

# Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 September 2018



## Response to Consultations

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### Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

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#### Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the committee's response to three consultations that have recently closed on:
  - a) Children and Young People's Mental Health Local Transformation Plan at appendix 2;
  - b) Draft Children and Young People's Strategy at appendix 3; and
  - c) Supporting Children to achieve and maintain a healthy weight at appendix 4.

#### Background

- 2 Over the summer there has been three consultations taking place that fall within the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3 Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee received electronically information relating to a consultation on Supporting Children to Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight. Members provided comments on the consultation that were formulated to form a committee response.
- 4 At its special meeting on 10 September, members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Draft Children and Young People's Strategy and were asked for their comments. Members received a presentation on the Children and Young People's Mental Health Local Transformation Plan, which also asked for their comments as part of the consultation. Members comments on the respective items were formulated to provide a formal committee response.
- 5 All of the above named consultations closed prior to this meeting of the committee and due to timescales the formal responses to the respective consultations were signed off by the Chair and Vice Chair of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 6 The committee's formal response to these consultations can be found at appendix two, three and four for members' information.

### **Recommendations**

- 7 Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the copy of the responses sent to the respective services as a formal response to their consultations on:
- Children and Young People's Mental Health and Transformation Plan;
  - Draft Children and Young People's Strategy
  - Supporting Children to Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight

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**Contact: Tom Gorman, Tel: 03000 268 027**

**Author: Ann Whitton, Tel: 03000 268 143**

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance – N/A**

**Staffing – N/A**

**Risk – N/A**

**Equality and Diversity – N/A**

**Accommodation – N/A**

**Crime and Disorder – N/A**

**Human Rights – N/A**

**Consultation – N/A**

**Procurement – N/A**

**Disability Discrimination Act – N/A**

**Legal Implications – N/A**

### **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Consultation Response to Children and Young People's Mental Health Local Transformation Plan**

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the consultation and recognises the rigorous consultation procedure that has been undertaken.

Members of the Children and Young People's and Members from Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees received a presentation from colleagues in Public Health and Education together with partners from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Investing in Children and Roller Coaster parent/carer support.

In relation to referrals to Harbour, members enquired if the six-week duration of the course was long enough for some children and young people and suggested that self-referral should be included.

Members highlighted concerns in relation to the travelling distance to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in-patient services as travelling costs could impact significantly on some families on low incomes and those who rely on public transport.

In relation to perinatal care, members were concerned if there was enough capacity in regarding peer support groups.

Members were supportive of the work of Roller Coaster and the help they provided to parents in County Durham who were struggling following mental health diagnosis of their children.

Members were pleased to note the new posts of Children's Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners developed in CAMHS and that the posts were open to those who held relevant degree level qualifications and what the role would encompass.

Concerns were raised in relation to children who are subject to joint acrimonious parental custody and the affect this would have on the child's mental health and support available to the child. In addition, if the support was delivered in partnership with parents.

In relation to early identification of mental health issues in children and young people members asked how good the authority's performance was and if meeting targets became the priority rather than the action.

Overall Members were supportive of the information they received and the work that had been done in relation to the Local Transformation Plan.

### **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Consultation Response to Children and Young People's Strategy**

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the consultation and recognises the rigorous consultation procedure in place.

Members of the committee were pleased to note that following the draft strategy proposal coming to committee in July their comments had been used to strengthen objectives and there were mechanisms in place to provide a check.

Comments were given that highlighted the readability of the strategy and that diagrams, and the use of colours had further enhanced the ease to understand the subject matter.

In relation to monitoring and review members enquired if Liquid Logic would be the vehicle used to do this.

Members were pleased to note the inclusion of Speech and language under Aim two, objective one and noted that work had been done in libraries but asked how communities where there was no library would access the service.

Comments highlighted gaps in the strategy in relation to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and suggested that a separate VCS strategy be considered, it was also suggested that AAPs could provide information as they engage regularly with VCS.

Members noted that partnership working had been undertaken to develop the strategy and were pleased to note the involvement of children, young people and their families; particularly in relation to Special Education Needs and Disabilities and suggested that other strands of the aims should explicitly mention how children, young people and their families were involved in the development of services and initiatives.

Members noted the Council's drive for economic regeneration and suggested that young people should have greater input into economic and planning policies and actions.

Members highlighted concerns over the financial pressures in bidding for funding from a national programme and sought clarification regarding the risks.

### **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Supporting Children to maintain and achieve a Healthy Weight Consultation**

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) have monitored actions to support children to achieve and maintain a healthy weight over many years and continue to do so and welcome the opportunity to be part of the consultation process.

The consultation information and link was sent to members of CYPOSC who were asked to respond to the consultation and to return their comments to the Scrutiny Officer who would collate the comments to formulate a committee response.

The committee provides a response below based on comments received from members of the committee.

Obviously, families and friends have the biggest direct impact on a child's ability to achieve and maintain a healthy weight therefore the focus has to be to work with families not to rely on processed foods, not to use foods as a treat for children and to eat as a family. However many families rely on processed microwave meals this may be because of their busy lives or because they do not know how to cook a meal from scratch so maybe there is a wider issue about educating parents how to cook using fresh ingredients and how to keep their family healthy. There are other factors that impact on achieving a healthy weight such as time and money. Many families work long hours and do not have the time to prepare healthy meals or the funds to purchase fresh foods. There is a strong relationship between obesity and deprivation with levels of child obesity much higher in areas of deprivation than more affluent areas.

Outside of parental control is advertising and marketing of high calorie, high fats, sugar and salt foods and sugary drinks and complicated food labelling and this is something the government could address to help families.

The policies of the local authority can impact on child obesity. Planning policies in relation to takeaways close to schools, play areas and open spaces and cycle routes will all impact on supporting children to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

The importance of physical activity cannot be overlooked and need not be organised events but could be an opportunity for families to spend more time together and enjoy activities as a family such as walking; playing outdoor games and young children may just want to run around. CYPOSC in their monitoring of Obesity learned of Beat the Streets incentive that was used in some areas and of the positive impact this incentive had on children and young people.

In relation to the National Child Measurement Programme, support should be given to families in pregnancy and regularly from birth in relation to healthy diet and physical activity as a preventative measure by reiterating the message of the importance of a child's healthy weight and how this can be achieved. Preventative work would reduce the number of children found to have excess weight following their first NCMP measurement taken at 4/5 year of age. An interim measurement at 7/8 years would allow for targeted interventions to be put in place and start to take effect before the next measurement at age 10/11 years took place. Children's weight should be monitored as they approach adolescence too as this can be a time when weight can affect their mental health as much as their physical health due to body image and bullying.

Support given in relation to children being identified as overweight and obese should involve several families working together to support each other for the benefit of the children. Support should be made available in a community setting rather than using schools or GP surgeries where the children may feel stigmatised.

The CYPOSC has an item on Childhood obesity programmed to come to its meeting on 11 January 2019 and it is hoped the results of the consultation can be shared with members at that meeting.