

## **Me & My Learning/Sure Start Integration**

### **Introduction**

Since April 2015 Leicestershire County Council has been running the Melton Sure Start Programme that is now structured in a different way than previously. Melton Borough Council's management team agreed to look at options as to how some of the more important services to the families and users of Sure Start could be maintained for a period of time to enable the Community to do more for themselves.

Some temporary measures have been put in place but it is clear that many of the interventions and one to one work dealing with people's social and financial issues will not be picked up by the new programme. The new LCC model focuses on 0-2 year olds and a pathway focused on the children themselves and parenting. This of course will continue to be valuable but won't in itself achieve independent living in the future.

It has become apparent that the families who are being worked with will benefit more from access to Me & My Learning services and this approach will best support the Council's aim to ensure that our vulnerable residents and families are supported but moved to social, financial and digital independence. These families are mainly our tenants and all council tax payers.

Learning suggests that monies should be used to support these families to move from Sure Start Services into Me & My Learning and ultimately learning or employment. Monies identified in 2014/15 and available from 2015/16 would be best focused in this area.

### **Supporting Families Move to Me & My Learning**

Consultation has taken place with families and Family Voices as to what services are valued but is best at helping the Council engage with them to encourage more people to think about making the step to addressing more of their wider family issues and move closer to employment. There was also a consideration made to ensure a transition took place in a number of services so families are not just 'dropped'.

### **Mental Health/Counselling**

Two areas of work support families which involve engaging mothers with low mental health issues or low self-esteem.

Parent Counselling – Continuation for this low level emotional health service is proposed for 2015/16 with it ceasing on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and no more referrals being taken from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to allow the service to naturally dissolve and give time for services to refer new cases into new mainstream services that are being established via health and the Sure Start Programme.

Arts & Culture – Families use these services as a way to start engaging and communicating with other services and the Council following issues such as post-natal depression and low level mental health issues. Families when consulted saw this area as being very important and we are now using it to move mothers into Me & My Learning. The proposal is to fund this for 2 years until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and during this period we will work with family voices to gain external funding.

### Engagement

The Family Voices Group has been established for a number of years and is starting to be able to work towards being more independent. It is proposed that a small amount of bridging money (£1000) is allocated to give the group time to fundraise themselves. They will need small amounts of money due to the group mainly being a consultative body but also able to develop new ideas, projects and be a critical friend to Me & My Learning.

Family voices will be moving into Fairmead Children's Centre from September 2015 to help deliver signposting services.

### Polish Community

The Polish Community in Melton is our largest ethnic group of residents but can be hard to engage and as many are shift workers in low paid/low skilled employment and some have a poor grasp of English. It is key that we maintain contact with this group within our community and it is proposed we continue the Polish Support Group for two years and start to merge it closer to Me & My Learning.

### **Integrating Community Development with Me & My Learning**

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 we have been targeting 1038 people who are in receipt of Council Tax Support. We have found that over 700 are our Council Tenants and a similar amount live in our priority neighbourhood areas. We need to be more robust at engaging these people and getting them to move towards addressing the issues they present. Over 250 children aged 0-5 years live within this cohort group.

In order for us to continue with this focus on targeting via the Me & My Learning service it is proposed that we use the funding set aside for a targeted outreach officer trainee position to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. We will be engaging with families and ensure they enter our services to start addressing their problems and issues. This should be done over the next 18 months with a review taking place as to its impact. For example we know that over 70 families on the Fairmead Estate are in workless households but very few have engaged with us.

All of this work will be co-ordinated with existing resources and the new Local Area Co-ordination team to ensure there is no duplication.

### **Council Advice/Signposting/Guidance**

Since we have started to trial reduced CSC services at the Centre's we have found that many vulnerable groups and people do require signposting and guidance. In consultation with the community and families it was suggested we should try and maintain some presence and also try and get community groups to start using the buildings and signposting people themselves.

Discussions have taken place with the Vineyard in relation to the Cove, Family Voices in relation to Fairmead and Shout for Residents in relation to the Edge.

We will build this up over the next 12 months but recognise we need to build in some resilience over this period of time into Customer Services and therefore propose we employ an apprentice over the next twelve months to assist with their demand and rota's.

This approach has been agreed with the Customer Services Manager (SJO).

#### **Costs**

<b>Service/Staff</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Parent Counselling	4,500	0
Mental Health Cultural Support	15,500	15,500
Family Voices	1,000	0
Polish Community Support	4,000	4,000
MML Targeted Outreach Officer (Band 5) Fixed Term - Trainee	11,500	23,000
Apprentices x 1 (CSC)	4,000	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,500</b>	<b>46,500</b>

The total cost for both financial years will be £87,000 which is within the budget of £89,000 that has been set aside for this work.