
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

3 November 2022

Update on the Children First Board (a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board)

Report by: Lucy Butler, Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning

Summary

This report provides a summary of the work of the Children First Board formed in October 2020.

Recommendation(s) to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Note the contents of this report.
 - (2) Promote key message from Children First SEND Sub-group
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Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

1. Starting Well
2. Living Well
3. Working Well

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Children First Board is chaired by Cllr Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Meetings are held four times a year and the inaugural meeting was held on the 8th October 2020.
- 1.2 The Board is made up of a wide range of West Sussex organisations and groups including young people, parent, carers and others who look after our children on a daily basis. It also comprises members from practitioners and officers of the County Council; people elected to represent the views of the people of West Sussex, Districts and Boroughs, schools, colleges, police, health partners, and representatives from the voluntary and community sector. The voice of young people is provided through four young people on the Board and the Board's vice-chair is also a young person; Harley Collins. They are all supported by the Council's Voice and Participation Team and to facilitate their participation, Board notes and papers are written in an accessible style.

1.3 The Children First Board has agreed three main goals

These are to:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people who live in West Sussex, or who are cared for by West Sussex's children's services;
- Ensure that all agencies that provide services for children and young people in West Sussex work together effectively;
- Always listen and respond to the views of children, young people and their families, particularly when decisions are being made that affect them such as how services are run and funded.

1.4 To achieve these goals, the Children First Board will:

- Have oversight of key strategic planning for children and young people's services, especially when these plans affect more than one agency or service.
- Always remember that our children and young people have the right to be:
 - kept safe by everyone, and to learn how to keep themselves safe;
 - supported to be as healthy as possible – both physically and emotionally;
 - given the skills to be successful in adult life.

1.5 The Board will also:

- Be responsible for determining the key priorities that need to be addressed to improve the lives of children and young people in West Sussex;
- Agree how these will be addressed.

2. The Children and Young People's Plan update

2.1 One of the Board's early priorities was the development and production of a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The Board agreed an approach and style for this Plan, with the latter being based on what children and young people and parent carers said would help to make it accessible.

3.2. The original draft CYPP had three agreed priorities:

- 1. Keeping Children and Young People Safe*
- 2. Addressing Poverty and closing the disadvantage gap*
- 3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing.*

2.3 Following a twelve-week consultation process (April 2022 - June 2022) a number of important changes were made and incorporated into the final version of the plan. The most significant changes are:

a) That the plan now focusses on 5 priorities (instead of 3):

1. Keeping children and young people safe from harm

2. Providing the earliest support to families on low incomes to minimise the impact this has on their lives
3. Closing the disadvantage gap for children and young people across all key stages
4. Improving children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing
5. Strengthening our multi- agency approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

b) That what we said we will do to keep children and young people safe from harm now includes specific reference to more of the environments and issues that pose a risk to children and young people's safety and how we will respond to these.

- 2.4 The final draft for the CYPP was generated in consultation with a reference group comprising members of the Children's First Board and their representatives and was subsequently signed off at the end of August 2022.
- 2.5 A number of design options were then proposed for partners and stakeholders to consider. The options provided were shared with two groups of young people and their feedback informed the final design.
- 2.6 The final plan will be made available in an electronic format in the first instance, so it can be circulated and accessed virtually. It will then be put into a range of formats so it can be accessible to all. The Board expects to have the first version to be ready by the end of October 2022. Plans for the CYPP's launch across the partnership are underway and we are now putting the infrastructure in place to ensure the plan's successful delivery.

3. Governance

- 3.1 A review of all governance arrangements, including sub-groups has been undertaken to ensure the Board has full oversight of the key areas of strategic planning for children and young people's services where these plans affect more than one agency or service.
- 3.2 A new Children's First Sub-Group is currently being set up to design and produce the CYPP Implementation plan and to drive its delivery. This group will manage all operational risks and issues and their mitigation referring these to the Children First Board for information and escalation. The work of this group will involve the production of a CYPP Engagement Strategy – comprising a carefully planned series of stakeholder events – bringing partners, children, young people and their families together to share what is happening in relation to each of the CYPP's priorities. This will include evaluating progress, celebrating success and learning from each other what we collectively need to do more of, differently or better to make a positive difference to the lives of children, young and their families.
- 3.3 Each future Children's First Board will include a thematic focus and review of one of the 5 CYPP priorities.
- 3.1 The Board has a very strong ethos of engagement and participation and continues to support young people's participation in the work of the Board, both

as Board members and as consultation and participation subject matter experts. We continue to work with the Voice and Participation Team as part of the Childrens First partnership "Children and Young People's Participation Strategy".

- 3.2 The voice of children and young people will continue to play a vital role in the implementation of the CYPP, with the expectation that they, along with their families, will help to shape the way in which the plan's priorities are delivered and how services and organisations work with them; and will provide the partnership with regular feedback on how the plan is impacting on their lives. Their feedback will be used to iteratively improve the way the plan is put into practice.

5. Childrens First Board Update

- 5.1 The last meeting of the Childrens First Board was held on 17th October 2022. Aside from an update on progress on the Childrens and Young People's Plan, two other reports were received:

a) Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Sub-group

- The Group has met on 3 occasions and drafted an action plan that will support the overall ambition of Foundations for our Futures. The following three priorities have been agreed:
 1. Identify and connect the range of Early Support and Preventative services currently offered to enable children and young people to access the right service at the right time
 2. Identify the full range of financial resources available to commission services across the partnership.
 3. Review and align existing pathways to support good emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- This plan will be finalised at the end of November 22.

b) SEND Sub-group

- The Group reported on progress being made towards meeting statutory timelines for issuing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The number of new requests for Plans has grown considerably (+16.5%) compared to the previous academic year and there has been a 32.5% increase in the number of plans agreed. However, the number of plans being completed within the statutory 20-week timeframe is just 10% with the average time for completion being 26 weeks.
- A SEND Partnership Board has been established with a wide range of partners to provide feedback on SEND Strategy. To ensure the voice of children and young people are being heard to influence the strategy, a SEND Partnership Youth Board has been established.
- The key message that the partnership group would like support with is ensuring that all stakeholders are fully aware that children's special educational needs can be met at SEND Support rather than through an EHCP; and that children and young people with EHCPs can have their

needs met in mainstream schools and don't necessarily need specialist provision.

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Background papers

None.