

Item No. 13.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 September 2015	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Families Matter	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

We believe in giving all our young people the best start in life. We want them to be in a safe, stable and healthy environment where they have the opportunity to develop, make choices and feel in control of their lives and future.

We want to offer our young people and families the right support at the right time, from their early years through to adolescence and into adult life. By giving families help earlier, when problems first start to emerge, we can not only prevent the need for the most costly and intensive interventions, we can ensure that our children get the best start in life, so that they are able to go on to be happy and successful young adults. Families Matter sets out our approach to achieving this.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That cabinet agree the Families Matter strategy and implementation plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. As part of the Council Plan’s “Best Start in Life” theme, the council made a commitment to invest more in ‘early support’ for families.
3. ‘Early support’ means giving families the right support at the right time, whether help is needed in a child’s early weeks, months and years of life, or whether a problem emerges in a child’s teenage years.
4. The development of Families Matter builds on the Children and Young People’s Plan published in 2013, which as one of its three transformation priorities, made a commitment to ensuring children, young people and families access the right support at the right time.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The aim of the Families Matter is to resolve problems at the point of need, before problems escalate, reducing the need for intervention by acute Children’s Social Care services and achieving better outcomes for children and families.
6. Families Matter sets out the continuum of care that families can access, from universal services, such as children’s centres and schools, to targeted services for families with more complex needs and specialist children’s social care for the most serious cases.

7. Through Families Matter, we will ensure that pathways and thresholds for different levels of support are clear and understood by all partners.
8. Families Matter provides Southwark's response to the national early help agenda and encompasses our local delivery of the national Troubled Families programme.
9. It is based on the principle that the most effective approach is to take a holistic view of the family and offer coordinated support to help them tackle their interconnected problems.
10. It is important that we are able to show how the services we offer to families are making a difference and so Families Matter has a clear set of outcomes that reflect our ambition for all Southwark families.
11. These outcomes are across five key themes:
 - healthy living;
 - keeping safe;
 - achieving and attaining;
 - contributing to the community; and
 - preparing for work and financial stability.
12. As well as demonstrating better outcomes for the individual families we support, we will evidence the effectiveness of Families Matter against a number of key measures, including the number of children needing the support of statutory safeguarding services, the number first time entrants into the criminal justice system and the number of young people in education, training and employment.
13. Progress with Families Matter will be monitored by the Council and its partners in a multi-agency approach, with the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board providing challenge in ensuring that the early support provided to children and families is effective in improving safeguarding of children and young people.

Policy implications

14. Policy reports over recent years, including the Graham Allen review of Early Intervention, the Munro Review of Child Protection and statutory guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children all confirm the same message that holistic, integrated support for families is key to transforming lives.
15. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires every local authority to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board to bring together local leaders in health and social care and join up the commissioning and delivery of local services.
16. Southwark's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board has as one of its few key priorities, 'Giving every child and young person the best start in life'. This reflects and is informed by the Children and Young People's Plan published in 2013, which set out the commitment to helping every local child, young person and family to thrive.
17. The Southwark Safeguarding Children Board has supported the development of the Families Matter approach as a major avenue for preventing and tackling child neglect, one of the Board's key priorities.

Community impact statement

18. Families Matter has been developed through extensive engagement with practitioners, partners, the voluntary sector, parents, carers and young people.
19. The delivery of Families Matter as the basis of our approach to supporting children, young people and families will ensure that vulnerable families get the right help at the right time.
20. A key underpinning principle of Families Matter will be to ensure that policy and practice embeds consideration of equalities and human rights throughout our services.
21. We continue to mainstream equalities in all aspects of the work such as needs assessment, stakeholder engagement and performance monitoring.

Resource implications

22. The delivery of Families Matter will be supported by existing resources available within both the local authority and partners.
23. As the approach proposes joint working within existing resources, there are no immediate financial implications over and above existing allocated funds.
24. In delivering early support to families in the current financial context, we will ensure that services and interventions are evidence based, cost effective and efficient.
25. Families Matter aims to ensure that services are co-ordinated around the family, so that services work together in a seamless way and do not duplicate or cut across each other.
26. We expect to avoid costs for the local authority and other public services over time through intervening earlier to help families and preventing the need for more costly interventions in future.

Legal implications

27. Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area.
28. Government guidance states that in addition to high quality support in universal services, specific local early help services will typically include family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues and help for problems relating to drugs, alcohol and domestic violence. Services may also focus on improving family functioning and building the family's own capability to solve problems; this should be done within a structured, evidence-based framework involving regular review to ensure that real progress is being made (*Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, March 2015).
29. In order to fulfill its statutory functions under Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006, the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board should assess the effectiveness of the early help being provided to children and families.

Consultation

30. In 2013, the Children and Young People's Plan was published, following consultation with more than 1,000 children, young people, their families and carers, who in the report, *1,000 Journeys* talked about what they thought was important and what they wanted from services to help them thrive. Families Matter builds on the 'Best start' priority' within the plan, focusing on ensuring the right intervention at the right time when children and families need support.
31. A further consultation asking Southwark residents to tell their stories about health and wellbeing took place in 2014, resulting in the *1,000 Lives* report. These stories from children, young people, parents and carers have informed Families Matter.
32. Throughout the development of Families Matter, extensive engagement has taken place with practitioners and with partners, including a well attended multi-agency event for stakeholders in April, events in each of the early help localities in June and engagement events for key stakeholders, including head teachers and the voluntary sector. Parents who have used Southwark's early support services were interviewed in April and May.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
1,000 Journeys	Children's and Adults' Services Southwark Council 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Rachel Flagg: Rachel.flagg@southwark.gov.uk
Link: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200165/southwarks_children_and_families_trust/1484/children_and_young_peoples_plan		
1,000 Lives	Children's and Adults' Services Southwark Council 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Rachel Flagg: Rachel.flagg@southwark.gov.uk
Link: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/3570/joint_health_and_wellbeing_strategy_2013-14		
Children and Young People's Plan	Children's and Adults' Services Southwark Council 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Rachel Flagg: Rachel.flagg@southwark.gov.uk
Link: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200165/southwarks_children_and_families_trust/1484/children_and_young_peoples_plan		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Families Matter Strategy
Appendix 2	Families Matter Implementation Plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Cabinet Member for Education and Schools	
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director for Children's and Adults' Services	
Report Author	Merril Haeusler, Director of Education	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 September 2015	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
	Officer Title	Comments sought
		Comments included
	Director of Legal Services	Yes
	Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes
	Head of Safeguarding & Community Services Legal Team	Yes
	Interim Departmental Finance Manager (Children's and Adults' Services)	Yes
	Cabinet Member	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 September 2015