

Telford and Wrekin - Lakeside South

Children and Family Locality Services, 103 South Gate, Sutton Hill, Telford, TF7 4HG

Inspection date 22–24 October 2013

| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
| Access to services by young children and families | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| The quality of practice and services | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for children and families

This children's centre group requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough parents from the group's identified target groups are accessing its services.
- The group is not having enough impact on improving the performance of children in the area in their Early Years Foundation Stage. Not enough of the Early Years providers in the reach area are good.
- Its programmes have not yet sufficiently reduced health inequalities in the reach area.
- Managers do not make sufficient use of monitoring and evaluation to improve the quality of the services.
- The group does not make good enough use of all the available data to set targets for its staff or to measure how well the group is doing.

This children's centre group has the following strengths:

- Leaders carefully identify key target groups based on a new accurate and critical analysis of core demographic information at both group and individual centre level.
- The allocation of families to the most appropriate agency or partner organisation for support through Family Connect and the triage system is prompt and effective.
- The allocation of lead partner to support a family with particular needs is clear. Effective communication then allows partners to offer their additional support to the lead agency supporting a family.
- Working within a nought to 19 approach eliminates loss of engagement by families needing support as their children move from one stage to another and facilitates support for siblings when required.
- Governance from both the local authority and the group's advisory board is strong.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Dawley Sure Start children's Centre, Sutton Hill Children's Centre, Woodside Children's Centre and Windmill (formerly Brookside) Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority, the senior leadership team, the advisory board and the stakeholders' board, and with the group manager, local leaders and senior practitioners of early years provision across the sector, local authority data officers, midwives, health visitors, outreach workers and volunteers. They also spoke to parents and looked at the outcomes of evaluation and satisfaction surveys.

The inspectors visited each of the group's four children's centres, the local authority's 'Family Connect' triage centre, local childcare settings and a variety of community venues.

They observed the centre's work, including home visits, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They carried out one joint observation with the centre group manager, who also attended all team meetings.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cliff Rose, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Deborah Udakis, team inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Joanne Smith, team inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Megan Dauksta, team inspector | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about the group

The Lakeside South Children's Centre Group consists of four children's centres located in the Southern part of the Telford and Wrekin local authority area. The group manager is based at the Sutton Hill centre. She is supported by three team leaders; two early intervention team leaders, one covering the Sutton Hill and Windmill centres and one covering the Woodside and Dawley centres; and one team leader responsible for early years activity across the whole group. The area contains three priority wards and some of the most deprived estates in Telford and England. All of the core services are managed and led by Telford and Wrekin Council. The centres are managed by one common leadership team and a common advisory board. In addition to the advisory board, there is a locality stakeholder group, which meets before the advisory board. It comprises a combination of parent representatives, multi-agency partners and community members concerned with children aged nought to 19 living in the locality. The centres offer a range of services to meet their core purpose, including family support, adult learning and health services.

The Lakeside team is based at Sutton Hill Children's Centre and provides daily outreach and activities to Windmill Sure Start Children Centre. The South and Early Years/Play team is based at Woodside Children and Family Centre and activities are also delivered from the Dawley Children's Centre. Each team delivers programmes in a variety of other community venues.

The Sutton Hill centre houses a midwifery scanning clinic. Windmill (Brookside) Sure Start Children Centre moved to a new purpose-built facility on the Windmill Primary School site in 2011. Windmill and Dawley centres are both phase 2 centres. Sutton Hill and Woodside centres are both part of former Wave 6 Sure Start Local Programmes.

All centres are used for targeted rolling evidence-based programmes such as Incredible Years (Webster Stratton), HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young) and Freedom Program (Domestic Abuse).

Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare is provided by the Chipmunks, Stepping Stones, Strawberry Hill and Woodentops nurseries, which are inspected separately. There are 29 childminders in the area, one of which has been graded as outstanding and 18 as good.

The population for children aged nought to five in the group combined reach area is 3,840. The percentage of residents from black or minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than that for Telford and West Midlands.

The Lakeside South Hub has the highest percentage in the local authority area of children, as a weighted population, who live in poverty as identified through the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). The area covers three priority wards, and some areas of the Radburn estates are classified in the top 10% most deprived in England. Almost 60% of children live in the top 30% most deprived areas, with Sutton Hill and Woodside Sure Start children centres significantly disadvantaged at 77% and 86%.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Raise its profile in the local community through concerted and consistent promotion of its services, particularly among its identified target groups and by partners and volunteers.
- Improve children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage by working with partners to improve the quality of the provision and ensuring that parents only use good-quality providers.
- Reduce health inequalities in the target groups by working more effectively with health partners.
- Improve the impact of evaluation and monitoring by improving tracking and making better use of individual evaluation in order to evaluate and improve the overall quality of programmes on offer in the service.
- Make better use of all available data to inform management decision making and further improve the service.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Too many families report that they are not informed or aware of the wide range of services and activities available within the locality.
- The large majority (56%) of those families identified as being in greatest need are not accessing services via the centres.
- Leaders do not make effective use of all available information to show accurately the levels of engagement with families living in the area.
- Signage at The Lighthouse (Dawley) centre, Sutton Hill centre and Brookside centre is poor and the venues are difficult to find, even for families living in the area.
- Too many children are accessing early childhood settings that are not yet good.
- Leaders carefully identify key target groups based on an accurate and critical analysis of core demographic information for the reach area of each of the centres in the group and the group as a whole.
- New systems to provide early intervention and support to families in times of need are proving essential in Woodside and Sutton Hill areas. Families, who find themselves in complex and chaotic and at times dangerous situations, receive prompt attention at the centres.
- Partnerships with key agencies and organisations are used effectively to provide early interventions and support to families in time of need. For instance; the Citizens' Advice Bureau has made a significant contribution to the reduction of family debt and to help maximise household income for several families in the locality. This is an essential service in this area where loan sharking is prevalent.
- Free crèche facilities are a valuable and much appreciated service that enables parents to attend training courses such as parenting programmes and personal development programmes. This is supporting parents to recognise their strengths and weaknesses as parents and to improve family relationships.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- A broad range of services and activities that appear to meet the needs of families in the reach area are delivered across the locality. However, there is no clear picture of the quality of all of the services or of the long-term impact accessing services is having on health outcomes or on children's learning and development.
- Evaluation and planning of group sessions are not completed consistently. Staff do not always use the prompts provided to track what they have delivered against the centre's expectation, for example the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning or engagement with target families. Links to these expectations are retrospective rather than being used to ensure adequate coverage.

Evaluations are not used well enough to monitor the quality and impact of what they are providing and are instead stored as a record of what has been done.

- There is very limited tracking of families' progress in general from attendance at groups. Long-term tracking is not routinely completed unless it is an integral aspect of the programme being delivered, for example HENRY.
- Activities and services are not adequately monitored. For example, the crèche provision does not have an overview of expectations of the crèche or how many children are attending and does not take the opportunity to track children's progress.
- Early Years Foundation Stage scores are well below national average. Unvalidated data on Early Years Foundation Stage scores received during the inspection, although calculated in a different way to previous years, indicate that the gap between the locality and national average scores is not closing fast enough.
- Health outcomes are still poor. There is no evidence of improvement over time. Partners attempting to deal with the poor health outcomes have adopted a least harm approach; for example mothers of young children who cannot stop smoking are provided with nicotine patches and as so few new mothers start breast feeding they receive advice on infant feeding. However this approach does not impact sufficiently on the health inequality data.
- Opportunities to use volunteers and for parents to volunteer are not exploited. A large majority of families are not accessing services to promote improvement in their lives.
- Families who receive one-to-one support packages or who attend courses demonstrate that they make good progress and that very positive changes are made to their lives. Good use is made of the Citizens' Advice Bureau financial advice service helping families to access benefits and manage debts. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the services and resources available to support families in crisis and have successfully supported families to obtain essential items such as washing machines and cots through funds such as the Frank Buttle Trust and local food banks.
- Parents are consulted about the centre's work through activity and course evaluation and this is used to make changes to programmes and service delivery.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The midwifery scanning service sees a large volume of prospective parents at the Sutton Hill centre. Managers do not make enough use of services such as this, which are delivered by partners as opportunities to increase the registration of families and promote children's centre services, especially to those expecting their first child.
- The local authority, the advisory board and the group senior leaders have made considerable progress in establishing the group as one of three within Telford and Wrekin and in producing new sets of data earlier this year to be used as a baseline and for the setting of incremental targets to lift the provision from its previous very low levels. However although progress has been made, the number of families from target groups accessing the service is still too low and managers do not make sufficient use of all the available data to set targets for staff or measure all the work that the group is doing.
- Senior managers at the local authority and the advisory board monitor the performance of each centre and the group regularly. They and the group senior leaders recognise that the group's performance requires improvement. Self-evaluation is self-critical and largely accurate, however managers do not make sufficient use of monitoring and evaluation to drive continuous improvement in the services offered.
- Governance is strong. The group opted for a single advisory board for all four centres. The board provides strong support and appropriate challenge to the group over and above that provided by the local authority. The board identified appropriate prioritised targets for both the group and the individual centres within it as soon as accurate locality demographic data became available.
- Staff and other resources are deployed effectively within the group to best meet the needs of young children and families. The group is in the process of introducing parent-led groups wherever possible to free up employed staff to be used to best effect, although this is in the early stages.

Cross-training staff dealing with children from nought to 19 has introduced greater flexibility as children grow older or when supporting families with children with a range of ages and means that these families can continue to engage through the same known members of staff.

- Children most at risk are safeguarded because of close working between centre staff and social work colleagues. The local authority's Family Connect triage system ensures that the most appropriate agency takes the lead in all cases and that meetings and secure computerised records ensure other partners and agencies are aware of other agencies' involvement and can offer additional relevant support. Staff have received appropriate training in case recording, including the use of the Common Assessment Framework process. Those experiencing domestic violence and abuse are well supported.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------------|----------------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing. |
| Grade 2 | Good | Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children’s wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services. |

Children's Centre Group details

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique reference number | 80095 |
| Local authority | Telford and Wrekin |
| Inspection number | 424859 |
| Managed by | The local authority |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Approximate number of children under five in the reach area | 3840 |
| Centre leader | Christine Murray |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected as a group |
| Telephone number | 01952 385465 |
| Email address | christine.murray@telford.gov.uk |

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- URN: 23619 Windmill (Brookside) Sure Start Children's Centre
- URN: 20926 Dawley Children's Centre
- URN: 23082 Sutton Hill Children's Centre
- URN: 23671 Woodside Children's Centre

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