

Governing Board

25th August 2011

1. Challenging Families Project – Next Steps

1.1 Action requested of the Governing Board

- 1.1.1 To agree an approach to gaining a wider buy in from those service areas working with Challenging Families in system change.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 In April 2010, the Governing Board of the Solihull Partnership established a project to look at how the organisations who make up the Solihull Partnership can work better with the most challenging and chaotic families in our Borough.
- 1.2.2 The aims of the project are to create an integrated service pathway and a joint commissioning strategy for Challenging Families. By doing this, the Partnership is looking to support the delivery of a combined 5% saving year-on-year for services currently providing support to individuals who are from these families.
- 1.2.3 In February this year, we started the process of developing the evidence base for change through customer journey mapping, resource mapping and data about system flow, processes and networks. In addition, the aim of the customer journey mapping was to also develop a shared understanding of the end to end experience of these families from their perspective, of the service providers working with them while at the same time creating a groundswell of people advocating change.

1.3 Progress so far

- 1.3.1 Over the last 6-9 months, several groups of practitioners have been meeting in Solihull to investigate ways in which there can be a 'whole system' change in how to provide support to families in extreme and persistent need. We have mapped the experience of families in our service system, assessed experience from elsewhere, and considered the local experience of 'what works'. A picture is beginning to emerge of our shared commitment to improving outcomes for families.
- 1.3.2 We are in the process of estimating how many families fall into the 'high cost : high need: multi generational demand' category – we do not think that the numbers are astronomic, but they are considerable. We are close to concluding our assessment of this, and associated 'counting' of resources.
- 1.3.3 It is clear, however, that there are already in hand several work streams which merge into the shared objective of improving outcomes for families. These include:
 - (a) The new referral system for CAMHS
 - (b) The integrated offender management process
 - (c) Multi agency case management of anti social behaviour cases

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- (d) The re-commissioning of children's centres
- (e) The revisions to the parenting support strategy
- (f) Dialogue with potential providers about how to make the most of ESF funded support aimed at getting families with multiple problems into employment.

1.3.4 As such, progress on improving outcomes for challenging families is both a specific focus for system-wide change, and a partial by product of these, wider changes – some of which (e.g. the new referral system for CAMHS) are prototypes of how system-wide change could be introduced.

1.4 Challenges & issues to be confronted

1.4.1 It is clear that there are some considerable challenges in this outcome-focused ambition. In particular, we need to find ways of:

- (a) improving the impact and the efficiency of the families' experience of the services,
- (b) stream-lining the connections between what it is that each of us does
- (c) find better ways of understanding need, so we do not assess, and re-assess need inappropriately
- (d) getting a real handle on low cost, long term support that prevents the escalation of need (and demand) on services
- (e) understanding the end-to-end, through life costs of the services we provide, and find ways of reducing these costs, whilst improving their impact
- (f) bridging the differences in approach between different 'service worlds' – in some of which, for example, there may be very different assumptions about how and what to 'treat' – we feel that for this group of families, we need a radically different and more coherent way of *supporting the whole family*, rather than individual members of it.

There are other issues; but these are the prominent ones

1.5 A festival of ideas

1.5.1 We are at the stage in this process, where we need to open up and engage more widely; and bring some radical perspectives into the process of innovation. We need to generate new ideas from within the system in ways which secure ownership, and understanding – preconditions for radical reform of custom & practice.

1.5.2 To take this forward, inspired by NESTA¹, and their experience – we are proposing a 'festival of ideas'. The concept needs to be specified in its final details – but we suggest it is based on the following:

1.5.3 Objectives:

- to widen & deepen involvement and engagement in agreeing the actions we will take to bring about 'whole system' change in securing better outcomes for these families

¹ NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology & Arts) promotes innovation in the UK. It runs several projects with public services – eg helping Councils to become more creative, promoting ideas like radical efficiency and co-production. They use the concept of festivals of ideas to open up thinking and acting around the kinds of service provision that could be used.

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- to generate as many ideas for innovation as we can come up with, in order to think as widely 'outside the box' as possible
- to develop a realistic, shared view of what could make a difference in securing better outcomes for families; and
- give the process of implementing these innovations real traction and 'can do' sense of urgency

1.5.4 Timings and duration

- there may be several of these events – but each one will last no more than 4-5 hours

1.5.5 Format:

We are visualising a format in which there will be:

- look & see visits to various projects/services/settings which provide support to challenging families in order to get some real, shared sense of the context
- conversations with service users and front line practitioners about their experience of working in these services
- opportunities (following the look & see activity) for the whole system involved in this process to get into dialogue about innovation opportunities and needs
- we will need to 'pledge' to act as part of this process

1.5.6 In outline, the agenda and timings for the event will be something like this:

Half day session – morning or afternoon	
Briefing	30 minutes
Look & see visits to projects/service settings to gather data and gain impressions	1.5 – 2 hours
Facilitated process of discussion and ideas exchange in which we push the thinking to make the most of new ideas	1 hour
'Pledges' of action (things I will change), and requests for action of others (things I would like you to change)	30 minutes

- There will be a number of these, each visited by up to 5 people. Appendix One provides a list of possible areas to visit covering both assessment and case management processes as well as services.

1.5.7 Participation

1.5.8 We need to get the 'whole system' involved in this – so it will not be an activity in which interested participants 'work something out' and try to sell it to others. The experience needs to be shared between us – otherwise we will not create the impetus for change. The participation list will need to include:

- Challenging families
- Wide range of practitioners – from all roles (not just managers)
- Senior politicians – Cabinet level
- Senior officers – Chief Executive and Directors of Services

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- 3rd sector organisations who could be alternative providers of services

1.6 Stakeholder Involvement

1.6.1 Proposals have been developed in consultation with Challenging Families project group.

1.7 Implications for Equality and Diversity, and Sustainability

1.7.1 Families facing multiple problems are a key aspect of our priority for creating the best start in life for children and focuses on those most disadvantages through a range of socio and economic factors.

1.8 Resource Implications

1.8.1 There is an allocation of funding that was secured through the Regional Improvement and Efficient Partnership (RIEP) to support the challenging families project which will be used to facilitate discussion. The Local Authority, through their LEAN team can also provide advice and guidance on facilitating discussion regarding process improvements.

1.9 Supporting information (attached as appendices)

Appendix One – Festival of Ideas possible things to see

1.10 Contact Person

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1.11 Background Papers (available on request)

1.11.1 Nesta evaluation of the 'Life' approach link:

http://www.nesta.org.uk/events/previous_events/assets/documents/Co-production%20Roadshow%20Gavin%20Jones