

Committee:	Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10 June 2013
Title of Report:	THRIVE Transformation Programme
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the THRIVE programme at the end of the first year and on outcomes so far.

RECOMMENDATION:

The committee is recommended to note the achievements of the THRIVE transformation programme in the first year.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 As part of the annual Medium Term Financial Planning process in 2011, the Children's Service Department identified that rising demand for Children's Social Care services and the protection of vulnerable children was set to create an unsustainable financial pressure for the County Council. The THRIVE programme was designed as a response to these issues.

1.2 The programme was designed to both reduce the unit costs of some of our service provision, but also to manage demand by reducing the number of children that require any statutory social care involvement including admission to care. The aims of the programme are not solely financial, and improving the outcomes for those children and young people remains central. Benchmarking and research with other Local Authorities showed that whilst unit costs were broadly competitive for East Sussex services, we were experiencing higher levels of demand and safeguarding activity than comparable areas.

1.3 The programme design recognised that reducing the budget requirement overall would take time and is particularly linked to reducing the number of Looked After Children, with a need to secure good outcomes for children already in the system. We have seen significant success in this in the first year of the programme, and the outlook is promising. However there is more to do to ensure that momentum is maintained and the financial aims of the programme are met. We have successfully grown our options for more cost effective placements.

1.4 We are currently in the process of re-modelling our financial projections within Children's Services to support the THRIVE programme management and the development of the next Medium Term Financial Plan. This includes amending the investment plan in the light of new savings requirements since the programme was launched. This detailed work will enable us to confidently profile the future requirement for investment from the THRIVE fund set in reserve by the County Council.

2 Supporting information

2.1 THRIVE provides a transformational response to the system of support for vulnerable children, in particular for those parents who cannot adequately meet their children's needs. Taking advantage of greater local discretion on policy and procedure and of the short-term investment made available we have conducted in-depth needs assessment and strategic review, trialled and initiated changes in work with vulnerable children and worked in detail with partners to develop a shared understanding of the issues in the wider children's safeguarding system.

2.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the recently issued THRIVE bulletin outlining for staff and partners our progress in the first year of the programme, and at **Appendix 2** is a summary of achievements in the first year from a programme management perspective.

2.3 During this year we have completed comprehensive Service Reviews of Children's Social Care, Children's Centres, and the Targeted Youth Support and Youth Justice services. In addition we have agreed a multi-agency needs assessment and strategy in relation to Early Help. The outcomes of

these reviews can be found online at <http://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/thrive>. These, combined with the evaluation of our pilot initiatives, have set the strategic plan for the future and allow us to implement the new system and working practices.

2.4 The combined work of the first year has seen significant improvements in children's outcomes and against the targets we set. We have developed and expanded services that work in partnership with families when they are first experiencing difficulties and which are based on the family keywork model of a single worker co-ordinating and delivering a complete package of support where possible. Referrals to Children's Social Care, social worker-led assessments, the number of children requiring a Child Protection Plan, initiated care proceedings and admissions to care are all substantially reduced. This is against a trend of rising demand in comparable authorities. Our supply of in-house carers for Looked After Children has increased and we have become faster at approving these carers and at placing children with them. We have underpinned this transformation with a substantial training and practice development programme for staff.

2.5 For those children that do need us to take action to protect them, we have significantly increased the number that have permanent alternative care via adoption or from within their existing family network, and the number of those with long-term foster care placements – all of which are better for children whilst also keeping them safe from harm.

2.6 The THRIVE Executive Board has recently approved an implementation plan that builds on the successes of the first year of delivery and focuses on embedding changes securely within usual practice. Activities are supported by clear expectations on outcomes, regular monitoring, and a range of evaluation approaches drawn from an overall evaluation framework. More detail on the work of the programme in the coming year will be shared as part of the presentation to the Scrutiny Committee.

3 Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 In the first year of the THRIVE programme we have successfully begun to reduce demand for Child Protection services and completed the strategic review necessary to re-orientate the system of support that will continue this trend. Solid plans are in place for the second year of the programme, and we expect to continue to see improvements as a result. The key target of reducing the number of children that require local authority care remains ambitious, but progress to date is encouraging.

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Interim Director of Children's Services

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Background Documents

None

thrive

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Newsletter 6

One Year On

April 2013

Year of change and progress

We have been working on the THRIVE programme for a whole year. In this edition of the THRIVE bulletin we reflect on what we've done in the year, and some of the achievements and successes so far.

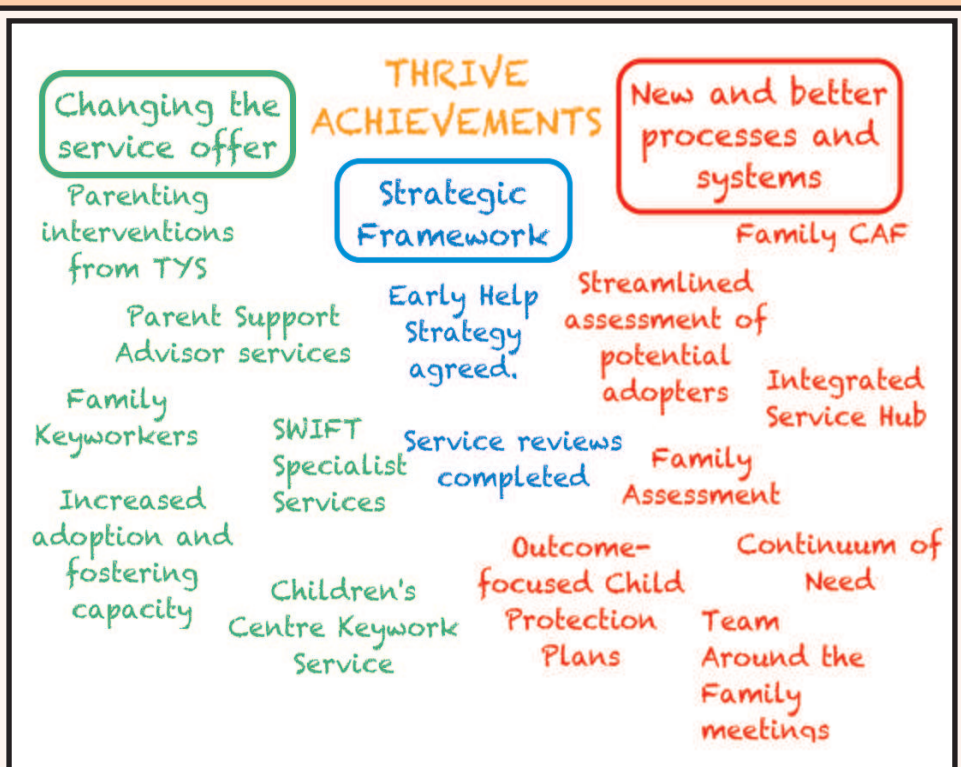
All the different projects that make up THRIVE have the same aim - to improve our support for vulnerable children and young people in a way that means we can reduce their needs in the long term.

Taken together the THRIVE projects will help us to use our financial resources more effectively and at the same time improve children and young people's lives.

After a year of piloting and trying out new approaches and reviewing our services we're now clear on what needs to change, and what needs to stay the same.

In this first year, thanks to hard work across many services, we have:

- reduced the number of children who need the protection of Child Protection Plan or to be admitted to our care ensuring their safety



and ongoing support in better ways

- offered more and earlier help to families with complex needs through our investment in family support services, family keywork roles, and bringing in these services more promptly
- increased the chances that children who can't live safely with their birth parents can have a stable

family life with friends, extended family, an adoptive family, or a long-term foster carer

- improved the multi-agency understanding of when to involve children's social care services, and the opportunities to agree plans of support across agencies

The rest of this bulletin gives a bit more detail on some of the work.

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The financial picture

THRIVE is not only good sense for children and families - it also has an important impact on how we use the public funding that we and others have to protect vulnerable people.

When the programme was first designed, costs in Children's Social Care were rising year-on-year because more and more children needed protection through Child Protection Plans or in foster placements.

The number of children needing social care services - including expert assessments of their carers, supervised contact with their parents, and foster placements - meant that we were paying for more expensive agency services as we couldn't meet the demand ourselves.

We estimated that if we did nothing differently we would need to spend an extra £15m just to keep up with demand by 2015, and that this cost would keep rising.

The THRIVE fund

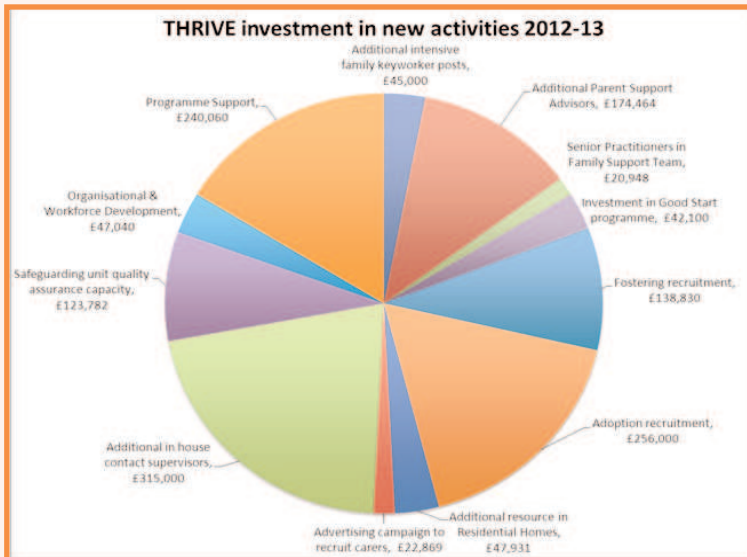
THRIVE is supported by a fund of £9.7m that we can use, as agreed by our multi-agency Executive Board over the three year period. This fund is to pay for:

- supporting the high number of children already receiving social care services - such as the costs of children's placements with a foster carer or family member
- new activities or expanded services that we believe will make a difference to children's outcomes or save money - such as investment in Family Keyworkers, adoption services, and family support services
- making the changes that we need to - through new learning and development opportunities, trying new ways of doing things, or supporting the review of services

The investment aimed to generate savings in some areas straight away, and in others over the longer term.

Of course the THRIVE fund only pays for a small amount of the activity that is going on to do things differently. The existing budgets and resources of the Children's Services Department and others working with children and families make a much greater contribution.

The THRIVE fund is for us to use to try new things, sup-



port areas where we don't think we're spending enough, and to pay for short-term activities such as training and events that will help us make the changes we need to.

What have we spent so far?

In 2012-13 we expected to spend £7.5m and make savings of £912,000. We thought we would need 75% of that budget in order to meet social care demand and the costs of placements for Looked After Children.

Because of the success of the projects so far, but also because we needed more time to agree where to invest, and because some services managed to make changes without additional money, we have actually spent less - about £3.9m. This means that we can spread out the investment over the next two years of the programme.

We have spent nearly £1.5m on new activities or expanding teams this year, all designed to support our aims and with a link to improving the support on offer.

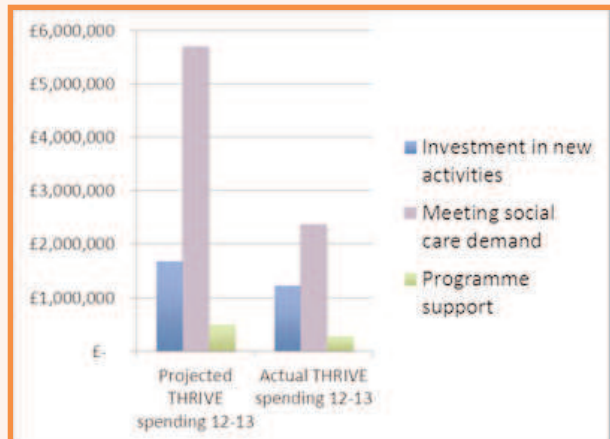
Several other activities and teams were allocated funds initially but in the end didn't need additional funding to make the changes planned because some of the things we were trying immediately started to reduce demand.

What savings have we made?

As a result of our work this year we have saved money or avoided the high costs that we predicted by changing the way we work and by investing in different approaches.

For example, we have saved money on expensive external assessments of parents and children by providing those independently through the re-structured SWIFT service, and significantly reduced our spending on contact services for children not living with their parents through a range of measures. We have also been able to improve the quality of these services at the same time.

We also spent a lot less than expected on specialist Parent and Baby placements because we have developed better and more cost-effective alternatives thanks to the hard work of our teams, and less on agency staff to chair Child Protection conferences because of the reduced number of Child Protection Plans.



Improving our support

Developing new and better processes and systems for supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families is an important part of the programme. We have:

- Created the **Good Start programme** and the **Team Around the Family model** for 0 to 5-year-olds with colleagues in health. The successful Bexhill pilot project will be rolled out across the county. To help with this Children's Centres and health visitor team areas have been reorganised into nine aligned areas.
- Agreed the **Continuum of Need** as a shared tool for discussing our professional responses to children's needs, and the requirement for social care involvement.
- Introduced new **screening and referral processes** - including screening by Sussex Police prior to discussion at the multi-agency **Integrated Screening Hub** - improving the multi-agency response to referrals.

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East Sussex County Council

What's next for Emma?

Where is Emma on the Continuum of Need?
Find out on czone

1 Mum is drinking
2 Dad is in prison
3 Emma is hungry and tired
4

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Find out more: Keep in touch

On Czone

- The THRIVE "Prezi" presentation
- Our "Dragons Den" video
- Links to pages covering key aspects of THRIVE
- Background information
- Earlier editions of this Bulletin

There is a clickable THRIVE logo on the front of Czone that will take you to the THRIVE pages.

On Yammer

The forum is open to all. To join just go to www.yammer.com/thrivenetwork and register. And if you have any questions you can email thrive@eastsussex.gov.uk

- Introduced a better model of social care **Family Assessment**. This allows us to make quicker decisions in serious cases but, where appropriate, gives us the time to put in place alternatives to social care support.
- Implemented new-style **Child Protection Plans** which identify risks more clearly and which make it easier for families and professionals to understand what needs to change and how quickly to lower the risks to children and young people.
- Streamlined **assessment of potential adopters**, delivering high quality assessments more quickly.
- Piloted a **Family CAF** model that will inform the agreed model of assessment and planning support within Early Help services.

Teamwork at the Integrated Screening Hub: Practice Manager Jill Nwokedi, back right, with Mathew Passey, Senior Targeted Youth Support Worker in Eastbourne and, front left Helen Donelan, Practice Change Manager, with Kim Nesbit, Family Outreach Service Manager for Wealden



Changing our services

We have changed what our services do offer to meet the aims of THRIVE in several ways including:

- Giving more support to parents and carers through the **Targeted Youth Support** service, alongside support to young people.
- Giving families with many problems a **Family Keyworker** to co-ordinate the help the family receives
- Improving family support for children aged 5-11 by expanding the **Parent Support Advisor** services.
- Developing the **SWIFT Specialist Services** teams to



- Our "fillspace" website advertising campaign has encouraged more people to apply to become carers

support parents and carers who have very significant problems and whose children may need our protection

- Recruiting more foster carers and

adopters for looked after and vulnerable children.

- Increasing the use of **Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders**, so

As noted on Page 2, THRIVE was designed to reduce rising costs in Children's Social Care that were unsustainable in a time of reducing budgets.

Following the original children's social care benchmarking and workshops in November and December 2011, we visited other local authorities to discuss good practice and how they were remodelling services.

We visited Hackney, Lincolnshire and Wigan during June and July 2012 - local authorities where trends in the number of Child Protection Plans, Looked After Children and those becoming looked after, were reducing:

Key themes emerged which formed the bedrock of THRIVE:

1: Investment

Significant investment in remodelling services and in the workforce.

Learning and best practice

2: Remodelling of services

An emphasis on front door practice, more integrated ways of working and early help services. Key strands included supporting the workforce in new ways of working.

3: Early Help Services

Early help, with an emphasis on pitching the service or intervention correctly, in terms of a step up to / down from social care.

4: Integrated Working

Review of CAF to move towards a customised model to meet local needs.

5: Workforce Development

Workforce development was key, especially using a balance of skills across teams and developing specialist in-house staff. Ability to share information and have appropriate working environments considered important.

6: Data and IT systems

Increasing use of data, and appropriate IT systems, to join up a child's journey across a number of databases and agencies.

7: Financial modelling

Customised financial model to meet local needs.

8: Commissioning and partnership arrangements

Improved professional links and greater partnership working with health and the police in particular.

9: In-house / external / volunteers

Good use of external expertise, external providers and volunteers



Time for new skills

Developing the children's workforce to increase the impact of their work

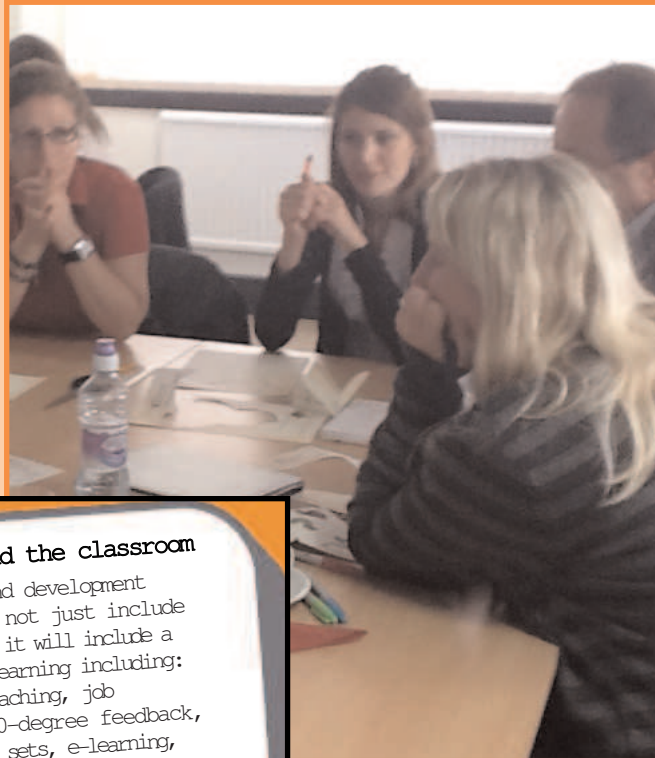
We asked our workforce to tell us about their learning needs. On the back of that we are developing a comprehensive training and development programme that will include

- **Early Help workforce development plan:** We are tweaking existing training and commissioning new training for our workforce development plan that will cover the next two years. Where possible, training will be multi-agency and / or locally-based to give colleagues from different agencies the chance to learn together.

- **Manager's development programme:** A key to the success of THRIVE will be front-line managers having the confidence and skills to promote practice change across their teams. The Early Help managers' development programme, which we have just launched, will give managers the support they need.

- **Running a professional development programme for social care managers** to support the changes recommended in the Munro report.

- Running a programme of skills development specifically aimed at **supporting relationship-based practice** in social care services.



Looking beyond the classroom

Our training and development programme does not just include "taking courses" it will include a wide range of learning including: supervision, coaching, job shadowing, 360-degree feedback, action learning sets, e-learning, team meetings and even through reading and private study.

- a form of guiding/counselling to elicit and strengthen motivation for change; and **Solution Focused Brief Therapy** - an approach which helps people change by looking at solutions rather than dwelling on problems

We are also moving ahead with some "quick wins" In training and development:

"Quick wins"

- **Risk-assessment training** has been commissioned and will start in June.
- **Family keywork training** has already started.
- An exciting **level 4 QCF accredited course**, on

working with families with complex needs, will be available for children's centre keyworkers and multi-agency keyworkers; with the taught part of the course open to other early help staff. The first course starts in May.

- In response to demand, CAMHS have increased their offer of **twilight training** for the courses: 'Introduction to CAMHS and common mental health problems' and 'Parental Mental Health'.

- We have already commissioned training on **intervention tools** such as: **Motivational Interviewing**

Dates will be advertised soon.

Family Keyworker core training

The second round of core training for Keyworkers was held recently and brought together over 50 practitioners from 15 different services.

The two-day training provides the basic knowledge to get started with Keywork, including whole-family assessment and planning, plus safeguarding within families with multiple problems. It also gives Keyworkers the chance to meet colleagues from other services.

We have also trained 62 Children's Centres Family Keyworkers - bringing the total number of Family Keyworkers to receive core training to 155, plus a further 26 practitioners from non-keywork services.

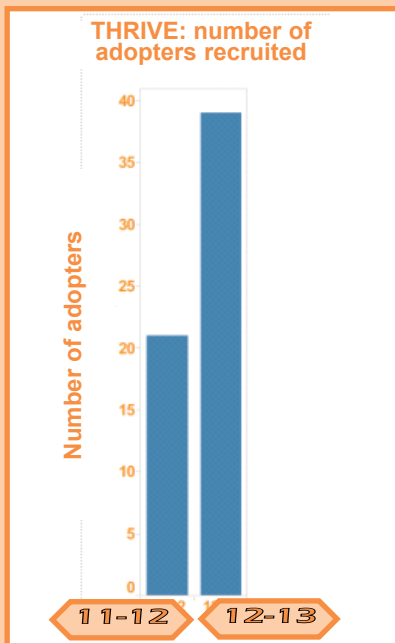
Monitoring how we're doing

Lying behind all of the THRIVE activities are a set of indicators that managers involved use to help determine whether things are going in the right direction. These help us to see whether we are making a difference in the round, rather than just for individual children and their families.

Positive changes

At the end of the year these indicators show a really positive picture in many areas, for example we have:

- increased the number of families who are receiving targeted 1:1 support from Early Help services
- reduced the number of referrals to Children's Social Care, because the Continuum of Need is helping to create better referrals, and because of changes in screening
- reduced the percentage of those referrals which are re-referrals, because it is more likely that there is already a plan in place for those children
- substantially reduced the number of social care assessments undertaken, because there were fewer referrals, and the Integrated Screening Hub can put in place other responses
- significantly reduced the number of children requiring a Child Protection Plan to keep them safe, with more use of other options



- reduced the number of children being admitted to care, and the number of care proceedings started

- recruited almost double the number of potential adopters than in the previous year, because of our recruitment campaigns, additional staffing, and changes to our processes

Ones to watch

Although we're making good progress according to the plans we set out, there are some areas where we need to keep a close eye on whether our activities are having the right effect. These include:

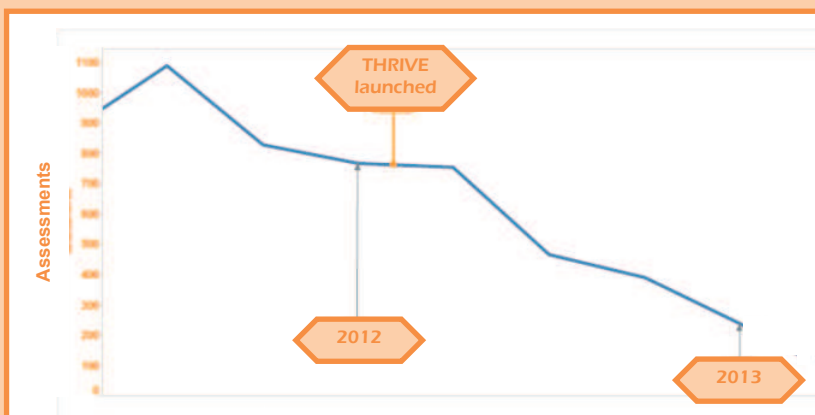
- continuing to improve the quality of referrals to Children's Social Care and the decisions on whether families require social care assessment
- keeping the momentum up on recruiting foster carers - including specialist carers for disabled children
- reducing the number of children and young people who have had more than one Child Protection Plan

Comparing our progress

East Sussex is part of a group of Councils that meet regularly and share data to compare this kind of information.

Our latest look at how we compare to other areas showed that we're now much more in line with other areas than we were before THRIVE.

We still stand out in some areas, however - particularly when we compare our number of Child Protection Plans and referrals to Children's Social Care to areas with similar deprivation levels.



Making a real difference

Through THRIVE we are speeding up our response when difficult issues arise for families that might put children at risk. Through the Integrated Screening Hub and better information sharing and joint decision-making we're making sure that families get help earlier and more effectively. Here are two examples.

CASE 1: One of our Parent Support Advisor services took an urgent call from a primary school after a mother had gone in to see the staff.

The mother's partner had moved a known offender in to their home, and she and her children didn't feel safe.

In consultation with Children's Social Care, the



PSA service helped her to find safe temporary accommodation, and make some decisions about the family's future.

The PSA service worked with the mother on how to manage her own mental health issues as well as keeping the children safe, and worked with the children to help them understand what was changing. In doing so the service secured better long-term

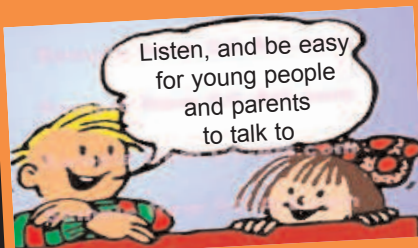
accommodation and an ongoing plan of family support.

CASE 2: Our Targeted Youth Support service were asked by the Integrated Screening Hub to follow up a referral to Children's Social Care relating to 13-year-old young woman who had just moved to the area with her family. The TYS worker uncovered a complex set of family relationships, poor housing, and a history of self-harm. She spoke with the separated parents and the young woman and gradually made plans with them to get somewhere to live, enrolment in school, and careful support for the young woman to cope with all that was changing, building her resilience and protecting her mental health.

What they said

Over 250 young people and parents have given us their views about the support they received from the Youth Offending Team, Targeted Youth Support, or

Children's Social Care. From the feedback they gave us we have identified some key behaviours we want workers to develop



Coming soon

- Look out for more information on the next steps for THRIVE and our services.

We're running update sessions in three Early Help conferences, social worker briefings, and team days. Information on new training and development opportunities will also be coming out soon.

If you have any questions about what's next send them in to thrive@eastsussex.gov.uk and we'll do our best to get you an answer.

Summary of achievements in Year 1

1. Overview

1.2 As a result of work across the inter-agency system that safeguards children we have:

- offered more and earlier help to families with complex needs through our investment in family support services, family keywork roles, and bringing in these services more promptly
- reduced the number of children who need the protection of a Child Protection Plan or to be admitted to our care, ensuring their safety and ongoing support in better ways
- increased the chances that children who can't live safely with their birth parents can have a stable family life with kinship carers, an adoptive family, or a long-term foster carer
- improved the multi-agency understanding of when to involve children's social care services, and the opportunities to agree plans of support across agencies

1.3 Whilst the first year has seen significant progress and successes the programme remains challenging and complex, and easily influenced by external changes. These include changes to the financing of local government and our partner organisations, changes in the strategic landscape such as Government policy in relation to safeguarding, and changes for those we work with such as the possible impact of welfare reform. These potential risks are captured in the programme risk log and the Programme Team monitor them regularly and mitigate where possible.

2. Key programme achievements

2.2 Agreement of the *strategic framework* to the programme, through

- **the completion of Service Reviews** of Children's Centre services, the Targeted Youth Support service and Children's Social Care Services, which set out the future of these services and their contribution to THRIVE
- **the agreement of the new Early Help Strategy**, and the development of the Family Keywork programme

1.3 Development of *new and better processes and systems* for supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families, including

- **the integrated Good Start programme** including regular local Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings to agree support for 0-5 year olds within Early Help services
- **agreement of a new Continuum of Need** and service response as a shared tool for discussing our professional responses to children's needs, and the requirement for social care involvement
- **new screening and referral processes**, including screening by Sussex Police prior to discussion at the multi agency Integrated Screening Hub, providing a better Early Help response to families who are brought to the attention of children's social care
- **a new more efficient and effective model of social care Family Assessment**, focusing on those families who most need that assessment, informing quicker decisions where necessary, and taking the time to put alternatives to social care support in place
- **implementing outcome-focused Child Protection Plans** which identify risks more clearly and which make it easier for families and professionals to understand what

needs to change and in what timescales to lower the risks to children and young people

- **streamlined assessment of potential adopters**, enabling the assessment process to be completed to a high standard but with fewer points of delay
- **a new model of assessment and planning for Early Help services** – based on **learning from the Common Assessment Framework** and piloted with families and the workforce
- **agreed processes for the coordination of Early Help support to families**, particularly where there are complex whole family issues
- **improved the Children Index information system to reflect a whole family approach**
- **agreed the specification for a new Social Care Information System**, to be jointly procured with Adult Social Care

1.4 *Changing the service offer to meet our aims, for example*

- **Working more actively with parents and carers**, and delivering parenting interventions, through the Targeted Youth Support service
- **Restructuring Children's Centre delivery** substantially and putting in place stronger management support for the new Children's Centre Keywork Service, based on the previous Family Outreach Service
- **Developing designated Family Keyworker roles** in a range of services to provide a whole family response and coordination, in part using the Troubled Families funding
- **Investing in an expansion of family support** for children aged 5-11 through growing the Parent Support Advisor services
- **Developing the SWIFT Specialist Services teams** to improve our assessment and response to the needs of adults whose children need our protection
- **Launching a new advertising campaign** to recruit potential carers for Looked After and vulnerable children, and increasing our workforce to see them through assessment and matching to children who need their care
- **Increasing the use of Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders**, so that where it is best for a child or young person they can live permanently with a different family member or someone they know, rather than in our care
- **Setting up a small team of social workers to advise Early Help services**, help develop the practice and supervision of those services, and support quality assurance

1.5 *Developing our workforce to increase the impact of their work, by*

- **Agreeing a competency framework for the Early Help workforce**, and undertaking a comprehensive Learning Needs Analysis to plan the workforce development offer
- **Running a professional development programme for social care managers**
- **Launching a development programme for Early Help service managers**
- **Commissioning additional training and development opportunities** on key issues and skills, to be delivered in 2013-14 on a multi-agency basis
- **Communicating clearly with key workforce groups** the direction of travel and what we expect of their practice
- **Establishing a group of front-line Change Champions** to provide a link between front-line practice and the direction of the programme

1.6 *Learning from research, evaluation, and practice in other areas, for example*

- **Benchmarking activity** on social care outcomes on behalf of a group of Local Authorities
- **Visiting a wide range of other Local Authorities** to learn from their practice
- **Reviewing the evidence base** for different interventions and systems of support
- **Conducting an Early Help Needs Analysis**, and a comprehensive analysis of social care demand information
- **Evaluating the outcomes of the Good Start pilot and the current PSA delivery** to inform our commissioning intentions
- **Agreeing an evaluation framework** and engaging with experts to ensure the impact of activities is evidenced

