

Health and Wellbeing Board

11 September 2024

Children and Young People Partnership

Recommendations

That the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB):

1. Notes and comments on the update provided by the Children and Young People Partnership on activity related to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA);
2. Comments on and endorses the proposed Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan; and
3. Notes and comments on the outcome of the universal free school meal (FSM) feasibility study and school pilot evaluation.

1. Executive Summary.

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of activity that has taken place over the last six months under the banner of the Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP). It contains updates on the:
- Published children and young people Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) and progress against the recommendations.
 - Development of the Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan (EYIDP), which is being led by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Education.
 - Outcome of the universal free school meal (UFSM) feasibility study and associated pilot of UFSM in a Warwickshire North Place primary school.

Children and Young People JSNA update

- 1.2 Between 2022 and 2024 three JSNAs have been published on the theme of children and young people: Children's 0-5 (2022); Mental Health and Wellbeing of Infants, Children and Young People (2023); and most recently Empowering Futures (2024) on the physical health of children and young people. The JSNAs have increased our understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people who live in Warwickshire. They have informed commissioning decisions and programmes of work led by HWBB partners.

- 1.3 The HWBB Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) provides oversight of the delivery of children and young people JSNA recommendations. Since the last update to HWBB, the following items and updates have been discussed at the CYPP.

Children 0-5 JSNA

- 1.4 In response to this JSNA, WCC Education are leading on the development of the Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan (EYIDP):
- Membership of the EYIDP working group includes the Council's education, early help and public health services and NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB), Children's transformation and Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) leads.
 - The key purpose of the EYIDP is to develop a co-ordinated and consistent approach that is responsive to recommendations as detailed in the HWBB Strategy 2021-26 priority of Best Start in Life, and in response to the 0-5 JSNA (January 2023) and the Early Years Remote Peer Challenge Review (March 2023). It also supports the delivery of the Three-Year Maternity and Neonatal Plan (2023-2025) and the Healthy Child Programme.
 - Initial discussions of the working group identified interdependencies across strategy and policy relating to early years services such as the Education Strategy 2024-2029, Creating Opportunities, SEND Partnership Board, Child Friendly Warwickshire and Children's Core 20 Plus 5.
 - The EYIDP aims to provide assurance to Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) Board that the EYIDP is being monitored effectively and any risks influencing delivery are escalated accordingly.
 - The EYIDP working group will be chaired by the Head of Early Years and Schools Effectiveness. Updates will be provided to Children and Young People Partnership, and formal updates will be provided for the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.
 - The EYIDP has been shared and approved with the Children and Young People Partnership Board, and shared with the Children's Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team in Education and the Warwickshire Education Partnership Board.
 - Six main areas of focus have been identified and actions within this support an increasingly collaborative approach toward achievement of outcomes:
 - **Early Years SEND and inclusion:** secure early identification and support for children with special educational/development needs

- **Early Years Places and Sufficiency:** Universal support for all providers and targeted support for settings that are inadequate, requires improvement or in exceptional circumstances.
- **School Readiness:** Universal support from integrated partners identifies a shared vision and clear pathways.
- **EYFS Workforce Development:** Improve resilience, training, knowledge, and confidence for practitioners to deliver high quality services.
- **Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children:** Identifying integrated approaches and service offers to maximise outcomes for children.
- **EYFS Parents and Carers:** Ensure that advice, support and guidance for parents is easily accessible.

- 1.5 As reported in the last CYPP update to HWBB in January 2023, improvements have been made to the delivery of the health visiting service. Guided by the recommendations within the 0-5 JSNA to deliver targeted support to those who experience greater inequalities, the service expanded its workforce within the north of the county, created a specialist health visitor role to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and provides targeted support to Asylum Seeker and Refugee families. The health visiting service continues to report into the CYPP on a routine basis.
- 1.6 The development and launch of the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) for children and young people was also driven by the recommendations within the 0-5 JSNA. The training programme supports professionals who come into contact with children and young people to deliver small interventions related to the wider determinants of health and health improvement. The aim is for children and young people MECC to be embedded across HWBB partners' workforce, providing a point for early intervention and working to prevent the need for further access to healthcare services. Reporting at the April CYPP highlighted that uptake is good across Warwickshire and further opportunities to roll out the training to health professionals was identified within the meeting.

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Infants, Children and Young People JSNA

- 1.7 During April CYPP, there was a focus on progress made against some of the recommendations within this JSNA. These included the identified gap in support for young people aged 16-25 and the need for increased support for those at risk of self-harm.
- 1.8 With respect to support for young people, the CYPP welcomed presentations from CW Mind on the Peer Mentor Service, which is in year 1 of its delivery. The service is a low-level intervention, open to anyone aged 18-25. Referral can be through a professional or via self-referral. Peer support for young people who are transitioning from Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHs) to Adult Mental Health services (AMHs) forms part of the Peer Mentor service, however some of the service users aren't known to other services. It was noted that support for those aged 16 remains a gap. The service operates across a range of settings, including within schools across Coventry and Warwickshire. An engagement lead aligned to the Service

worked to develop a list of schools to work with, in order to target support at those with greater need.

- 1.9 In respect of support for those at risk of self-harm, an update was provided by the Coventry and Warwickshire Self-harm Working Group outlining the Group's initial focus on self-harm in children and young people, with a specific focus on teenage females. A self-harm policy for schools has also been developed and is being disseminated, alongside a services and resources guide for practitioners that will be uploaded to public webpages once approved. Further updates from the Group are expected in 2025.

Empowering Futures JSNA

- 1.10 This JSNA was published following HWBB endorsement in May 2024. The interactive dashboard is a new approach to JSNA and will be kept live. The CYPP endorsed the approach for a working group to deliver on the actions within the Empowering Futures JSNA. Further progress on this will be outlined in future updates.

Universal free school meal (UFSM) feasibility study

- 1.11 The Director of Public Health Annual Report (2022) explored the topic of health and the rising cost of living and made the following recommendation:
'I recommend that to support children to have the best start in life, Health and Wellbeing Board explores the feasibility of free school meals for all primary school children in Warwickshire, as research shows that children are able to learn better in school if they have a full stomach.'
- 1.12 Since the publication of the report, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Public Health officers have worked to establish the feasibility of delivering Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to all primary school aged children within Warwickshire. The key activities completed as part of this work, along with their findings, are summarised below.
- 1.13 A literature review was completed, exploring the current provision, benefits, challenges, learning from others and key considerations associated with the feasibility of implementing UFSM. This concluded that the delivery of UFSM for all primary school-aged children could be feasible but requires substantial financing and careful planning. In addition to finances, there are several logistical challenges and considerations associated including expansion of kitchen and dining space, and increased demands on kitchen staff.
- 1.14 For the year 2023/24, across Warwickshire, 10, 418 (21.8%) of state funded primary school age children were recorded as eligible for, and claiming, free school meals (Department for Education, 2024). WCC do not hold full data on those children who may be eligible but are not claiming UFSM as this data is held by other public sector bodies at a national and local level.
- 1.15 Initial cost estimates using available data provide an indication of the total cost to provide UFSM to all pupils within Warwickshire. Utilising the central

government funding (£2.53 per meal) and the estimated 37,362 state funded primary school pupils not eligible for FSM (2023/24) the estimated cost for the academic year 2023/24 to fund UFSM would have been £18.433m.

- 1.16 In February 2024, Michael Drayton Junior (MDJ) school in Hartshill, North Warwickshire, launched a pilot to offer free school meals for every child at their school, regardless of means-tested eligibility. The primary funding stream was a £24,000 grant, following a successful bid made to the Tackling Social Inequalities Fund. During the period of February 2024-June 2024, an independent qualitative evaluation was led by a qualified nutritionist supported by WCC Public Health. The evaluation identified a number of positive outcomes including significant (31%) reduction in late attendance to school during the pilot, notable behaviour improvements during school time, reductions in the social stigma associated with FSM and reduced financial pressure on parents and carers. MDJ have continued working hard to identify further funding, and, at the time of writing, can continue to offer UFSM until October (2024) half term.
- 1.17 The pilot also identified significant challenges and resource pressures at school level to in delivering the pilot, in terms of both time, resource, and financial investment. There are a number of practical issues such as bringing catering in-house and facilitating the meals, and ensuring that menus meet (or exceed) national policy standards within a challenging financial envelope.
- 1.18 The conclusion drawn from the review and pilot is that it is not feasible as a County Council to provide UFSM to all primary school aged pupils at the present time. However, significant insight and learning has been revealed by the pilot that can be shared to support Warwickshire schools who wish to independently consider pursuing a UFSM approach subject to appropriate legal and financial advice

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The work described in this report has been completed within existing resources. The potential cost implications of the USFM proposal were considered during the feasibility work and are covered in the body of the report.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 At the recent August CYPP it was agreed that the sub-structure of the CYPP would change and that working groups will drive delivery of the HWBB CYPP agenda. These working groups will feed into the CYPP, enabling the latter to

focus on the provision of oversight, whilst ensuring there is a separate space for operational and delivery focused discussion to take place. As such, future updates provided to HWBB will be aligned to these working groups.

- 4.2 It was agreed at the May 2024 HWBB that renewed focus would be given to the HWBB priority of helping children and young people to have the best start in life. As such, a HWBB Development Session is planned for the 20th November and will be led by the CYPP.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 - Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Councillors Barker, Drew, Holland, Rolfe.