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| Report to: | Health and Wellbeing Board | Date of Meeting: | Wednesday 11 September 2019 |
| Subject: | Reducing Parental Conflict in Sefton | | |
| Report of: | Head of Communities | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Councillor Trish Hardy Councillor John Joseph Kelly Councillor Paul Cummins | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with information on the national initiative to address and reduce parental conflict, led by Department of Work and Pensions and to update them on Sefton's progress. The Project Lead for this in Sefton is Stephanie Critchley, Principal Early Help Worker, supported by Lorraine Webb, Venus Charity.

Recommendation(s):

The Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to receive the report and note the contents.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To acknowledge and endorse the ongoing actions to reduce parental conflict in Sefton.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Sefton has been awarded a total grant of £40,100. £15,000 is from the Strategic Leadership Grant to provide support for strategic oversight and planning. £25,100 is from the Practitioner Training Grant to support frontline identification of parental conflict to help local family support professionals spot parents in relationship distress and refer to available services.

(B) Capital Costs

No direct costs associated with the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

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| <p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>Future financial and staffing implications (if any) could potentially lie within existing or future Troubled Families/Early Help but with relevant acknowledgement from Social Care, Primary Care, Healthy Child Programme and Mental Health. However the current work will increase skills and confidence in the workforce, create stronger multi-agency partnerships and embed RPC in Sefton's Strategic Framework therefore adding value to current services and creating savings in the future.</p> <p>There are no IT implications</p> <p>There are no Assets implications</p> |
| <p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>There are no Legal implications</p> |
| <p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>There are no equality implications.</p> |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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| Protect the most vulnerable: Positive Impact |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Positive Impact |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Not Applicable |
| Place – leadership and influencer: Not Applicable |
| Drivers of change and reform: Not Applicable |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not Applicable |
| Greater income for social investment: Not Applicable |
| Cleaner Greener: Not Applicable |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report (5759/19). The Chief Legal & Democratic Officer has been consulted and has no comments on the report (LD 4883/19)

(B) External Consultations

1. Sent out a link to the EIF questionnaire to the Sefton workforce – this was completed by 19 practitioners
2. Held 2 multi-agency workshops – these were attended by 47 practitioners
3. The feedback from 1. & 2. has been incorporated into the planning tool and submitted to the National programme in June, the planning tool refresh is to be submitted in February 2020
4. Two Community Focus Groups have been delivered and another four are planned
5. Convened a Steering Group/Working Group to take forward our action plan, second meeting in September, 22 attendees

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

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| Contact Officer: | Stephanie Critchley |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Email Address: | |

Appendices:

1. Early Intervention Foundation Briefing for LA's
2. Early Intervention Foundation Briefing for NHS
3. Presentation from Regional Lead

Background Papers:

Reducing Parental Conflict Briefing Note
Reducing Parental Conflict Application

1. Background

1.1 Conflict between parents can harm children's outcomes

Conflict between parents is a normal part of relationships. However, there is a large body of evidence that shows that parental conflict puts children's mental health and long-term outcomes at risk when it is frequent, intense and poorly resolved. These destructive

conflict behaviours include: Aggression, non-verbal conflict or the “Silent Treatment”, lack of respect and emotional control and lack of resolution.

Parental conflict can harm children’s outcomes, regardless of whether parents are together or separated, or are biologically related to the child, such as in blended or foster families. Exposure to destructive parental conflict is associated with a range of problems for children and young people. This can include poorer academic outcomes, negative peer relationships, substance misuse, poor future relationship chances, low employability and heightened interpersonal violence. It is also associated with mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression, conduct disorder, poor attachment, risk-taking behaviours and even suicidality.

1.2 Some families are more vulnerable to parental conflict

Financial difficulties impact on parental mental health, which can increase parent conflict. This in turn can impact on parenting and children’s outcomes. Children in workless families are up to three times more likely to experience damaging parental conflict, according to data from the Department for Work and Pensions. Yet low income families who may benefit most from relationship support are less likely to receive it, due to lack of service availability, cost or stigma.

1.3 Parental conflict reduces the effectiveness of family services

Interventions which focus solely on supporting the parent-child relationship such as parenting programmes, are unlikely to improve outcomes for children if they take place in a context of parental conflict. Evidence suggests that fathers’ parenting may be more adversely affected by parental conflict (By withdrawing or becoming hostile) yet fathers are less likely to be reached by support services.

The impacts of parental conflict on children and adolescents can place significant pressure and economic cost on public services, including health, social care, school systems and judicial services. Local government leaders and commissioners have a key role in reducing the impact of parental conflict on children by integrating this within the wider system of family support for health and wellbeing, working with their partners in the NHS, schools, the police and the voluntary sector.

2. Sefton Reducing Parental Conflict Programme

The programme has been designed, developed and delivered as a multiagency approach locally. A range of partners are involved to ensure parental conflict is consistently understood and responded to across Sefton.

A timetable of events has been planned and delivered which included consultation and engagement with local agencies and action plan development. Multi agency awareness raising workshops and training for frontline professionals will take place in the Autumn. This will be shared across partners and strategic leads. Lorraine Webb from Venus, a local voluntary sector organisation with knowledge and expertise on working with families and parental conflict has been commissioned as part of the strategic element of the grant to lead and co produce the project alongside Stephanie Critchley, Principal Early Help Worker in Sefton. The following teams/organisations have been identified as crucial to be

part of the RPC Steering Group and we need nominated representatives who have management oversight of staff teams and can advise on strategy.

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|--------------------|---------------------|
| Homestart | Schools/DSLs/Nurses |
| Parenting 2000 | Venus |
| Camhs | Sefton CVS |
| Early Years | Access Sefton |
| Police | Health Visiting |
| Maternity Services | Alcohol Services |
| Relate | Social Care |
| LSCB | Public Health |

3. Strategic Partnership Commitment

As parental conflict is a cross thematic issue, it was agreed that the programme would be championed and promoted jointly across Sefton’s Health and Wellbeing Board, Sefton’s Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and Sefton Safer Communities Partnership. This has helped to promote a joint and consistent approach to the programme across Sefton and encourage strategic buy in from a wide range of Sefton agencies. The Regional Integration Lead for the DWP, Helen Armstrong, is available to attend Board meetings to provide an overview of the programme to partners if required.

4. Sefton’s Action Plan

This was submitted in June 2019 and will be refreshed in February 2020.

| | | What actions are you planning to take in this area in the next year? Please enter your top 3 actions in the spaces provided. | Date you expect to complete this activity. |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| PLAN | 1. Strategy | Multi Agency Steering Group to be established | Jul-19 |
| | | Parental Conflict will be included in Sefton's Early Help Strategy | Sep-19 |
| | | Presentation to be delivered to Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Board | Sep-19 |
| | 2. Commissioning | Look at the impact of interventions from pilots and the evidence of what works for families to inform future commissioning plans | Jan-20 |
| | | Review commissioned service's delivery to include consistent Parental Conflict messages and processes | Mar-20 |
| | | Produce a map/directory of locality and commissioned services available to address Family Relationship Conflict across a Continuum of Need | Mar-20 |
| | 3. Workforce Planning | Deliver appropriately targeted, cross-sector training in conjunction with DWP & Knowledge pool | Dec-19 |
| | | Ensure there is the capacity for consistent opportunities for training and skill development across the workforce | Mar-20 |
| | | Strengthen links and support for schools to embed parental conflict/healthy relationships into PSCHE curriculum | Jan-20 |
| LE | 4. Partnership | Multi Agency Steering Group to be established | Jul-19 |

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| A P | | Work with partners to involve parents views of Parental Conflict and capture the child's voice to inform PC Strategy, Planning and Training | Jan-20 | |
| | | Improve engagement with Health Partners particularly Maternity and Early Years Services | Dec-19 | |
| | 5. Leadership | Further develop communication methods across all agencies and networks | Dec-19 | |
| | | Drive and embed awareness of PC across the whole of the Children's Workforce | Mar-20 | |
| | | Report back to Sefton's Partnership Boards and agree a future plan | Mar-20 | |
| | 6. Community Ownership | Deliver Focus Groups with Parent/Carers to gather 'expert by experience' perspectives on language and what works for them | Dec-19 | |
| | | Recognise and replicate current Good Practice in Community Ownership and Co-production across work with Sefton Families | Dec-19 | |
| | | Develop a common use of language around healthy relationships that is accessible and non-judgemental | Dec-19 | |
| | DELIVER | 7. Services and Interventions | Deliver appropriately targeted, cross-sector training in conjunction with DWP & Knowledge pool | Dec-19 |
| | | | Develop a Pathway of Services & Interventions available to address PC in Sefton, including what is available, where & when | Mar-20 |
| Develop a Suite of Tools to support the workforce to appropriately and confidently work with Parent/Carers around PC | | | Mar-20 | |
| 8. Information & Data | | Questions and prompts to be included in the Early Help Assessment to support staff to gather the information and data needed to understand, address and report level of need | Sep-19 | |
| | | Review Information and Data tools and confirm what will be used across the partnership for Parental Conflict | Mar-20 | |
| | | Develop a leaflet and tools to use with the community and partnership staff to raise awareness locally about healthy relationships and support services | Mar-20 | |
| EVALUATE | 9. Outcomes | Identifying an evidence based tool such as Outcomes Star or similar to consistently measure and track impact so outcomes can be clearly identified | Jan-20 | |
| | | Ensure appropriate support/supervision for staff engaged with families around Parental Conflict | Jan-20 | |
| | | Recognise and replicate good practice in engaging with Dads and male parent/carers | Mar-20 | |
| | 10. Using & Generating Evidence | Share evidence repeatedly through training, awareness raising and easy read printed literature to gain a shared understanding | Mar-20 | |
| | | Develop a Toolkit to further enhance the training to be delivered and use Promotional Video clips, YouTube/digital media appropriately to raise awareness | Mar-20 | |
| | | Develop a leaflet and tools to use with the community and partnership staff to raise awareness locally | Mar-20 | |

5. Conclusion

The Chairs of the Health and Wellbeing Board, LSCB and SSCP are asked to endorse this programme, nominate representatives if required for the Steering Group and ensure a commitment to the Action Plan.

