

Subject: *Think Family Pathfinder*
Date of Meeting: 9 June 2008
REPORT OF: *Director of Children's Services*
Contact Officer: Name: *James Dougan* Tel: 29-5511
E-mail: James.dougan@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 The Board is asked to note this report which provides information on Brighton & Hove's successful bid to be a Family Pathfinder. The bid proposal was submitted by the CYPT and the PCT, with the support of its partners, on 29th February 2008. The Brighton & Hove Pathfinder will receive Government funding of £780,000 over three years (2008-2011). The Family Pathfinder project (to be known as 'Think Family') will support the CYPT in achieving its priorities since it aims to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged families in the city. By addressing the needs of these families in a more co-ordinated way across adult and children's services (including the Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, the Learning Skills Council, Housing Services, the Community Safety Partnership Team, Adult Social Services and Children's Services) the 'Think Family' pathfinder project will contribute to better outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged families in Brighton & Hove, which will benefit them and their communities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) The CYPT Board notes the 'Think Family' Pathfinder project and the commitment to keep the board informed of progress

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The 'Think Family' Pathfinder initiative arose from the cross-Whitehall Families at Risk Review which was launched in March 2007 and led by the Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Unit. 'Families at risk' is a shorthand term for families with multiple and complex problems such as:

- The family lives in poor or overcrowded housing
- No parent has any qualifications
- Mother has mental health problems

- At least one parent has a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity

The family has a low income (below 60% of the median) or cannot afford a number of food and clothing items.

3.2 The review focused on those who already had complex and ongoing problems as well as those who were at risk of developing them. The aim of the review was to improve outcomes for families at risk, and in particular to reduce the impacts of parental problems on children's life chances. The review published an interim analysis report 'Reaching Out: Think Family' in June 2007 which highlighted innovative practice and assessed the effectiveness of existing services and systems. It showed that often, families are not getting the most effective support and that when parents face difficulties in their own lives, the impact for both themselves and for their children can be severe and enduring.

3.3 The review's second report, 'Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk' sets out a 'think family' model for integrated services at a local level which improves the life chances of families at risk and helps to break the cycle of disadvantage. The report also introduced the Family Pathfinder initiative (launched at the beginning of 2008) which would offer local authorities the opportunity to submit a proposal on how they would use the 'think family' model of integrated working at all levels (frontline delivery, processes, strategy and governance) to transform outcomes for families caught in a cycle of low achievement. Family Pathfinders are expected to generate learning about how to 'think family' and provide an evidence base on the effectiveness of the 'think family' model and generate best practice.

3.4 'Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families' announced that £13m over the Comprehensive Spending Review period had been allocated for a Family Pathfinder programme to run from 2008 – 2011, to be led by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to test out ways to provide more effective support to families locked into a cycle of low achievement. The Pathfinders are expected to:

- ensure family-centred services and systems
- support families with effective and co-ordinated services
- equip front-line staff to do their job more effectively
- ensure a focus on vulnerable families across all agencies
- ensure clear accountability for improving outcomes for families

3.5 The CYPT and the PCT submitted a proposal to be a Family Pathfinder on 29th February 2008. In a Cabinet Office press release on 4th May it was announced that Brighton & Hove is one of 15 areas chosen to be a Family Pathfinder and to lead the way in testing and developing a ground-breaking 'Think Family' approach to help their most vulnerable families.

3.6 The CYPT and the PCT worked with the following organisations to produce the proposal, 'Think Family in Brighton & Hove': Adult Social Care, the Sussex

Partnership NHS Trust, the Community Safety Partnership Team, Housing Strategy, Housing Management, the Learning Skills Council, and Working Links. These organisations are the core partners to the 'Think Family' project. It is anticipated that other organisations, for example, from the Community and Voluntary Sector will be involved in the pathfinder too. The project builds on integrated services already in place for children and adult services (e.g. at Children's Centres), multi-agency working (such as the 'Team Around the Child') and initiatives such as the Intensive Family Intervention Project as well as the Parent Support Strategy, the Youth Homelessness Strategy and the Improved Access to Mental Health Therapies initiative.

3.7 Brighton & Hove's pathfinder project will be based in East Brighton where it will focus on embedding a 'Think Family' approach across organisations that work with children and adults and implement changes to structures, processes and service delivery necessary to improve outcomes the families with complex problems. The rationale for the project is that outcomes for children are mediated through processes within the family as well as through the characteristics of the local neighbourhood. Children grow into adults whose outcomes are affected by what they experienced as children. Thereby a cycle of low achievement can occur. Breaking this cycle requires an understanding of the processes by which adult outcomes affect those of their children through processes transmitted through the family (see 'Poor Outcomes for Children' diagram, Appendix 1).

3.8 The project aims to achieve improved outcomes for families by reshaping the resources of the core partners and other organisations, including the Voluntary and Community Sector. The project is about developing and establishing new ways for organisations to work with families. The project will not be setting up new services (which would not be financially sustainable once the pathfinder was over) but will be setting up new processes and structures which will arise from the following:

- The establishment of a multi-agency team working in East Brighton
- The Identification of families suffering from disadvantages
- A thorough assessment of the needs of these families
- The allocation of services to meet the assessed needs
- The use of an assertive engagement model for working with families

3.9 It is estimated that there are approximately 800 families with multiple problems in East Brighton. This is the heaviest concentration of families with multiple problems in the city and is the reason that the area was chosen for the pathfinder project. Each targeted family will be assessed and a Family Plan will be produced which will include a set of relevant outcome measures. The Plan will be the vehicle for the partners to work to a multi-agency model. For each child in the family, outcome measures will relate to the four domains of: physical e.g. child abuse / neglect; cognitive e.g. educational attainment; behavioural e.g. school exclusion; emotional e.g. subjective well-being.

3.10 Other outcome measures that could be in the Family Plan are:

- Reduction in anti social behaviour and hate crime
- Reduction in domestic violence
- Reduction in substance misuse
- Increased parental take-up of learning / training opportunities
- Reduction in the number of young people who are NEET
- Prevention of young people being evicted from the home due to family breakdown
- Reduction in people claiming Incapacity Benefit
- Increased access to mental health services, especially psychological therapies
- Reduction in the caring role for individual young carers

3.11 The DCSF will provide a total of £780,000 to the CYPT for the pathfinder project. This will be allocated as follows; 2008-09 - £180,000, 2009-10 £300,000, 2010-11 - £300,000. From this funding a Project Manager will be employed for the full term of the pathfinder and in the first year part-time secondees from partner organisations will be funded, to form the multi-agency team. No match funding was required for this pathfinder.

3.12 The Project Manager will be responsible for the performance management of the project (see Performance Management of the Pathfinder Project, Appendix 2) which will include reports to the CYPT Board and the Chief Officers Group on outcomes from the project.

3.13 Family Pathfinder sites will be supported by a national implementation team run by the DCSF. Each area will have a nominated contact who will be available to work with them to ensure projects are successfully implemented.

3.14 An independent national evaluation will be conducted to review and examine implementation processes as well as the impact of the pathfinders on the outcomes of families at risk. Each pathfinder is required to work with the evaluation team to establish baseline data and a performance management framework.

3.15 The pathfinders will generate new knowledge about how greater cooperation between adults' and children's services can improve outcomes for families at risk. Mechanisms for sharing this knowledge at a local and national level will be set-up with support from the DCSF which will organise a forum for representatives from the pathfinders to share experiences and feedback into national government policy.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The core partners to the bid (the Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, the LSC, Housing Services, the Community Safety Partnership Team, Adult Social Services, Job Centre Plus and Working Links) were consulted during the development of the bid in February 2008.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

This is a new service initiative and there is not sufficient information as yet to identify the specific financial implications arising from this report. The grant runs for three years from May 2008 and although the report stipulates indicative allocations, I have been unable to confirm these. It is essential that plans are documented to deal with any ongoing financial commitments at the cessation of the grant period.

5.1 Legal Implications:

The report sets out how the CYPT and PCT will implement the 'Think Family' pathfinder status, awarded in May 2008. The initiative is in line with national guidance directed at improving outcomes for vulnerable families and will assist the CYPT in meeting its statutory duties to children. The initiative is also in line with the Public Law Outline which directs local authorities to undertake early assessments to avoid delays in achieving good outcomes for children in need.

5.2 Equalities Implications:

The pathfinder reflects the CYPT's equalities principles and is intended to address the needs of some of the most socially excluded families in Brighton & Hove. It will therefore contribute to the reduction of poor outcomes for these families and will help to narrow the gap between the better off and worse off. The pathfinder will be targeting resources to those families most in need of them and aims to find effective ways, through multi-agency working, to break the cycle of low achievement which is experienced by some families.

5.3 Sustainability Implications:

The pathfinder is aiming to find sustainable solutions to better service delivery for the most disadvantaged families in the city. As the project develops it will only introduce new processes and structures which are sustainable. The Project Steering Group will ensure that sustainability implications are considered whenever services are being redesigned.

5.4 Crime & Disorder Implications:

The pathfinder will be working with some families whose members are offending or involved in anti-social behaviour. The pathfinder will be supporting and reinforcing work in the city to reduce youth crime, anti-social behaviour and offending.

5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

A risk assessment of the pathfinder project was included in the bid. Once a Project Manager is in post a Risk Log will be produced and will be monitored along with the Project Plan by the Project Steering Group, which will use this process to manage the project risks.

5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The pathfinder aims to greatly improve multi-agency working in the city and between directorates of the council. It will provide additional resources which will be used to find sustainable and effective ways to co-ordinate service delivery for the most disadvantaged families in the city. It aims to have a long term impact on outcomes for children and their families.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix 1 – The Drivers of Poor Outcomes for Children
2. Appendix 2 – Performance management of the pathfinder project.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. **None**

Background Documents

1. Think Family in Brighton & Hove – Our proposal
2. Think Family in Brighton & Hove – Our capability
3. Think Family in Brighton & Hove – Local Area Profile
4. Extended family pathfinder for young carers in Brighton & Hove