

Budget Strategy for Children's Services

Summary

	Budget 2011/12 £'000	Propose d Budget 2012/13 £'000	% change	Indicati ve Budget 2013/14 £'000	% chang e
Commissioner - Children's Youth & Families	17,333	18,721	+8.0	17,518*	-6.4
Commissioner - Learning & Partnership	6,438	5,512	-14.4	5,488*	-0.4
Delivery Unit - Children's & Families	38,937	38,078	-2.2	37,727*	-0.9
Total Children's Services	62,708	62,311	-0.6	60,733*	-2.5

* Indicative budget is shown before any allocation from corporate service pressure funding in 2013/14 for demographic change and other pressures.

Strategic Financial Context

- Numbers of looked after children drive spend on placements and on social workers, benchmarking shows that our numbers are high in Brighton & Hove
- Through our Section 75 agreements with health, and our close partnership with schools, community safety and the Police we deliver a joined up front line service for children and families targeting those most in need
- Our Value for Money programme is driving an early intervention strategy enabling families in need to care for their children, especially when they have multiple problems. Effective early intervention should reduce the numbers of children in need and those that become looked after, leading to better outcomes for children and reduced spend while ensuring we meet our child protection duties
- When we do have to take children into care we are working to ensure placements are cost effective, taking into account the needs of the child for the long term

- There has been a significant reduction in specific grant funding from central government available for children's services and our provision needs respond to this, targeting our resources at those most in need
- There are fundamental changes being driven at a national level to the role of councils as Local Education Authorities and funding is being transferred from the maintained sector into Academies and Free Schools
- The Children's Commissioning and Delivery Units work collaboratively to improve the efficiency and impact of our integrated services including provision for disabled children, teenagers at risk and re-shaping services such as Health Visiting, and Youth Work

Key Changes arising from this Budget Strategy

In 2012/13

- There will be less council subsidy for early years provision in private sector nurseries, advice for childcare providers and families will be more targeted
- We will start consulting on some changes to our provision from some of our children's centres
- The council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group will re-shape Health Visiting and other community health services
- We will retain an educational welfare service but one which focuses only on statutory compliance
- We have already restructured our Schools, Skills and Learning Service and there are significant savings as a result of this, but this also means we are reliant on schools to take greater responsibility for one another. And spend on school improvement and inclusion will be targeted to the highest priority areas only
- Home to school transport will continue to be provided for the most vulnerable.
- We will protect funding for carers and respite care to help families stay together wherever possible
- Implementation of the Youth Services strategy will bring together more effectively provision across children's services, culture, sports and leisure, and seek to better integrate statutory and voluntary services
- A programme of early intervention services targeting families most in need will be in place to reduce numbers requiring statutory children in need or child protection plans

In 2013/14

- We will continue with the strategies set out in 2012/13

- Our continued investment in targeted early intervention will have stabilised the numbers of children coming into care and average costs of placements will be lower
- Re-commissioned services for children who need to be looked after, and for young people in housing need will sustain low unit costs focusing, wherever we can on more cost-effective in-house provision
- The Youth Employability Service will be reduced in line with the transfer of much of this responsibility to schools
- We will continue early consultation on further changes to the provision of services from our children's centres, again maintaining the services at our full offer centres in the most disadvantaged communities
- We will significantly reduce the subsidy on the school music service