

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting: 6 July 2021

Item No 6

Title: DSG Historic Commitments

Appendices A and B refer

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the service provision for DSG funded activities on Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service and MASH as part of the consideration around continued DSG funding when 'historic Commitments' funding ceases.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report.
- b) Express any views on the continued support for the service provision previously funded through DSG historic commitments funding.

Background

The Forum will be aware that the Historic Commitments element of the DSG Central School Services Block (CSSB) has been reducing over a number of years and the DfE have indicated that they will continue to unwind this funding to zero in future years.

The Forum have made considerable reductions in historic commitments expenditure in Lancashire over recent years, in accordance with DfE requirements, as indicated below:

- 2017/18 - £1,243k historic commitments contribution.
- 2018/19 - £450k historic commitments contribution.
- 2020/21- £350k historic commitments contribution.

In setting the Lancashire Schools Budget for 2021/22, the Forum supported a continuation of the existing combined budgets that are funded from the Historic Commitments element of DSG as follows:

- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service - £200k
- Multi-Agency safeguarding Hub (MASH) - £150k

Members noted, however, that this was only affordable in 2021/22 as a prudential borrowing expenditure commitment had ended in 2020/21 and due to a subsidy from the CSSB 'ongoing costs' allocation. It was clear that continued support for these services was not sustainable from the 'historic commitments' allocation going forward as the DfE allocation reduced further/ceased.

Both services supported by the historic commitments funding had produced annual reports for the Forum in the lead up to the 2021/22 budget cycle and members stated that they held the services in high regard.

As the remaining services were well regarded, the Forum asked that enquiries be made of DfE to ascertain if DSG funding could continue to be used to support this provision as it could no longer be met from Historic Commitments. DfE confirmed that other DSG funding could be used to support the services, subject to the agreement of the Forum.

Lancashire receives an overall DSG allocation of over £1b, and a commitment of circa £350k is not a significant amount in these terms, but members will be aware that there are considerable cost and demand led pressures facing a number of funding blocks. At the 18 March 2021 Forum meeting, members recommended that service representatives for MASH and Emotional Health and Wellbeing be invited to attend this meeting and to present information about what any future DSG funding would provide, including information on value for money for schools and to set out what the impact for schools and pupils if these services were discontinued

As requested, the services have provided updates on the service offer funded through DSG and information is attached:

- Appendix A - Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service
- Appendix B – MASH

Dave Carr, Head of Service Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well) and Chris Coyle, Head of Service MASH & Complex Safeguarding will attend the meeting to present the reports on the respective services.

Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide Schools Forum members with an update on the progress of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing commissioned service.

The demand for specialist Emotional, Health and Wellbeing Services has been on the rise nationally and locally for a number of years with the past year seeing a particular spike in demand due to the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health .

One in six young people are now estimated to have a mental health problem, an increase from one in nine young people prior to the pandemic.

Prevention and early identification is key in ensuring that children and young people have access to help and support as issues start to emerge and it is critical to capitalise on all opportunities to improve the continuity and outcomes for children and their families across health, education and social care.

The Schools Forum has supported the Early Support Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for several years providing a funding contribution of £200k. Together with an annual contribution of £1.1m redirected from Tier 2/3 mental health services the service provides an appropriate pathway for children and young people at level 2, 3 and 4 on the Lancashire Continuum of Need who are experiencing escalating emotional health and wellbeing needs.

The service is delivered across the County by the Child Action North West Partnership within both an individual and family context and includes a range of approaches including specialist counselling provision.

The contract is delivered partly on a payment by results basis to ensure that the authority receives optimum value for money with 40% of the annual contract value being paid up front with the remaining 60% paid based upon the achievement of agreed outcomes.

The contract is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service. Systems and processes are in place providing robust reporting, at a family, service, district and county level. Quarterly performance reports are produced and shared through established governance arrangements. Also supplied are case studies to provide examples of the type of work that has been undertaken and the impact that has had on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Performance 2020/21

Demand for the specialist Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service during 2020/21 has remained high with 1,583 requests for support received.

300 requests for support were at level 3 and 4 (statutory support) of the Lancashire Continuum of need with the remainder (1,283) at level 2 (early support).

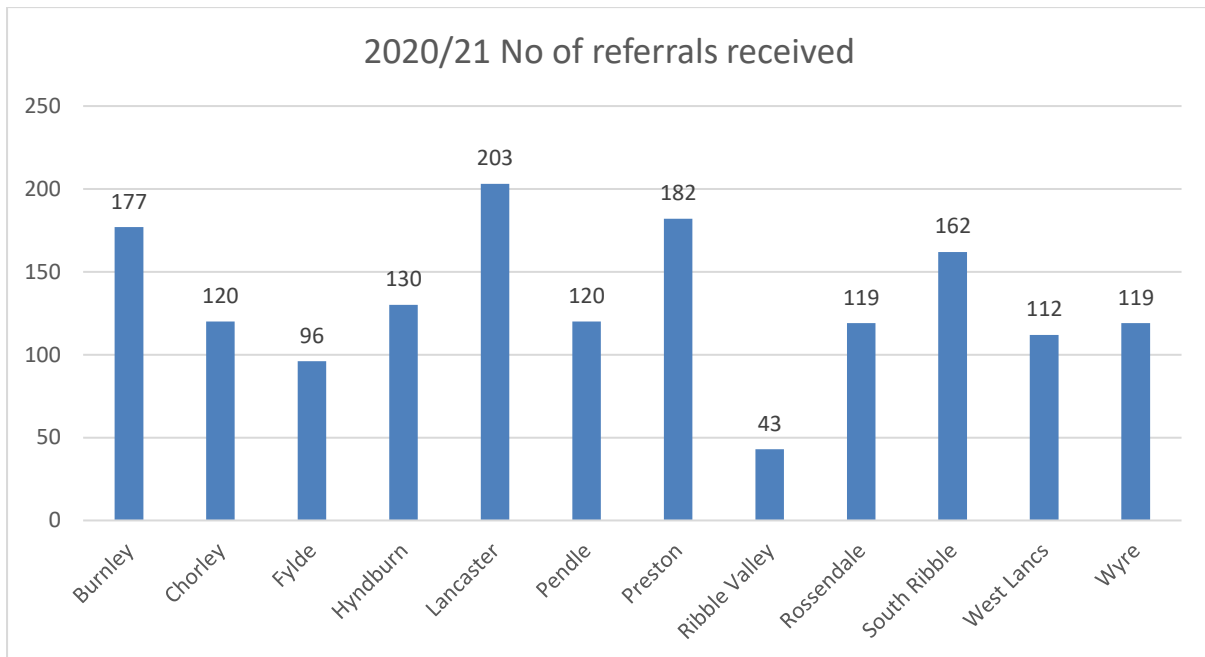


Table 1: Number of referrals received 2020/21 (per District)

Referrals were received across the age ranges with the majority of referrals received across the eight to 11 age range which coincides with transition to high school as illustrated in Table 2.



Table 2: Referrals received by age group (2020/21).

Delivery of the contract has been particularly challenging over 2020/21 due to the impact of the pandemic which has presented difficulties due to the repeated lockdowns, isolation of individual children and their families and access to venues.

In the early stages of the pandemic the provider offered both face to face and remote support but it soon became evident that face to face support was increasingly challenging to deliver. At this stage the provider responded swiftly to develop an online therapeutic platform and delivery was converted to online from September 2020 in all but exceptional cases. This enabled support to continue without ongoing disruptions and kept waiting lists to a minimum.

Despite the challenges, the service has completed a programme of support with 1,140 children, 682 of which report a positive outcome. 322 children and young people remain open to the service and are currently in receipt of support and 121 children and young people remain on a waiting list.

All the children and young people currently on the waiting list receive regular telephone contact from the provider and have been offered access to the virtual support platform. The majority of cases currently on the waiting list are waiting for face to face support or are on hold due to their current Covid 19 status.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commission Outcomes 2020/21	
% CYP with improved family self-assessment (using the MyStar) reporting positive distance travelled	60%
% of CYP whose level of need escalated to require access to statutory access	0%

Feedback from professionals, children, young people and families

Providers are expected to gather feedback from service users and professionals on an ongoing basis. Feedback received to date has been positive and some examples of feedback collected is outlined below:

“I’ve noticed a pretty dramatic improvement in P’s behaviour. There has not been any issues’ taking her to school anymore, no clashing with dad anymore, getting on with people better and handling things better overall. she’s also managing her emotions better. I feel she still gets easily led by peers but other than that, her behaviour has improved. I have also learnt a bit of a lesson here as a parent too and it’s definitely had an impact on my parenting” - mum

R was very pleased with the outcome of the support, her eye brows were growing back and she was no longer pulling them out, she was sleeping a lot better, her self- esteem and confidence had also improved. R’s mum gave the same feedback stating that there have been massive improvements her behaviour, self- esteem and confidence – professional

Dad said the final session was the first time in over 12 months he had sat down as a family and positive things came out of it. He felt positive for the future. - professional

“you didn’t expect anything from me and I trusted you, you didn’t push me into anything but helped me with how I felt” – young person

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Appendix B

MASH Education Narrative 2021

Introduction

Since December 2014 School Forum have funded two Grade 9 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Education Officers, Matt, and Jenny. School Forum also funded two education Business Support Officers (BSO) to facilitate information sharing with schools. Matt trained as a Primary School teacher and Jenny as a Secondary School teacher and both understand the pressures that face Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's). The MASH posts are crucial to maintaining effective relationships with schools and facilitating pathways and processes that benefit schools, their pupils, and their families. Matt and Jenny provide support to all schools in Lancashire and provide a year-round service. The contact details for the MASH education officers are on the school Portal, school safeguarding policy and are also provided in DSL training.

Why MASH Education Officers are so valuable

Multi-agency working

The Education Officers continue to support schools and MASH partner agencies. They act as a conduit and facilitate information sharing through the interrogation of databases including Impulse (Schools), Early Help Module (CFW / Early Help) and Liquidlogic Children's Services (CSC) and liaise with SEND /CWD teams, EHE / CME Teams, School Attendance Consultants, School Advisors, the Exploitation (Complex Safeguarding) Team and the Educational Psychology Team. Both Officers represent Education at the MASH Operation Partner Meetings and Board Meeting. The MASH Education Officers participate in multi-agency case discussions and audit meetings, they represent Education Safeguarding at CME Panel meetings, and work closely with LCC School Safeguarding Officers.

Quality Assurance of Education Referrals

The Education Officers continue to quality assure referrals from Schools. This is to identify strengths and weaknesses, to ascertain whether parental consent has been gained, extrapolate what the reasons for the referrals are, to recognise trends; and identify whether support is currently in place. Further analysis is undertaken to identify the outcomes of the referrals and whether threshold for assessment has been met. Many referrals that haven't met threshold for C&F assessment under S17 of the Children Act 1989 / 2004 are quality assured as appropriate referrals under Keeping Children Safe In Education (2020) and Working Together To Safeguard Children (2018), as schools have a duty to share safeguarding concerns with CSC. Where referrals are deemed inappropriate, these are allocated to Matt and Jenny by MASH Practice Managers to discuss with the School referrer the reasons why the referral is not being MASH assessed by a Social Worker and to offer support and guidance as to how to improve the quality of referral.

Matt and Jenny provide support and guidance to schools on a variety of issues but include the initiation of Early Support via the CAF / TAF process. Schools are also reminded to discuss their concerns with parents in an open, honest, and transparent way. It is important to engage families in early support prior to escalating to CSC. Matt and Jenny have had oversight of all school referrals since joining MASH in 2014. Initially the Education Officers read the referrals; discussing the concerns with the DSL prior to escalating to MASH Social Worker's for screening, if it was thought that threshold was met. In Phase 2, Matt and Jenny were allocated the referrals that didn't meet threshold, to discuss the referral in more detail with DSL's and identify Early Support needs. In 2015, 540 referrals were screened, excluding S47's that went directly to a Social Worker; 788 in 2016 with 31% meeting threshold for C&F assessment; 664 in 2017 with 26% meeting threshold; 676 in 2018 with a significant improvement to 66% meeting threshold; and 807 in 2019 with 45% meeting threshold.

2020 was an unprecedented year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools closed in March 2020 due to the National Lockdown 1.0, remaining open to vulnerable and Key Worker children only until June 2020. Schools then closed for summer in July 2020 and re-opened to all pupils in September 2020. Despite a national lockdown in November 2020 schools, colleges and nurseries remained open. 619 referrals were made by schools to CSC in 2020, the lowest since 2015: with 38% meeting threshold for C&F assessment. In late 2020 the Covid-19 variant mutated and rates began rising rapidly resulting in a further national lockdown 3.0 and closures of schools and colleges from 5 January until 8 March 2021. Between January and June 2021 there have been 313 school referrals to CSC, averaging 62 per month. So far threshold has been met in 32% of referrals, with only 18% of referrals quality assured as inappropriate due to having no parental consent predominantly.

Direct Point of Contact

The MASH Education Officers provide a direct point of contact via phone and email to all Lancashire Schools / Colleges / Maintained Nurseries; sharing information as required and offering advice and guidance. As the MASH Education Officers have become embedded, more schools have made direct contact with them for support and advice. In 2016 MASH Education Officers managed 253 direct enquiries; 1054 in 2017; 1180 in 2018; 1548 in 2019; 3443 in 2020 and 1695 so far in 2021. There has been a significant increase in enquiries since Covid-19, due to increased concerns with poor school attendance, neglect, mental health, Domestic Violence, Physical harm, and associated issues.

Operation Encompass Enquiries

Operation Encompass was launched in May 2019 with MASH Education Officers acting as a conduit to help ensure the process runs as smoothly as possible. The Operation has been so successful that it has been extended to include Sixth Forms and colleges; MASH Education are also looking to include all maintained nurseries this year. The MASH Education Team maintain the database of Encompass mailbox addresses which enables the police to share the Encompass referrals directly with schools and colleges. Consequently, schools have queries regarding the information received and whether CFW / CSC are providing support due to the incident. MASH Education Officers managed 842 OE enquiries in 2020 and 276 so far this year.

School Safeguarding Advice Line (SSAL)

The School Safeguarding Advice Line is part of the Traded Service, providing Schools and maintained nurseries with written safeguarding advice. The School Safeguarding Advice Line is managed by the School Safeguarding Officers and covered by the MASH Education Officers. Calls managed by the Education Officers have varied over the years with 844 in 2016; 1472 in 2017; 1023 in 2018; 990 in 2019; 889 in 2020 and 747 so far in 2021. Schools can phone or email the Advice Line sharing their concerns and receiving advice in verbal and written form, for DSL's to save in the child's safeguarding file.

The role of MASH Education BSO's

Police Safeguarding Reports

Initially only High Risk Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Police reports (716 in 2016) were shared by the MASH Education Officers verbally with DSL's in Schools, until the 2 BSO posts were funded. A written Police Notification pro-forma form was developed in order to share Police Safeguarding Referrals (PSR), which enabled all relevant DA / VA / VC reports to be shared with School DSL's via email, for them to record in the child's safeguarding file. High risk incidents are shared within 24 hours, medium risk within a few days and standard risk with consent to share within a week. 1346 Police Notifications were shared in 2017; 4774 in 2018; 3636 in 2019; 4879 in 2020 and 2535 so far in 2021. Sharing Police notifications with School DSL's enables schools to be aware of any incident which may have had a negative impact on the children, alerting the DSL to be able to monitor and support the children as required. Should DSL's require further information or an update as to support offered by CFW /CSC they are directed to contact the MASH Education Officers for this information. The MASH Education Officers train the BSO's how to summarise police reports and continue to provide ongoing support and guidance. The MASH Education Team maintain an up to date database with all School DSL's to facilitate information sharing.

Encompass Referrals

Operation Encompass (OE) is a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support for pupils experiencing domestic abuse. Operation Encompass commenced in Lancashire in May 2019; and facilitates at the scene information sharing with school from the attending Police officer. Information is usually shared directly by the police with a school's trained Key Adult (DSL), however, where the officer has not been able to correctly ascertain the name of the child's school, a process has been created where Encompass notifications are sent to encompass@lancashire.gov.uk to be shared by the MASH Education BSO's with the relevant school.

1388 Operation Encompass referrals were shared in 2020 by MASH Education BSO's to Schools Encompass mailboxes and 690 so far in 2021. School DSL's also contact MASH Education Officers for further information and to see if information has been shared with MASH via PSR and if support via CFW / CSC is being offered to the family. Lancashire Police are increasingly using Operation Encompass to share vulnerable child reports, in addition to missing from home notifications with Schools or the MASH Education Encompass mailbox.



17/06/2021