

Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **10 July 2015**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of Report: **THRIVE end of programme review**

Purpose of Report: **To provide an update on the outcomes and the review of the THRIVE programme at the end of the third and final year.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report.

1. Background

1.1 The final year of the three year programme, which has been overseen by a multi agency Executive Board, is now complete and this report provides a summary of the achievements, the final review of the programme and the next steps to sustain progress.

1.2 The THRIVE programme was established against a background of escalating demand and costs for Children's Social Care. The externally produced Outline Business Case (OBC) projected rising costs over the three year period and these have been avoided. The cost of Children's Social Care has decreased by £4.7m (8%) from £56.6m to £51.9m from 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the financial review has found evidence of the sustained impact of investment and change activities.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The final review of THRIVE has taken place between October 2014 and March 2015 around three key goals identified in the theory of change as crucial to sustainability:

1. Skilled, confident and proactive workforce
2. Effective, targeted interventions with children and families across the continuum of need
3. Reduced demand for high cost services

Goal 1: Skilled, confident and proactive workforce

2.2 The evaluation of goal 1 looks at two areas, a Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) completed by Early Help teams and a survey of social care practitioners.

2.3 The LNA was carried out to determine: the extent to which the workforce objective of the THRIVE programme has been achieved; the impact of the THRIVE workforce development programme on the skills and confidence of the early help workforce; and the key priorities for workforce development beyond the end of the programme.

2.4 Over 80% of staff rated themselves as confident in 6 out of 8 competency areas, and the confidence levels in all areas have increased since the first learning needs analysis was undertaken in 2012.

	2012	2015
Supervision and Managing Risk	76%	91%
Knowledge and understanding	88%	91%
Safeguarding, assessment, planning and managing risk	84%	88%
Effective communication, engagement and intervention	86%	91%
Confidence using intervention tools	20%	43%
Multi-agency and integrated working	80%	83%
Health and Wellbeing	67%	72%
Children and Young People's Development	79%	84%
Average	72%	80%
Average rise in confidence		8%

2.5 In all areas the rate of increase in confidence levels is greater in the group who received training than the group of respondents as a whole. Confidence levels of staff who had attended training, compared to 2012, had gone up in: the use of intervention tools (+47%); child and adolescent development (+18%); goal and outcome planning (+13%); supporting safe change in families experiencing domestic abuse (+7%); and working with parents/carers and young people in a group situation (+11%).

2.6 In terms of the THRIVE programme objective to have a skilled and confident workforce, it can, therefore, be concluded that the Early Help workforce is more skilled and confident in 2015 than in 2012. There will be continued investment in workforce development to embed the THRIVE way of working, particularly for those staff who have not yet undertaken training and for new staff. Learning opportunities will also be provided in areas that are considered to be important in supporting effective early help, where the LNA has identified lower levels of confidence. A core curriculum will also be developed for Family Keyworkers who are part of the Troubled Families programme. A range of delivery methods will be used to ensure, in the context of reducing budgets, that workforce development is delivered in the most cost effective way.

2.7 Research in Practice was commissioned to measure the impact of the Munro training programme (part of THRIVE), on staff skills, knowledge and confidence of the social work workforce. Two surveys were undertaken, a baseline survey in 2013 and a follow-up survey in 2014. The evidence shows that the training has had a positive impact on practice in East Sussex, and that the programme has led to increased levels of knowledge, skills and confidence in practitioners working with children and families. Overall staff rated their knowledge, skills and confidence as increased with fewer staff rating their knowledge as 'satisfactory' and more rating their knowledge as 'good' or 'very good'. The majority of staff who responded thought that the training had a 'fair' or 'great deal' of impact on their practice.

2.8 A key theme from both surveys was the need for time and the opportunity to use the new learning in practice and for good reflective supervision to explore how learning acquired can be implemented in practice. In response to this the programme has been adjusted to include more elements around learning transfer, including after training surgeries to review live cases and re-inforce training.

Goal 2: Effective, targeted interventions with children and families across the continuum of need

2.9 In order to evaluate goal 2 we have undertaken a light touch review using our internal children's services evaluators, who had been trained as part of THRIVE, to undertake 10 family interviews with families who had been in receipt of Children's Centre Early Help keywork services and 4 interviews with Targeted Youth Support (TYS) clients. In addition we have used an external evaluation of intensive family keywork and service user feedback.

2.10 The evaluation of the intensive family keywork programme involved interviews with practitioners, providers and families, workshops and case file reviews. The evaluation found that: the intensive family keywork programme was sustainable; evidence that keyworkers have been able to engage with families in a structured and supportive way providing practical support to families; and evidence of the positive impact of the service on families and their appreciation of the support provided. The evaluation also identified areas for development to improve the impact of the services and outcomes for families, to provide consistency and clarity in approach and intervention.

2.11 In addition there were 10 interviews with families who had been in receipt of Children's Centres early help keywork services. Feedback from the family interviews supports the conclusion from the evaluation of the intensive family keywork programme. The impact on families was clear with the majority of respondents reporting that their issues had been resolved and that the positive improvement had been sustained since exiting the service. However, in just under a quarter of issues presented respondents stated that they continue to deal with notable challenges. The interview evidence suggests that the Keywork service delivers interventions valued by the families, and that empowers the families to achieve positive outcomes and sustain them.

2.12 Service user feedback from 757 young people and parents/carers in 2013 and 2014 and interviews with 4 young people who have been in receipt of TYS Early Help Keywork services is positive about the interaction with the TYS service. 98% of the respondents to the service user feedback survey are generally happy with the TYS service they received. The small interview sample, supported by the more extensive service user feedback demonstrates that the TYS service is consistently providing an effective service for young people. Whilst it is not possible to directly attribute this to the THRIVE programme, tools and techniques embedded through THRIVE have supported TYS keyworkers to provide effective targeted interventions.

2.13 The evidence from both sets of family interviews and the interviews with young people suggests that in principle this goal is being met and the Keywork Service is having a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and families.

2.14 As an addendum to the LNA the THRIVE workforce was asked to rate any positive and negative impact they felt THRIVE was having on specific areas. 97% of the respondents felt that THRIVE is having a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and families. 57.7% identified some negative impact for example a lack of consistency in information sharing across partner agencies and concerns about the reduction in level 2 support. Only 5.8% (20) rated the negative impact as significant and 42% (144) rated no negative impact at all. Respondents felt that THRIVE is having a positive impact on multi-agency working and there was positive feedback regarding whole family working, a shared language and the provision of high quality training.

Goal 3: Reduced demand for high cost services

2.15 The cost of Children’s Social Care has decreased and the projected increase in demand and associated costs outlined in the OBC has been avoided. This has been achieved even against a back-drop of a reduced base budget as a result of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings. Figure 1 shows the pre THRIVE trend of expenditure, actual spend and forecast spend for the next three financial years.

2.16 The dashboard below sets out our performance against key indicators. In summary there has been a reduction in the number of referrals, assessments, Child Protection (CP) Plans and care proceedings. More children receiving Early Help services and fewer of these children going on to receive further social work services within 12 months are further positive indicators.

What did we aim to do?	What was performance?	End of THRIVE performance	Percentage Change	Did we do it?
Reduce the number of initial contacts	1,901 per 10,000 children	2,438 per 10,000 children	28%	
Reduce the number of referrals	1,677 per 10,000 children	375 per 10,000 children	78%	
More children receive targeted support from Early Help	5,520	6,592	19%	
Reduce the number of assessments	663 per 10,000 children	257 per 10,000 children	61%	
Reduce the number of Child Protection Plans	65 per 10,000 children	45 per 10,000 children	31%	
Fewer Looked after Children	620	548	12%	

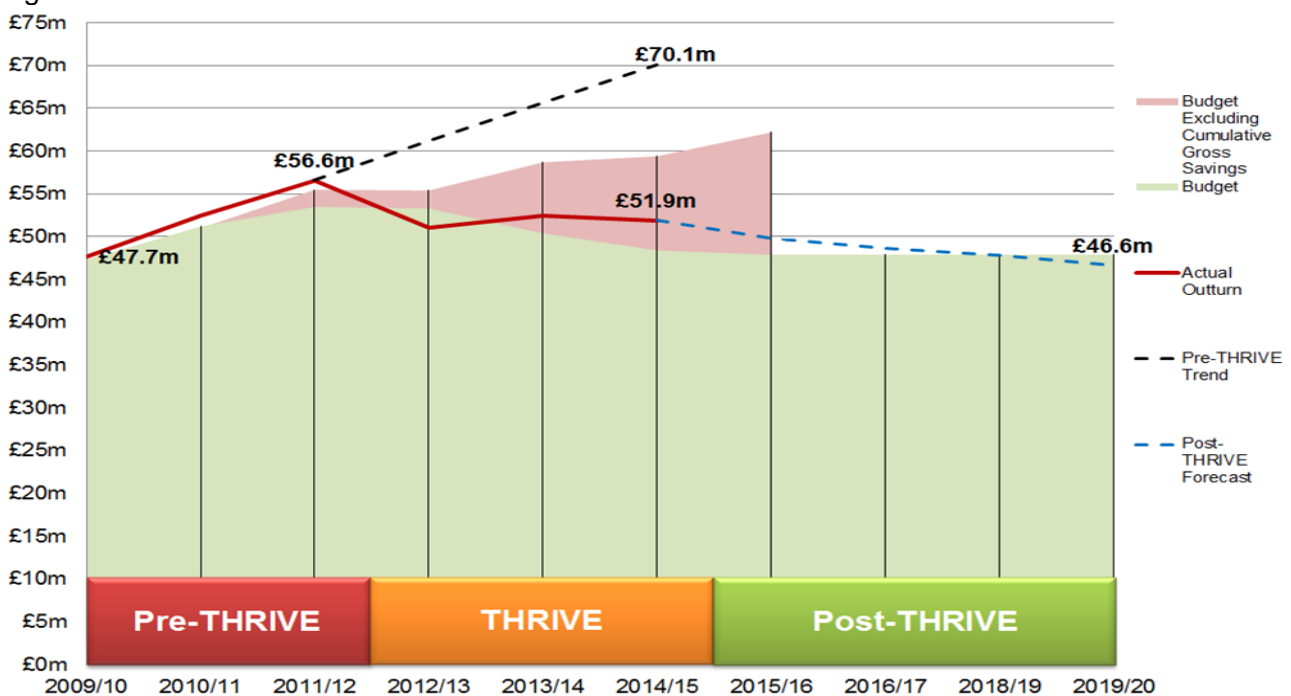
More 'in house' foster carers recruited	23	41	↑ 78%	✓
Reduce use of agencies for supervised contact	21,558	638	↓ 97%	✓
Increase the number of adopters recruited	21	50	↑ 138%	✓

2.17 The number of LAC has reduced to 548 from a high point of 620 at the start of THRIVE. Agency placements are being procured more effectively, for example by targeted negotiation with external providers and children in agency placements are moving to less expensive in house options as circumstances for the young person change. This has been made possible by an increase in the number of in house foster carers, and effective retention. Ongoing costs of LAC placements have also been reduced through extended family options, an increase in the number of adoption placements and continued focus on children moving to adopters in a timely way.

2.18 Within a context of an overall reduction in care proceedings, other savings have been generated by a reduction in the number and cost of supervised contacts, a reduction in the number of parent and baby foster care placements, and a reduction in externally commissioned expert assessments.

2.19 Through a combination of a reduction in demand, savings made and costs avoided we now have a more sustainable service. Key activities will continue and have been mainstreamed. Key investments will continue as business as usual and £1.2m investment from base budget has been approved on the basis of business cases submitted as part of the MTFP. This will continue to make the whole system more sustainable and avoid greater costs. We will continue to monitor relevant areas of performance and to develop financial models still further to help us monitor and forecast demand and costs as accurately as possible. We will also be looking actively for opportunities to trade services and generate income.

Figure 1 Cost of Children's Social Care from 2009/10 to 2019/20



3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 As a multi agency system we will build on our learning from THRIVE to embed what has worked so that we can achieve more with the diminishing resources available.

3.2 Overall it can be concluded that THRIVE has met the three goals set out in the theory of change and has safely and effectively reduced demand and as a result has both generated savings and avoided costs.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None