

Journey to Excellence: *thriving children – strong families*

Dear Chair of Governors & Head Teacher,

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding this key programme led by Children's Specialist Services. This briefing follows previous information posted on Notepad and BSO and presentations across key Boards and partnerships, for example, the Children's Trust Board, Behaviour & Attendance Collaborative Meetings and Designated Teacher Networks.

Journey to Excellence supports the wider local priorities to improve children's health and education outcomes and increase employment and skills. The programme will reinforce good school attendance and achievement throughout.

The programme will:

- Ensure a shared approach to working with families to agree plans for their children's safety building on families' own strengths and networks (the Signs of Safety approach)
- Positively manage the reducing resources and increasing demands on specialist services, for example, more children with complex health or disabilities, Missing & child sexual exploitation, children on child protection plans and looked after children cared for outside of the district
- Deliver a clearer Early Help offer to the public and professionals
- Provide excellent care when children do need to be looked after
- Increase the social inclusion of children and young people with disabilities across the district

Signs of Safety

Research indicates that the best outcomes for children arise when there are constructive working relationships between professionals themselves and between professionals and family members.

Signs of Safety will provide a consistent way of working that all practitioners can use in their work with children and families. From Early Help through to how we manage child protection plans, Signs of Safety will bring about more consistency in our work together.

The framework can be readily adapted to map or think through any issue, to focus on a different goal than safety such as *parental support to learning, behaviour and attendance*.

Signs of Safety always puts a child's safety first. The approach supports more direct work with children and families. It draws on a family's strengths and natural networks of support. Families lead the plans and practitioners support them to keep their children safe and well.

The model grew out of what practitioners and families reported to be effective. It leads to plans with families that include a robust analysis of strengths and risks. Plans will include specific actions that families must take. The emerging research highlights that family members say they are clear about what is expected from them. Families report that they feel their views and strengths have been acknowledged as well as their weaknesses understood.

Signs of Safety is now used in many countries around the world. Longitudinal studies in Australia and America are consistent in demonstrating the positive impact of this approach. Over 30 local authorities in England are using the approach. Prof Eileen Munro is leading an Innovation Project with 10 local authorities implementing this approach. The approach is being used in Wakefield, Calderdale, North Yorkshire and Doncaster.

At its simplest, the Signs of Safety approach asks three key questions:

- What are we worried about?
- What is working well?
- What do we need to do to increase child safety

So, through Journey to Excellence we will:

- **Implement Signs of Safety across the district (and safely reduce the numbers of children on child protection plans, those looked after and contacts to children's social care)**

Training will start from the end of April throughout 2016. The first block of training between April to July will focus on the Early Help pathfinder areas (Better Start and Keighley areas) and child protection.

We recommend that the person in your school who is best positioned to cascade learning attends the 2-day training. If it is not possible to release this person for 2 days then the 1-day course is recommended.

Please note that you will need to decide to attend either the 1 day or the 2 day course as we are not able to offer a place for each school on both.

Below is the date for the first block of training (further dates will be released as we complete the full training programme throughout 2016):

TWO DAY COURSE

25th & 26th April 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

27th & 28th April 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

4th & 5th May 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

16th & 17th May 2016 @ Keighley Victoria Hall, Victoria Park, Hard Ings Road, Keighley, BD21 3JN

18th & 19th May 2016 @ Venue to be confirmed

6th & 7th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

8th & 9th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

13th & 14th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

15th & 16th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

27th & 28th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

29th & 30th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

18th & 19th July 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

20th & 21st July 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

ONE DAY COURSE

29th April 2016 @ St Peter's House, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

20th May 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

10th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

17th June 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

22nd July 2016 @ Kala Sangam, 1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY

To book on one of the above courses please email

Barbara.cowling@bradford.gov.uk with the name and post title of the person you wish to attend and your first and second preferences for dates.

We will also run further 1.5 hour Information Sessions which members of Governing Bodies and/or School Leadership Teams may wish to attend.

- **Provide a new single Early Help Gateway for advice & support and a route into family support (delivered as close as possible to where families live).**

Pathfinders will run in Keighley and the Better Start (BD3, 4 & 5) areas between April to October. We plan for a district-wide roll out from October 2016.

- **Provide smaller children's home**

Plans are underway to reduce to no more than five children in each home. This will improve the quality of care for looked after children in our children's homes.

- **Develop a new integrated model of care for looked after children across care, education & health (and reduce the numbers of looked after children cared for outside of Bradford district)**

We are working on a model for a dedicated CAMHS team for looked after children and adoption. This will also focus on young people in the criminal justice system. We are working with the Virtual School for Looked After children to strengthen pathways for looked after children with significant attendance and/or behaviour difficulties. We will develop a training programme to increase understanding of the impact of trauma and attachment for looked after children.

- **Recruit more foster carers for teenagers**

You will see more marketing over coming weeks and months as we seek to recruit more foster carers for teenagers. A number of these will be specifically trained and supported to look after teenagers with more complex needs.

- **Provide a new transitions service lead by Adult's Social Care for young people with complex health or disabilities from aged 14 plus (earlier transition plans and better prepare young people for adulthood)**

Key teams are already co-located at Margaret Macmillan Towers. Recruitment to the manager of this new service is underway and the team will become operational as soon as possible and by autumn at the latest.

- **Promote more use of Personal Budgets so children and young people with complex health or disabilities and their families purchase and arrange services themselves. This will provide more choice and control**

A report will be considered at Executive on the 12 April 2016. Once the framework is agreed we intend to launch the framework in July 2016.

- **Develop a model to provide an all ages rapid response for people in crisis**

We are working with key partners to develop a local model for an 'all-ages' crisis response hub. This will ensure we provide timely support to young people in crisis. Partnership work across key services to adults have made significant achievement in this area and we want to build upon these for children and young people.

Michael Jameson

Strategic Director – Services to Children & Young People

For more information go to:

<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Schools/CMSPage.aspx?mid=3395>

or email Journeytoexcellence@bradford.gov.uk