

## Cabinet

27 October 2011



### Pathfinder Service – Summary of End of Project Report (2009-2011)

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#### Report of Corporate Management Team Report of David Williams, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services Councillor Claire Vasey, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services

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#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report will provide Cabinet with a short overview of the main points within the 'Pathfinder Service – End of Project Report 2009-2011' outlining the impact and outcomes for the children and families in receipt of this service.
- 2 It is intended that this summary report will be read in conjunction with the main report for further detailed analysis.

#### Background

- 3 Durham County Council was one of 15 Local Authorities selected by the then Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to run a Pathfinder pilot adopting a whole family approach i.e. the "Think Family" model.
- 4 The bid was based on a piece of research carried out within Durham County Council's Children in Need Service which identified that there was a cohort of children and young people who were the subject of numerous referrals into social care services, often as a result of issues relating to their parents mental health, substance misuse of domestic abuse issues for whom a different approach was required to tackle the root cause of these issues.
- 5 Three multi- agency Pathfinder teams have been operational since 2009 and have successfully provided services to **220 families** between April 2009 and March 2011, which has included **372 parents** and **449 children**.

#### Impact and Outcomes

- 6 Internal and external evaluation of the project conducted by York Consultancy on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) for the duration of the Pilot has identified a number of key successful outcomes for adults, children and the wider community which are summarised overleaf.

- 80%** reduction in family violence
- 83%** improvement in parental engagement in child's education
- 57%** improvement in family debt
- 55%** improvement in parents; ability to set boundaries at home
- 62.5%** reduction in parental anti social behaviour
- 38%** increase in the emotional mental health of parent
- 42%** improvement in parental alcohol issues
- 63%** improvement in school attendance (as measured against authorised and unauthorised absences)
- 68%** increase in children engaging in activities outside the home

7 A detailed analysis of these findings is contained in the full report.

8 Service user feedback on the Pathfinder is also extremely positive.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

9 An in depth Social Return on Investment exercise was completed as part of the external evaluation to determine costs of the project and potential savings through preventing families going on to use more expensive high cost services. Key findings of which are :

**£1.58** the estimated public purse costs avoided by every £1 of expenditure on Family Pathfinder – to be generated year on year

**£13 773** average cost per family of involvement with Family Pathfinder

**£21 783** average estimated costs saved by the public purse for each family involved in Durham Pathfinder

**£565 000** estimated annual cost of supporting 50 families within Pathfinder

**£1 million** estimated costs avoided whilst 50 families are tracked through Pathfinder

### **Re-referral Rates**

10 Indications are that the Service is beginning to impact positively on referral rates into social care with re-referrals into Safeguarding and Specialist

Services (SaSS) reducing from 27.2% to 24.7% over the last year, and to 22.5% in quarter 1 of 2011/12. This will however require a longer period of time to evaluate.

- 11 Indications are that there is not a significant level of re-referral directly into the pathfinder service post interventions.

### **Conclusion**

- 12 The Pathfinder Service is working with families with high levels of complex need.
- 13 The evidence of impact and outcomes, suggest that the model of service delivery which has been developed is one which meets need, reduces risk and engages families successfully across a number of dimensions. The key to this success is staff with capacity to work intensively; build relationships with families who are suspicious of professionals; have flexibility to be creative about how they work; and to develop unique packages of support to meet the needs of each family.
- 14 In addition this approach has been identified as being significant in reducing the requirement for higher tariff, more costly interventions and has demonstrated the cost benefits of working in this way.

### **Next Steps**

- 15 A detailed action plan accompanies the detailed body of the report

### **Recommendation**

- 16 Cabinet is asked to note the report.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance**

Service demonstrating cost effectiveness. Should this service not be maintained then likely increase in need for high cost, high tariff interventions e.g children becoming looked after.

### **Staffing**

No planned changes to service structure

### **Risk**

None

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Service provided on County wide basis in accordance with assessed need therefore no equality and diversity issues.

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

Service demonstrating positive impact in relation to reduction in parental anti- social behaviour

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Consultation**

None

### **Procurement**

None

### **Disability Issues**

Parents with learning difficulties are prioritised within the criteria for access to service

### **Legal Implications**

None