

Meeting: **Health & Wellbeing Board**

Date: **6 March 2012**

Title of Report: **THRIVE Transformation Programme**

By: **Matt Dunkley, Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To brief members on the planned programme of change in Children's Services.**

Recommendation:

- To note the rationale for and aims of THRIVE
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1. Background Information

1.1. Financial planning within the Children's Services Department (CSD) for 2012/13-2014/15 forecasts that, if no mitigating actions are taken, £12m of budget pressure will build over the next 3 years. Currently, demand for Children's Social Care Services is growing at a rate of approximately 10% a year and so if we do nothing the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans is predicted to rise from 700 to 931 and the Looked After Children (LAC) population will rise from 624 to 831. Clearly quite apart from the huge financial pressure this rise in activity represents, this will also place the wider children's system under immense strain.

1.2. The reasons for the demand are complex, but recession and high profile national publicity surrounding the deaths of children are likely to be two of the biggest drivers. However in East Sussex we have far more children brought to the attention of social care services than is the case for other authorities who are also responding to the same pressures and this then translates into higher numbers going through the system (see Appendix 1).

1.3. This suggests that we may also have a significant cultural issue to deal with, to ensure children are not escalated within the system because this is seen by staff in all agencies as a way to access resources, or to transfer risk from where it could be more appropriately held. In order to consider and achieve the cultural shift required we need to have in-depth, robust discussions with colleagues and to invest in comprehensive inter-agency training.

1.4. In order to respond to this rise in activity, the Children's Services Department submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) for a transformation programme which was presented to ESCC elected members at the end of January. The implementation of the transformation programme requires a one off investment fund of £9.7m over the next three years if the CSD is to return to a balanced budget for 2015/16. The proposal is that initially additional investment is required whilst services are developed and changed to reduce the pressure for statutory social work intervention. ESCC Cabinet agreed the financial investment to effect the transformation on 26 January 2012 and this was subsequently confirmed by full Council. If Board members would like more detail, the OBC is available on request (see contact details at the end of the report).

2. Key Deliverables and Interdependencies

2.1. The programme has been set up to find a way of achieving a financially sustainable model of service delivery with better outcomes for children and young people. The objective is to increase investment in early help and preventative services in order to reduce the

number of children and young people needing higher cost services. Research shows conclusively that earlier intervention improves the life chances of children – particularly their health and well-being and later socio-economic activity. The aim is also to speed up planning to reduce unit costs for services to children already in the care system by increasing the pool of foster carers and adopters.

2.2. The key elements of the Programme (see Appendix 2) will broadly be:

2.2.1. **To reduce referrals to social care** services by working with partners to stop some referrals altogether and to increase the number of referrals that are directed straight to early help services (key dependencies – the development of early help services which can take more cases with a wider range of risk held across all services; clear understanding of services available and of the referral system by all partners).

2.2.2. **To improve assessment** of need so that families can be referred to the service best placed to help them as early as possible (key dependencies – the reduction in referrals in order to free the time of Duty & Assessment Teams; the relaxation of statutory fixed timescales for assessment; the development of early help services with a wider range of risk held across all services).

2.2.3. **To increase the range of early help** so that more challenging cases can be held appropriately outside of social care services, with the aim of reducing referrals to social care (Key dependencies - clear understanding of services available and of the referral system by all partners; improved screening and assessment to ensure the right cases are referred; capacity for social care staff to provide support to early help teams when required).

2.2.4. **To reduce the numbers of children with child protection plans and who are looked after** (key dependencies – reduced referrals, improved assessment; the development of early help services with a wider range of risk held across all services; increased numbers of adoptions).

2.2.5. **Reduction in agency costs for Looked after Children (LAC)** (key dependencies – reduced numbers of LAC; more in-house foster carers recruited).

3. Methodology

3.1. The broad methodology is that three service reviews will examine the changes that need to happen to social care services and to the early help services currently delivered by Children's Centres and Targeted Youth support, Youth Justice and Secondary Behaviour Support. These will take into account the findings from a number of service development projects and pilots (see Appendix 3) which include:

3.1.1. Families with Multiple Problems pilot

3.1.2. Development of an early help strategy

3.1.3. Further development of the Section 75 agreement

3.1.4. Feasibility assessment for a multi-agency screening hub

3.1.5. Negotiations with Sussex Police to reduce referrals

3.1.6. Work with the Courts to introduce quicker specialist assessment of families misusing substances

3.1.7. Recruitment of more foster carers and adopters

3.1.8. Rationalisation of the number of children's centres

3.2. Milestones have been established against the broad Outline Business Case. These are being used to measure progress within each of the programme strands. A critical path is now being developed which will examine in detail the required steps and how these need to be staged in order to move forward to a new model.

4. The Role of Partner Agencies

4.1. Whilst a major focus of the plan is on transforming practice in the Children's Services Department of the County Council, the success of the plan is dependent on a range of partners also working in different ways. Fundamentally help needs to be delivered earlier to support families better and avoid presentation to social work teams if possible. We also need to increase activity that is purposeful in terms of changing parental behaviour.

4.2. We have therefore ensured that we have partner agencies involved at all levels of the Programme to ensure that future solutions will work for all partners. We also recognise that a wider training and support strategy involving partners will be key to success. Any changes made will have to be managed safely to avoid increased risk to children and potential damage to the reputational risk for local agencies.

5. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

5.1. The current level of spend in children's social care is not sustainable and already the high numbers of children subject to CP plans and who are LAC are placing enormous strain on a range of partner agencies, this will only get worse if nothing changes. If additional one off financial support is agreed by Full Council, successful implementation of the Transformation Programme should enable the Children's Services Department to produce a balanced budget within anticipated cash limits for the 2015/16 financial year.

5.2. Successful transformation will rest on developing different ways of working with colleagues and managing the change safely and in partnership.

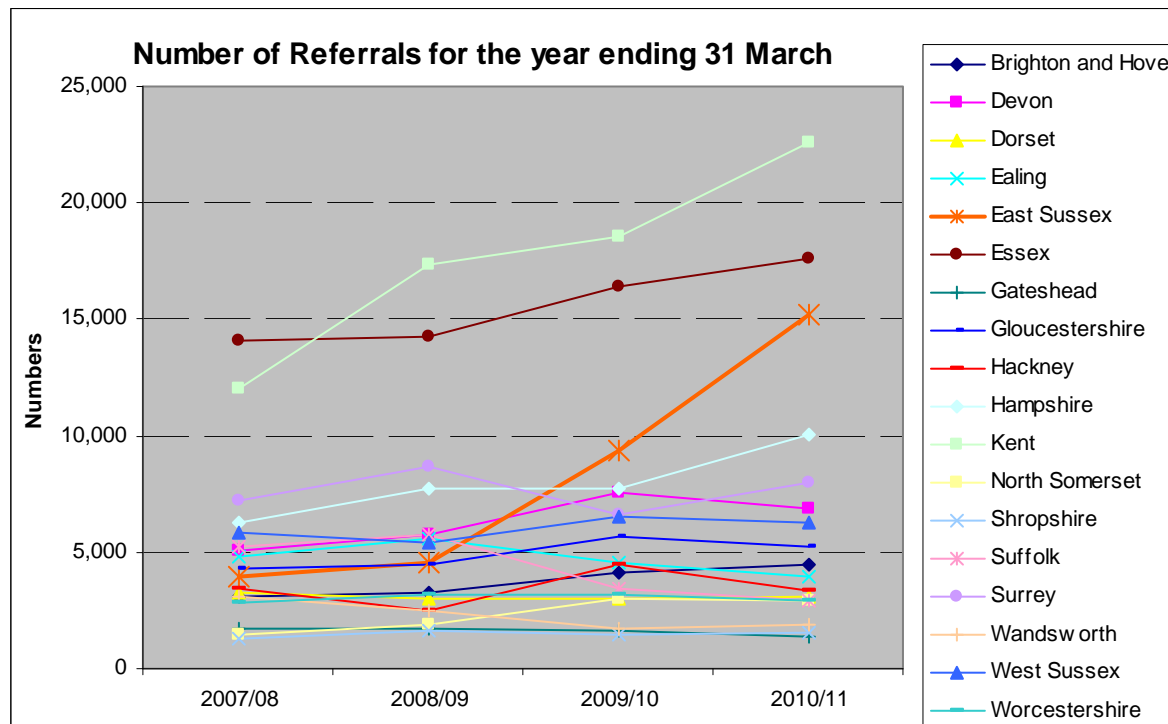
Contact Officer: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director Children and Families

Tel: 01273 481902 (Diana Francombe)

APPENDIX 1 – Social Care Demand

Number of Referrals for the year ending 31 March

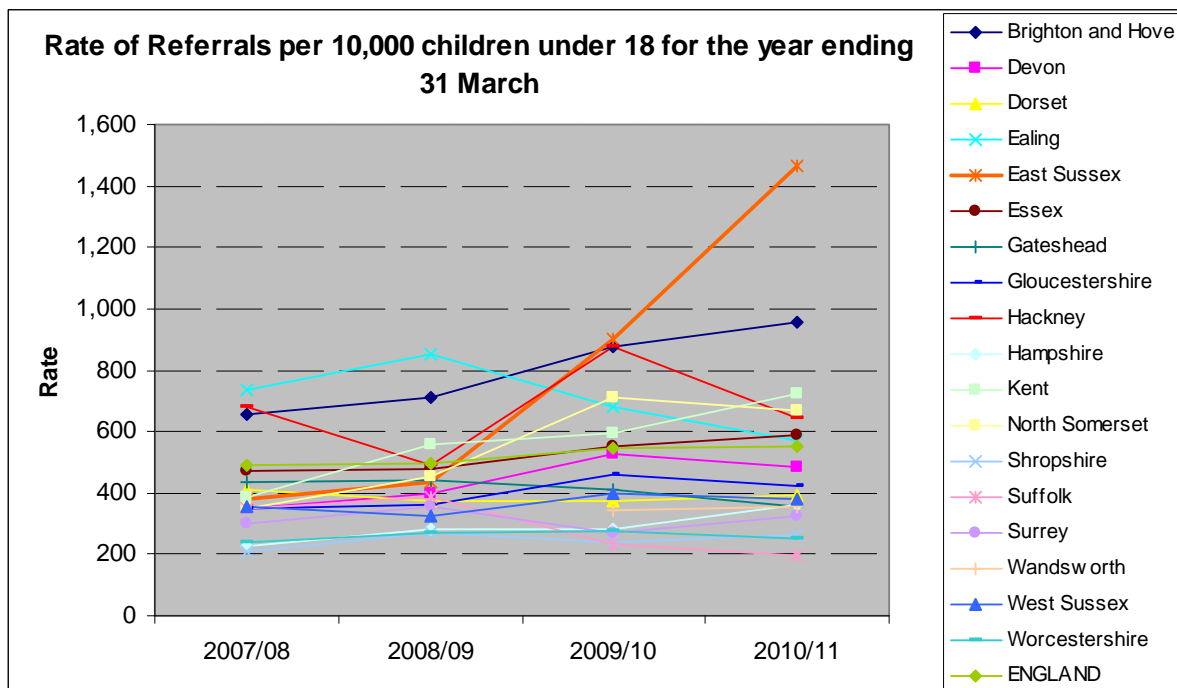
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Brighton and Hove	3,050	3,300	4,086	4,483
Devon	5,095	5,750	7,557	6,897
Dorset	3,295	3,030	3,001	3,127
Ealing	4,830	5,620	4,581	3,914
East Sussex	3,950	4,530	9,364	15,191
Essex	14,085	14,290	16,395	17,610
Gateshead	1,680	1,720	1,590	1,356
Gloucestershire	4,295	4,440	5,688	5,263
Hackney	3,465	2,485	4,484	3,360
Hampshire	6,295	7,745	7,758	10,040
Kent	12,005	17,360	18,565	22,616
North Somerset	1,475	1,930	3,040	2,885
Shropshire	1,260	1,640	1,433	1,574
Suffolk	5,250	5,760	3,467	2,934
Surrey	7,205	8,635	6,626	7,967
Wandsworth	3,135	2,525	1,735	1,848
West Sussex	5,870	5,385	6,549	6,300
Worcestershire	2,805	3,140	3,160	2,895
ENGLAND	538,500	547,000	603,700	612,600



APPENDIX 1 – Social Care Demand

Rate of Referrals for the year ending 31 March per 10,000 children under 18

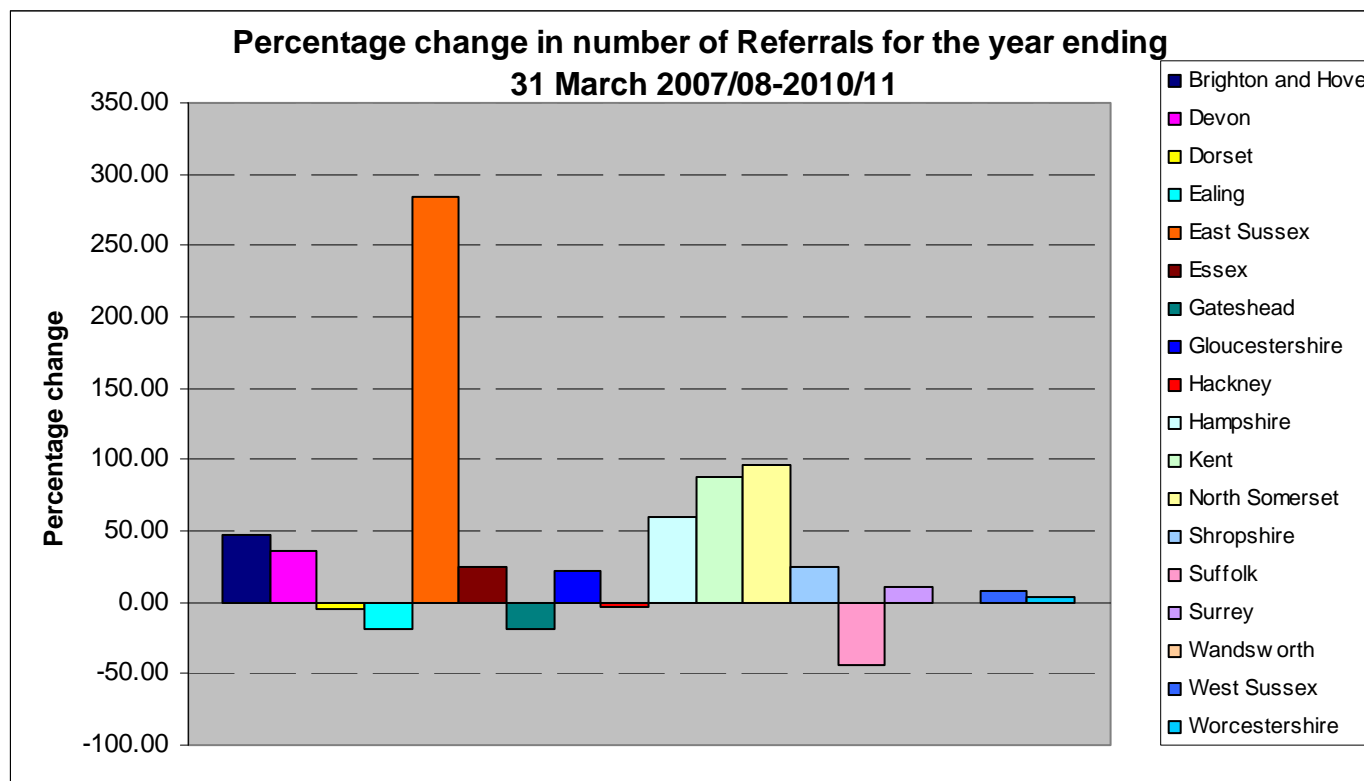
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Brighton and Hove	658	712	874	955
Devon	352	397	525	482
Dorset	408	375	375	391
Ealing	734	854	681	572
East Sussex	380	436	902	1,463
Essex	473	479	550	589
Gateshead	433	443	412	354
Gloucestershire	347	359	460	425
Hackney	680	488	874	645
Hampshire	228	280	282	365
Kent	386	558	596	723
North Somerset	347	454	712	669
Shropshire	208	270	238	263
Suffolk	349	383	231	195
Surrey	299	358	273	324
Wandsworth			344	355
West Sussex	357	327	398	381
Worcestershire	240	269	273	252
ENGLAND	489	497	548	555



APPENDIX 1 – Social Care Demand

Percentage change for Referrals for the year ending 31 March 2007/08 – 2010/11

	2007/08-2010/11
Brighton and Hove	46.98
Devon	35.37
Dorset	-5.10
Ealing	-18.96
East Sussex	284.58
Essex	25.03
Gateshead	-19.29
Gloucestershire	22.54
Hackney	-3.03
Hampshire	59.49
Kent	88.39
North Somerset	95.59
Shropshire	24.92
Suffolk	-44.11
Surrey	10.58
Wandsworth	
West Sussex	7.33
Worcestershire	3.21



APPENDIX 2 – Key Elements of the Transformation Programme

