Joint Commissioning and SEND Reforms

What was the issue?

To commission services effectively there should be a strategic approach to planning services based on identified local needs. Whilst Middlesbrough has worked with health and Teesside authorities on specific commissioning activity joint commissioning isn’t embedded. Middlesbrough is currently working to identify all key sources of information, ensure data collection and reporting mechanisms meet the needs of services and inform demand forecasting and build this into a refreshed JSNA, this and our the Children’s and Young Peoples Plan, Children’s Sufficiency Statement and Vision and Strategy for Vulnerable Learners will inform future commissioning activity. The aim is to embed joint commissioning, where appropriate, across all areas.

Our journey so far…

We have good working relationships with colleagues across Health, Social Care, Public Health, Supporting Communities and the Voluntary sector and are building on these. Middlesbrough council have recently reviewed and restructured their commissioning team creating a prevention team which covers commissioning of outcome areas for Learning and Skills, Supporting Communities, Public Health and Voluntary sector development and liaison. There is now a dedicated commissioner for learning and Skills, which covers commissioning around the SEND reforms; however the team covers all areas of early help and prevention ensuring that we join the dots across service areas to deliver efficient and effective services. There is also a dedicated commissioning officer from South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group who will be working with local authority commissioning officers to ensure effective joint commissioning.

What are we doing?

- Parents 4 Change are a group of parents, grandparents and carers of children with disabilities funded to support the development of ways to include families in influencing change in children’s disability services.

- We have a training programme for young inspectors for youth services, we are looking to extend and develop this to involve young people in evaluation more children’s and young people’s services.

- We have worked to regionally commission residential schools across 12 local authorities.

- We have a contracts monitoring team which carry out systematic reviews of
commissioned services in conjunction with operational staff.

- We have a Teesside commissioning group which looks at opportunities to commission jointly to deliver efficiencies.
- We jointly commission elements of our Speech and language Therapy services with the CCG.
- We work with the CCG and other local authorities on commissioning and delivery of CAMHS service.
- We are developing our market position statements to inform providers and enable effective market development.
- We are using BCF and CAMHS transformation funding to increase support to the voluntary sector to enable it to provide low level support to families and young people.
- We have involved young carers in the commissioning of our young carers support service.
- The South Tees Children’s Joint Commissioning Manager chairs the regional ASD Pathway steering group which is made up of members of Health and Local Authority
- The CCG has a 16/17 commissioning intention to review the ASD Pathway, as part of this review a RPIW will be undertaken with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the resources available meet the current level of demand.

**What difference has it made?**

- The restructuring of the commissioning team with a dedicated commissioner for the Learning and Skills service area has enabled more effective commissioning and the development of links with health and other local authorities to ensure effective and efficient commissioning.
- There is greater understanding of roles and responsibilities including the whole commissioning process.
- There are a wider range of options available to children with SEND.
- Joint commissioning is enabling more effective use of resources.
Areas for further action

We need to consider how personal budgets (both health and social care) impact on the commissioning of services.

We are developing our social value policy and including in all new tenders to encourage the support of young people with SEND into employment.

To work across all commissioning areas to ensure that the needs of children and young people with SEND are reflected in all relevant specifications.

Ensure we “join the dots” across service areas to commission cohesively and cost effectively.

Next steps

Formalise joint commissioning arrangements.

Ensure that the development of the revised JSNA reflects SEND.

Work closely with the SEN team to identify gaps in support and provision and commission appropriately to fill these.

Work with colleagues in health and social care to review funding in EHC plans.