious and require specialist support.

The delivery of effective early help services is crucial to meeting the needs of families at an early stage to prevent poor outcomes and reduce the cost to the public purse. The cost of a 'Troubled Family' can be as much as £250,000 a year and averages around £75,000. Methodology varies but it is estimated that for every £1 spent on early help it saves £3 - £7. The Troubled Families programme will be delivered through the Early Help strategy which will provide new ways of working across the partnership that delivers sustainable improved outcomes and reduces costs. A key outcome is to reduce the overall cost of the families to the public purse, whilst the Troubled Families Programme does have a payment by results element the significant savings and rewards will be achieved by reducing the demand on high cost statutory services across the partnership.

The total Family Services budget is in the region of £5.75m, however approximately £800K of this is specific grant funding (YOT, Housing and Localities) or partnership contributions (YOT). The Services have largely been funded in previous years though the Early Intervention Grant. The level of funding that the Local Authority will receive for 2013/14 is currently unknown and will be dependent on the next spending review. The existing grant and partnership funding (£800K) is very volatile for 2013 and could be reduced by 50% in 2013/14 due to funding being redirected directly to schools, Police and Crime Commissioner and overall reductions at a National level.

LOCALITY ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (AIS)

What is provided?	<p>The Attendance Improvement Service carries out the Local Authority statutory response with regard to school attendance. The Local Authority has a legal duty to ensure that children are in the school system or receiving education otherwise and to enforce the law when required. This duty is exercised through the Attendance Improvement Service (AIS) and its Attendance Improvement Officers (AIO's).</p> <p><u>The statutory duties include:</u></p> <p>Instigating legal proceedings against parents/carers who have failed in their duty to ensure regular attendance at school of their child; Issuing School Attendance Orders (SAO) ; Issuing penalty notices and making application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).</p> <p>Additionally the Attendance Improvement Service has responsibility with regard to :</p> <p>Child Employment; Children in Entertainment and Chaperone licensing; Tracking Children Missing in Education (CME) and CAF and being part of the Team around the Child and Family.</p> <p>Attendance Improvement Officers employ four interconnected and interdependent strategies – OUR CORE OFFER - to ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 As authorised representative of the Local Authority, monitoring attendance through the regular inspection of registers, coding /procedures and liaison with school staff;2 Undertaking individual case work with non attending and poor attending pupils and their parents adopting a family solutions approach to address the underlying issues as soon as possible. The use of voluntary parenting contracts to improve a pupil's attendance forms part of the early intervention and help approach to improving school attendance.3 Carry out the Statutory administration and monitoring of legal interventions when necessary including school Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders, prosecutions or the issuing of Penalty Notices.3 Provide whole school strategic advice, support and challenge to improve individual school's attendance levels. This includes guidance on policies and procedures, celebrating and raising awareness of school attendance to pupils, their parents and school staff and agreeing termly action plans and the monitoring of these actions. <p>Each school has an allocated Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who works closely and assists the schools with the tasks listed above.</p> <p>The service also provides advice, guidance and training to schools, governors, partners across children services on all aspects of attendance including safeguarding aspects of non attendance such as Child Missing in Education</p>
--------------------------	--

	<p>statutory procedures , and the early identification, support and monitoring of vulnerable groups including Children Looked After.</p>
<p>Why is it provided?</p>	<p>The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that children are in the school system or receiving education otherwise and to enforce the law when required.</p> <p>Improving School attendance is one of the 7 priorities of the Torbay Children and Young People’s Plan and a Torbay Promoting School Attendance Strategy – Every School Day Matters ‘is a core business activity of the Children’s integrated locality services and early help agenda.</p> <p>There is national and local recognition that poor or irregular school attendance impacts adversely upon a child’s and young person’s outcomes including attainment and future life chances. Targeting those most at risk of poorer school attendance as early as possible is a priority and indicator for the Torbay Attendance Improvement Service.</p> <p>Improving School attendance is a national directive and recognised as a key indicator of school performance. Persistent absence remains a government priority and they have changed the threshold from 80% to 85% - meaning that children would be classed as persistent absentees at an earlier stage. Addressing truancy from school has been recognised within the outcome measurements for the national troubled families initiative and forms part of the payment by results funding available to local authorities.</p> <p>Education Welfare provides one of the earliest interventions into identifying poor attendance patterns in individuals and groups within schools. This enables the earliest support and interventions to be put in place, thus improving attendance and outcomes of children.</p> <p>Consequences of not providing this service would likely be that without a strong link with the schools and pro-active interventions, attendance across the Bay may decrease again and children’s outcomes would be negatively affected (not identified or referred for support) – likely resulting in costs for other services later.</p>
<p>Who uses the services / what is the demand?</p>	<p>In terms of case work this service is accessed via the CAF by primary and secondary schools including special schools and EOTAS. There are currently 125 children and Young people allocated to the AIO’s all of which are subject to parenting contracts to improve school attendance and receive the identified support package accordingly.</p> <p>In the financial year 2011/12 : There were 215 referrals to the AIS due to poor or irregular school attendance or being a CME. . At time of case closure, the average attendance had improved by 12%. evidencing the effective use of voluntary parenting contracts to improve attendance The average age of children referred was 9 years old and the split between male and female was 56% and 44 % respectively.</p> <p>By implementing a voluntary parenting contract and family solutions approach to addressing poor attendance the need to resort to legal interventions was minimal. There were 6 ESO imposed and 20 penalty notices issued during this financial year.</p>

Disclaimer: These reviews provide a snapshot of council services and activities at the time they were carried out, as we have tried to represent as far as we can the detail of what is provided.

	The AIS also dealt with 68 work permits with plus 26 chaperone licenses and 10 entertainment licenses during this period.
How much does it cost to provide?	Staff: 6.41 FTE Budget: £250,000
How well are we providing it? Key achievements in the last 2 years	<p><i>Performance data relating to service</i></p> <p>School attendance in primary schools has risen year on year from 93.97% in 2008/2009 to 95.08%* so far in 2011/2012 school year. Secondary schools have also risen from 91.80% to 92.84%*.</p> <p>NB - * this is based on true Census data of 2011/12 autumn and spring terms – summer term data is not yet available.</p> <p>CME referrals – 99% of these are located by AIO which is well above the national average.</p> <p>The average attendance rise from individual case referral to case closure was 12% at last review (2011) but recent 2012 data analysis suggests that this has increased to an average of 15%.</p> <p>Persistent absence – this fell by 3.15% in secondary schools in the past 2 years, and by 0.43% in primary schools. The Persistently Absent threshold has now been changed from 80% to 85% so the data is not yet available to yet see what this year's impact is.</p> <p>Recent stakeholder consultations have highlighted that schools value the AIS and the work of the AIO is rated as high.</p>