



ITEM NO:

Report To:	OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL
Date:	24 November 2014
Reporting Scrutiny Panel:	Supporting People and Resources Scrutiny Panel
Subject:	REVIEW OF SCHOOL READINESS IN TAMESIDE
Report Summary:	This Review has considered the current approach towards school readiness outcomes in Tameside and has made recommendations to support future services.
Recommendations:	That the Overview (Audit) Panel note the recommendations detailed in section 9 of the report.
Links to Community Strategy:	This review supports the Community Strategy priorities relating to 'Learning Tameside' but also recognises links across all Community Strategy areas.
Policy Implications:	The review itself has no specific policy implications. Should the recommendations of this report be accepted by the Tameside Council's Executive, the relevant services will need to assess the policy implications of putting individual recommendations in place.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)	Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from the report recommendations, it should be noted that additional investment of £1.0m was approved within a Key Decision taken by the Executive Cabinet on 25 June 2014 to support a new early intervention model of service provision within the Communities, Children, Adults and Health directorate. A further Key Decision is scheduled to be considered by the Executive Cabinet on 10 December 2014 to approve further investment to support a new early years model of service delivery within the same directorate. A key measure of the investment included within both decisions will be improved school readiness of children within the borough which will be monitored accordingly.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	
Risk Management:	Reports of Scrutiny Panels are integral to processes which exist to hold the Executive of the authority to account.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe by:

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1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

- 1.1 I am very pleased to present this report of a review undertaken by the Supporting People and Resources Scrutiny Panel of School Readiness in Tameside.
- 1.2 It is important that all children in the borough, from birth to age 5 are provided with the right level of support; allowing them to develop and progress through all stages of early years and make a successful transition to further learning requirements and school life.
- 1.3 Making sure children receive the social, emotional and physical support they need throughout all stages of development allows them to fully prepare for education and learning at all levels. Poor school readiness outcomes can create conditions for future demand on public services in both the medium and long term.
- 1.4 It is important that children in Tameside have the confidence and attitudes they need to be effective learners. Communication and language provides children with the skills they will need to be effective readers and writers and also to verbalise their knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
- 1.5 The definition of a child's readiness for school has changed over recent years. It is important to look at how well informed and 'ready' both parents and schools are and to review the changes that have taken place in relation to how school readiness is both measured and monitored.
- 1.6 Addressing school readiness outcomes in the borough requires further understanding to how a range of partners and services provide support for families. While school readiness starts to be monitored as soon as a child enters the educational system; there are a multitude of stakeholders that can influence the responsiveness and development of a child from birth onwards.
- 1.7 The partnership work that the Council undertakes with parents, schools, NHS and voluntary groups is vital to ensuring strong links are established. Delivering a joined-up approach can allow services to work to an end goal of school readiness, understanding how every connection made with a family or child impacts on future outcomes.
- 1.8 On behalf of the Supporting People and Resources Scrutiny Panel, I would like to thank all those who have participated in this review.

Councillor Gillian Peet
Chair of the Supporting People and Resources Scrutiny Panel

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council is committed to improving outcomes for children and families in the borough. It is important that both universal and targeted support is available, allowing children of all ages to reach their full potential.
- 2.2 The review focuses on the support provided to children, families and schools in the borough. It is important to look at the work that is undertaken across a number of organisations to improve the knowledge, awareness and expectations of parents/carers and to look at the consistency of schools in their approach towards supporting children and families during the transition to further learning requirements.
- 2.3 The new Early Years delivery model will focus on reducing dependency and the future demand for services; creating a focus on improving the skills of residents. The programme

highlights the importance of early years work during a child's vital development stages from conception to 2 years.

- 2.4 The review also looks closely at capacity and the way support services can be complemented across organisations.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL – 2013/14

Councillor Peet (Chair), Councillor R Welsh (Deputy Chair).
Councillors Drennan, P Fitzpatrick, R Miah, Shember-Critchley, Sidebottom, M Smith, T Smith

Mrs L Aspin (Roman Catholic Church)
Mrs S Marsh (Church of England)
Mr N Ahmed (Muslim Faith)
Mrs T N Sharma (Hindu Faith)
Mrs A Gregory (Parent Governor)
Mr M Osmond (Parent Governor)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL – 2014/15

Councillor Peet (Chair), Councillor Bowden (Deputy Chair).
Councillors Ballagher, Beeley, P Fitzpatrick, R Miah, Roberts, Ryan, Shember-Critchley, Sidebottom, F Travis, Wild

Mrs L Aspin (Roman Catholic Church)
Mrs S Marsh (Church of England)
Mr N Ahmed (Muslim Faith)
Mrs T N Sharma (Hindu Faith)
Mrs A Gregory (Parent Governor)
Mr M Osmond (Parent Governor)

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Aim of the Review

- 4.1 To explore how Tameside Council, schools and partners are working to improve school readiness outcomes in the borough.

Objectives

- 4.2
1. To examine the variety of work undertaken across the borough to develop and improve school readiness
 2. To explore the range of support that is provided to children and families from birth to age 5
 3. To understand the importance of the work carried out by early years in relation to school readiness
 4. To explore the role of schools in developing and measuring school readiness
 5. To understand the importance of school readiness in relation to a child's future development
 6. To explore how information and data is shared across organisational boundaries
 7. To produce workable recommendations for the Council to deliver sustainable improvements to the future of school readiness in Tameside

Value for Money/Use of Resources

- 4.3 It is important that children and young people in Tameside receive the necessary encouragement and support needed across all aspects and requirements of the transition to full-time education. It is essential that the Council, schools and partners are working collaboratively to improve the preparation and outcomes for all children and young people. Therefore effective strategies aimed at creating positive and inclusive environments should improve development and learning outcomes across the borough.

Equalities Issues

- 4.4 School readiness can impact on all sections of Tameside's communities. The review will consider strategies that lead to positive and inclusive environments, so that children and young people from all backgrounds receive the necessary support to aid future development and outcomes.

People and Place Scorecard

- 4.5 The following targets from the People and Place Scorecard relate to governor services.

School Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of pupils achieving at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)
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5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The working group met with Jane Forrest, Head of Strategy and Early Intervention, Tameside MBC; and Emma McDonough, Strategic Lead – Early Help, Tameside MBC to receive an overview of school readiness in Tameside.
- 5.2 The working group met with Lorraine Butler, Strategic Lead – Early Help, Tameside MBC; Janet Perry, Early Years Provider Development Team Manager, Tameside MBC; and Emma Lewis; Team Manager – Early Help Services, Tameside MBC to receive information about the range of Early Years provision and Children's Centres.
- 5.3 The working group met with Gillian Simm, School Performance and Standards Officer, Tameside MBC; and Dean McDonagh, School Performance and Standards Analyst, Tameside MBC to explore the role and requirements of schools.
- 5.4 The working group met with Judith Westhead, Strategic Pathway/Partnership Lead: Children, Young People and Families; Penny King, Business and Clinical Services Coordinator; and Catherine Mee, Parenting Facilitator, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.
- 5.5 The working group met with Deborah Mason, Principal, Silver Springs Primary Academy to receive information about the work that is being undertaken in parts of the Ridgehill area of Stalybridge to address school readiness outcomes.
- 5.6 The working group met with Sarah Petts, Chief Executive, HomeStart (Oldham, Stockport and Tameside) to receive information about the work that is carried out across the borough with families that have children aged 0 to 5 years.

6. BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

- 6.1 Key indicators show that around 41% of children in Tameside are not 'school ready' compared with 36% in the UK (2012).

- 6.2 Evidence also shows that poor early life experiences can lead to poor life trajectory in relation to outcomes for individuals and future demand on public services. Improving school readiness will drive future attainment, economic activity and prosperity across Greater Manchester.
- 6.3 Often parents don't see themselves as a child's first educator, sometimes thinking that children will naturally develop key skills such as talking and dressing themselves. Parents both within Tameside and across the country do not understand the importance of talking and playing with their child. It is important that parents provide opportunities for their children to explore and experience different social environments.
- 6.4 The review will look at the approach taken by the Council and partners to improve school readiness outcomes in the borough. It is important that the framework of Early Years provision and assessments are designed and delivered in a way which improves the support provided to children and families in Tameside.

7. REVIEW FINDINGS

Measuring School Readiness

- 7.1 At the age of 4, when most children begin full-time education in a primary school reception class, they arrive with a host of different experiences, skills and expectations. They all come from different families, environments and often different childcare settings. Most children in England and Wales will have benefitted from some early education through the free entitlement that all 3 and 4 year olds can access in registered childcare settings such as nurseries, childminders or pre-schools.
- 7.2 The term school ready therefore can be interpreted as an attempt to measure this diversity, to capture what skills and abilities children should have as a minimum before progressing to further learning requirements.
- 7.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is used as a measure for 'School Readiness'. The criteria for the EYFSP scores are measured on the Early Learning Goals. The attainment of each child is assessed in relation to 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) descriptors. In the Graham Allen and Frank Field report they describe school readiness as:
- 'having the social and emotional foundation skills to progress in speech, perception, ability to understand numbers and quantities, motor skills, attitude to work, concentration, memory and social conduct; having the ability to engage positively and without aggression with other children and the ability to respond appropriately to requests from teachers.'*
- 7.4 Assessment is based primarily on the observation of daily activities and events. For each ELG practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected by the end of the reception year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding), or not yet reached this level (emerging).
- 7.5 The completed EYFSP must include a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning:
- Playing and Exploring
 - Active Learning
 - Creating and Thinking

Early Learning Goals

- 7.6 Following a review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) a revised and more focused framework was implemented from 1 September 2012. The framework now means that a child's development is assessed against 17 ELGs instead of the previous 69 goals and 117 scale points. The new profile and revised EYFS created stronger emphasis on the three prime areas that are most essential for the healthy development of a child. These are:
- Communication and language
 - Physical
 - Personal, social and emotional development
- 7.7 Children will be seen to have a good level of development at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level across the three prime areas. Details of the 17 ELGS are listed below.
- 7.8 **ELG 01 - Listening and attention:** Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events, and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- 7.9 **ELG 02 - Understanding:** Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- 7.10 **ELG 03 - Speaking:** Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- 7.11 **ELG 04 - Moving and handling:** Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.
- 7.12 **ELG 05 - Health and self-care:** Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently. Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- 7.13 **ELG 06 - Self-confidence and self-awareness:** Children are confident to try new activities, and to say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or do not need help.
- 7.14 **ELG 07 - Managing feelings and behaviour:** Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride

- 7.15 **ELG 08 - Making relationships:** Children play cooperatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. Specific areas of learning Literacy development involves encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials – for example books, poems, and other materials to ignite their interest.
- 7.16 **ELG 09 - Reading:** Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate an understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- 7.17 **ELG 10 - Writing:** Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. Mathematics development involves providing children with opportunities to practice and improve their skills in counting numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- 7.18 **ELG 11 - Numbers:** Children count reliably with numbers from one to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.
- 7.19 **ELG 12 - Shape, space and measures:** Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them. Understanding of the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment 26 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook Specific areas of learning.
- 7.20 **ELG 13 - People and communities:** Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.
- 7.21 **ELG 14 - The world:** Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.
- 7.22 **ELG 15 - Technology:** Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes. Expressive arts and design involves supporting children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play, and design and technology.
- 7.23 **ELG 16 - Exploring and using media and materials:** Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

7.24 **ELG 17 - Being imaginative:** Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and story.

Conclusions

1. A more focused approach towards the way school readiness is measured was introduced nationally from September 2012 onwards.

School Readiness outcomes in Tameside

7.25 The new profile was introduced in September 2012 and the first assessments took place in 2013. The new profiles 'emerging', 'expected' and 'exceeding' are very different to the previous measures. This has meant that results are not comparable between 2012 and 2013.

7.26 In October 2013 the Department for Education released the results and achieved outcomes at the end of EYFS for the 2012/13 academic year. Data showed that 42% of children in Tameside achieved a good level of development compared with 52% in England. In Tameside the key headline results are:

- In 2013, 42% of children in Tameside achieved a good level of development compared with 52% in England.
- A higher proportion of girls (50%) achieved a good level of development, compared with boys (34%).
- When measured against other Greater Manchester authorities Tameside has the joint third lowest level of school readiness with Rochdale. Across Greater Manchester authorities school readiness figures range from 38% in Wigan to 61% in Trafford.

7.27 The table below shows the percentage of children that are achieving at least the expected level in the prime areas of learning; and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics across Greater Manchester authorities.

Table 1: Percentage of children achieving at least the expected level in the prime areas of learning and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics.

LA	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	All (%)	30% most deprived areas nationally (%)	% point gap between girls and boys	Ranked position in 2012 (1 being the highest level of school readiness)
Trafford	69	53	61	47	16	1
Stockport	63	45	54	41	18	2
Salford	61	45	53	49	16	5
Bury	59	44	51	42	16	7=
Bolton	54	41	48	38	13	3
Manchester	55	38	47	45	17	7=
Rochdale	51	34	42	35	17	9
Tameside	50	34	42	37	16	6
Oldham	48	35	41	32	13	10
Wigan	46	30	38	29	16	4

Source: Statistical First Release – DFE

7.28 It is also apparent from the data that 37% of children in Tameside living within the 30% most deprived areas nationally achieved the expected levels for school readiness, 5% lower than Tameside average.

7.29 In Tameside the ELGs with the lowest proportion of children achieving the expected level are:

- Writing (54.6%) compared to 62% nationally
- Numbers (62.4%) compared to 69% nationally
- Reading (65.7%) compared to 71% nationally

7.30 There are 73 primary schools in Tameside (excluding special schools) and school readiness outcomes appear to vary dramatically from school to school. Data from 2013 shows that St Mary's RC Primary School in Denton recorded the highest number of pupils judged to be 'school ready' at 77.4%. The lowest school readiness score was recorded by Arundale Primary School at just 7.1%, with the school reporting that only 2 pupils out of 28 were 'school ready'.

7.31 The table below shows the highest and lowest recordings of school readiness for primary schools in Tameside for 2013.

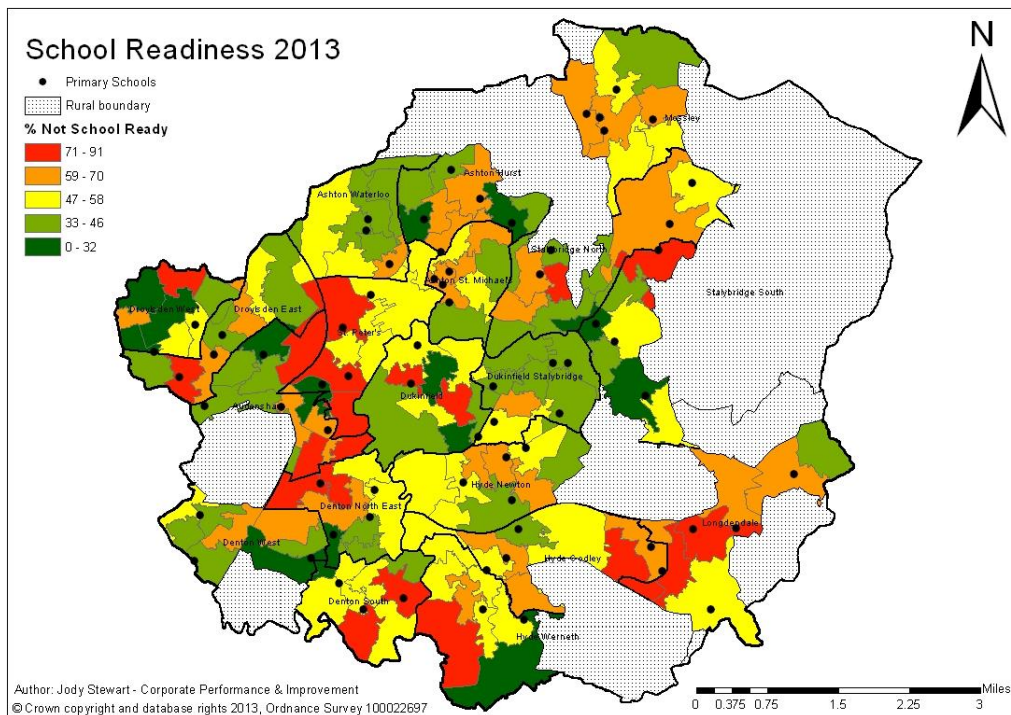
School	Number of children	Not school ready	School Ready	% School ready
Highest				
St Mary's RC, Denton	31	7	24	77.4
St Peter's, Stalybridge	31	8	23	74.2
Holy Trinity, Gee Cross	30	8	22	73.3
Lowest				
Holy Trinity, Ashton-u-Lyne	30	26	4	13.3
Wildbank, Stalybridge	26	23	3	11.5
Arundale, Hattersley	28	26	2	7.1

7.32 Data for the 73 primary schools in Tameside shows that 23 schools recorded a school readiness figure below 40%; with 10 schools below 30%. In comparison, 12 schools recorded a school readiness figure of 60% or above.

7.33 Data shows that 27 schools have recorded school readiness levels below the Tameside average of 42%, this equates to almost 37% of schools being below the borough average.

7.34 The map below shows school readiness in Tameside across all primary schools. Areas in green have the highest levels of school readiness and red represents the lowest levels of school readiness in the borough.

Map1: School Readiness outcomes across Tameside (2013)



7.35 High levels of school readiness can be seen across a number of areas in Tameside. The map however does show some clusters of lower school readiness outcomes (orange and red). On further inspection it becomes apparent that some of the lowest outcomes are located in the more deprived areas of Tameside. The areas of Hattersley in Longdendale and St Peters in Ashton show clusters of red and orange with little or no green.

Conclusions

2. Due to changes in the way school readiness is measured figures prior to 2013 are unable to be compared.
3. Tameside is ranked in the bottom 3rd of Greater Manchester authorities for school readiness.
4. There is a significant variation in school readiness results across all primary schools in Tameside.
5. A relationship between deprivation and low levels of school readiness is apparent across the borough.

Recommendations

1. That the Council carry out further examination in relation to the degree of variation of school readiness outcomes for 2013; and work is undertaken with all primary schools to ensure a consistent approach is being adopted across the borough for the assessment of school readiness.
2. That work is undertaken with primary schools to highlight the importance of school readiness and to support any training needs where required.

Tameside Early Attachment Service

- 7.36 Tameside and Glossop Early Attachment Service is a partnership between Stockport NHS Foundation Trust (Tameside and Glossop Community Healthcare) and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust. It has a remit to:
- Promote early attachment in the local population
 - Raise awareness amongst practitioners through training, consultation and supervision
 - Provide a clinical service
- 7.37 Early Attachment Service (EAS) specialists are based in localities alongside Health Visiting teams. They also work with the maternity and neonatal intensive care units at Tameside General Hospital; and provide some support to Tameside's Fostering and Adoption Team. The service has also developed a new role to provide early attachment support to teenage parents.
- 7.38 The first few months and years of children's lives are the most sensitive to developing secure attachments with their parents/carers. There is considerable evidence that sensitive, attuned care-giving, warmth and empathy consistently predicts secure attachment. Secure attachment can help with resilience and later mental health in both childhood and adulthood.
- 7.39 Research shows that what matters most is the reciprocity of the interaction. It's not just the stimulation that is important; the quality of the relationship between the infant and parent is crucial. At the heart of any intervention with families should be support to develop secure attachment between infant and care-giver, stronger family relationships and quality parenting.
- 7.40 It is however important to understand that some parents and families are overburdened with a variety of external problems and issues. Additional problems such as mental illness, domestic abuse and substance misuse can affect a person's ability and capacity to be a 'good parent'. Socially adverse factors such as poverty, poor housing, lack of education and unemployment can also play an important role.
- 7.41 Around 30% of parents will struggle to tune into their baby, due to lack of awareness of infant development, preoccupation with their own needs, or because they are trying too hard. In Tameside and Glossop, this equates to around 3,500 children aged 0 to 3 years at any one time.
- 7.42 Another 10% of parents are in the highest priority need for support. Preoccupation with their own problems following the birth of their baby means they are likely to develop psychological or psychiatric symptoms; which can lead to problems in developing the infant/parent relationship.
- 7.43 The EAS provides a direct clinical service to families, but this is only part of its work. With only 2.83 whole time equivalents, it is impossible to meet the needs of even the most vulnerable 10% of families. (For example, in 2010/11 only 132 families could be seen, which is about 10% of this group; and just 1% of the whole 0 to 3 year old population).
- 7.44 The service makes every effort to accommodate urgent referrals. However there are occasions when there is no capacity to see the family immediately. Therefore, regular consultations with the lead professional will be offered until the family can be seen.

Healthy Child Programme

- 7.45 The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) focuses on a child's development during pregnancy and the first five years. The guide is for primary care trusts, local authorities, practice-

based commissioners and providers of services in pregnancy and the first years of life. The specification for health visiting is based on the HCP.

- 7.46 The programme plays a key role in improving the health and wellbeing of children, as part of an integrated approach to supporting children and families. The HCP offers every family a programme of screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews and guidance to support parenting and healthy choices. It is recognised that through effective implementation the HCP should lead to:
- Strong parent-child attachment and positive parenting, resulting in better social and emotional wellbeing among children.
 - Care that helps keep children healthy and safe
 - Readiness for school and improved learning
 - Early detection of development delay
 - Identification of factors that could influence health and wellbeing in families
 - Better short and long term outcomes for children who are at risk of social exclusion
- 7.47 The HCP includes opportunities for parents and practitioners to review a child's social and emotional development, for the practitioner to provide evidence-based advice and guidance and for practitioners to decide when specialist input is needed.

Early Years and Children's Centres

- 7.48 A large amount of research has been undertaken over recent years which draws specific conclusions about the importance in the development of opportunities and support that children receive during the first two years of life. Previous research has also shown that parental involvement in a child's development is vital and that parents need to be made aware of the positive steps they can take to help their child develop. This includes things such as parents talking, reading and playing with their child.
- 7.49 *"A wide range of research now shows that conception to age 2 is a crucial phase of human development and is the time when focused attention can reap dividends for society.....Because we now understand the importance of the 0-2 period in creating solid psychological and neurological foundations to optimise lifelong social, emotional and physical health, and educational and economic attainment, we believe policy emphasis needs to shift to reflect this."*
Conception to age 2 – the age of opportunity, WAVE Trust, 2013
- 7.50 The Council's Early Years Development Team supports private, voluntary and independent childcare providers in Tameside. This includes private day nurseries, pre-schools and child minders, to aid with the delivery and implementation of the EYFS. By providing support and advice in line with Ofsted regulations and standards the Team are focused on improve the quality of provision across the borough, which impacts directly on the outcomes of children attending each setting.
- 7.51 Statutory guidance from Sure Start in 2013 states that a Children's Centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing services at the centre itself or by providing advice to parents elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that Children's Centres provide some activities for young people on site.
- 7.52 At the time this review was undertaken there were 17 Children's Centres in Tameside. The working group was informed that this was currently under review, with plans to develop the existing offer and explore further options in relation to the number sites, locations and accessibility.

- 7.53 Children's Centres work with other organisations to make sure children and families are able to access services locally. Children's Centres can offer:
- Child and family health services and information
 - Information on benefits, jobs and training opportunities
 - Support for children with disabilities and/or additional needs
 - Family support and play opportunities
 - Activities to encourage speech and language development
- 7.54 Children's Centres offer a wide range of activities for children and families in Tameside. This ranges from general baby groups to more focused sessions that relate directly to a child's development. This is delivered through sessions such as Baby Babble, Toddler Talk, Rhymetime and Stay & Play. All sessions are designed to build awareness and encourage parents to take an active and responsible role in the ongoing development of their child.
- 7.55 Sessions such as Stay & Play provide parents with the opportunity to access a variety of activities which they may be unable to do in their own homes due to lack of space or resources. The session shows parents a range of low cost activities that they can repeat at home with their child.
- 7.56 The majority of services provided by Children's Centres are universal and free to access. Work that is undertaken on a daily basis can allow Early Years workers to identify any additional needs that require targeted intervention. A breakdown of some of the types of universal and targeted work that is undertaken is listed below.

Universal services:

- Antenatal sessions
- Drop-in baby clinics
- Breastfeeding peer support
- Stay and Play
- New parent groups

Targeted Services:

- Adult/Family learning
- Employment and training sessions
- Family support
- Parenting support
- Speech and language therapy
- Home-Start

- 7.57 Targeted services are accessed via an invitation, referral or assessment made by the centre or partner agency. This is when it is felt that a more focused support package is required to meet the individual needs of a child or parent.
- 7.58 It is important for Early Years workers and Children's Centres to ensure that the right people are made aware of the services available and that the universal offer is allowing the most vulnerable to access support without feeling they have been targeted. Work is undertaken to ensure that parents who attend sessions are free from stigma and feel welcome. While a large part of the offer is universal there is a need to explore what the potential barriers are; and to find out why parents may not feel comfortable in attending.

- 7.59 It may be that a parent is unaware of the Children's Centre, its location and the range of services that are provided. Some of the challenges that Children's Centres and Early Years workers face can often be the lack flexibility to deliver support outside of core hours.
- 7.60 One of the most important parts of the sessions is not just making sure that people attend and take notice but to make sure parents feel comfortable, are happy to come back and have the opportunity to meet other parents that are in similar situations; where friendships can be formed and extended beyond the Children's Centre.
- 7.61 Sometimes the best way to engage new mums from relatively deprived areas is to try and facilitate some form of peer support. Often people are happy to attend if encouraged by a friend or relative, rather than a member of staff. This type of support can also be influential in increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes.
- 7.62 Another key factor that will contribute to school readiness outcomes going forward is the introduction of 2 year old funding from September 2014. This will allow children from 'at risk' families to access free child care provision. Work is being undertaken to ensure there is enough capacity across the borough to accommodate the projected number of eligible children.

Conclusions

6. Addressing attachment and parental problems at the earliest opportunity can have a positive impact on outcomes along the course of a person's life.
7. Some parents are unaware of the positive impact that social and emotional interaction has on a child; and the crucial role they need to play in relation to providing development opportunities.
8. It is essential that barriers are removed which prevent new and expectant parents from accessing the wide range of early years services that are available in the borough.
9. Providing quality support and interventions to children under the age of 3 plays a key role in improving school readiness outcomes.

Recommendations

3. That the Council work with partners to explore new ways to provide information to parents about being a child's first educator; and raise awareness of age related expectations (local media, radio, text message, doctors waiting rooms etc).
4. That work is undertaken with Registered Social Landlords such as New Charter to raise awareness of early years provision to their residents and highlight proximity to Children's Centres and community and voluntary organisations.
5. That joint working relationships are explored between the Council's Early Years Development Team, Children's Centres and the School Performance and Standards Team, in relation to the services provided to children from birth to 3 years.

Home-Start (Oldham, Stockport and Tameside)

- 7.63 Home-Start exists in order to provide support to vulnerable families with a range of needs in the neighbouring boroughs of Oldham, Stockport and Tameside. Support is provided to

families in their own homes, where they feel most at ease, allowing parents to provide the best possible start in life for their children.

- 7.64 The approach taken by Home-Start means there are no time limits to the support provided, as long as there is a child under the age of 5 in the household. The support is provided by volunteers, who are in a position to establish trusting relationships; allowing them to get to the root of any problems.
- 7.65 Work is undertaken to recruit, train and support volunteers, who themselves are parents, to visit families for 2-3 hours per week. Volunteers provide practical help and in some cases much needed emotional support. Home-Start support families with a whole range of needs and no two families are the same.
- 7.66 The support is individually tailored to the needs of each family and takes place at a time that suits them best. The aim is to offer support before a family reaches a point of crisis. The support provided is aimed at being as flexible as possible.
- 7.67 In 2012/13 a total of 145 new referrals were received for families in Tameside that were in need of Home-Start support. In 2013/14 (to mid February) a total of 176 referrals had been received, indicating a rise in demand for support.

Home-Start and School Readiness

- 7.68 Home-Start believes that it is important for a child to be 'ready for life', not just 'ready to learn' and for this to be achieved by school age support is provided to parents to enhance their child's development. Many parents simply do not understand the importance of playing and talking to their child.
- 7.69 Home-Start helps to support school readiness in a number of ways as well as complementing the shared outcomes framework. Volunteers also play a key role in encouraging parents to help their children learn and develop through play. It is important that parents are made aware of a child's age related expectations and appropriate play activities.
- 7.70 Parents can often have unrealistic expectations about what their child should be doing by a certain age and sometimes expect that children will just know how to do something. Volunteers are able to encourage parents to see that it is not necessary to have a large number of expensive plastic toys; and that simple inexpensive toys and activities can have a huge impact on a child's learning.
- 7.71 By delivering support across a range of areas such as breastfeeding, attachment, child welfare and childcare offers; Home-Start are actively helping families in the borough gain awareness and understanding across a wide range of issues that have a direct impact on school readiness outcomes.

Speech and Language

- 7.72 The number of children in the UK identified as having a speech and language delay has increased over the last 10 years. It is estimated that around 50% of children now enter school with delayed speech and language skills. It is also estimated in areas of high deprivation this can increase to over 80% of children.
- 7.73 Identifying a speech and language delay or difficulty early is key to aiding a child's progress and development. It is important that early years practitioners have good awareness of appropriate development and have access to materials to assist to support children's language.

- 7.74 The WellComm toolkit was published in 2010 and provides speech and language guidance for Early Years Practitioners working with children from 6 months to 6 years. The toolkit provides an opportunity for concerns to be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.75 Practitioners undertake screening, with each age group having a set of 10 items. Detail is provided about age related expectations in relation to actions and words etc. Between 6 to 11 months assessment is purely observational and involves the knowledge and experiences of parents and carers. From 12 months onwards instructions are introduced and progression towards direct screening for children 2 years and above.

Conclusions

10. Home-Start provides a vital service to vulnerable families across Tameside.
11. Using volunteers, who are parents themselves, has a positive impact when working with often hard to reach and complex families.
12. Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of children being identified as having a speech and language delay.

Recommendations

6. That the Council work with partners such as Home-Start to seek advice and explore how the introduction of a volunteer peer support scheme can help encourage isolated and disengaged parents to access a range of universal services.
7. That the Council work with health partners to address the growing demand for speech and language therapy.

The Role of Schools

- 7.76 Schools play a vital role in relation to school readiness outcomes. When children first enter the school environment there is a huge disparity in relation to the social and learning experiences of each child.
- 7.77 It is important that every school provides an environment that supports and enables the smooth transition to primary school education and beyond. It is also important that continuity is established between families and schools. In order for good relationships to be formed each school needs ensure that frequent opportunities are available to communicate with parents.
- 7.78 The EYFS assessment needs to be carried out in the final term of the child's reception year at primary school; and must take place no later than 30 June in that term. Throughout the course of the academic year schools will carry out internal monitoring to judge the progress made and draw comparisons to the ELGs.
- 7.79 If children settle well, enjoy playing and learning, express themselves effectively, develop their gross and fine motor skills and build good relationships with their adults and peers they should make excellent progress towards achieving the ELGs.
- 7.80 Raising awareness of what will be expected of children, the assessments undertaken and the level of progress that needs to be made can help engage parents to support and

complement best practice at home. It is also important that schools across the borough adopt a consistent approach towards the way the EYFS assessments are carried out.

Silver Springs Primary Academy

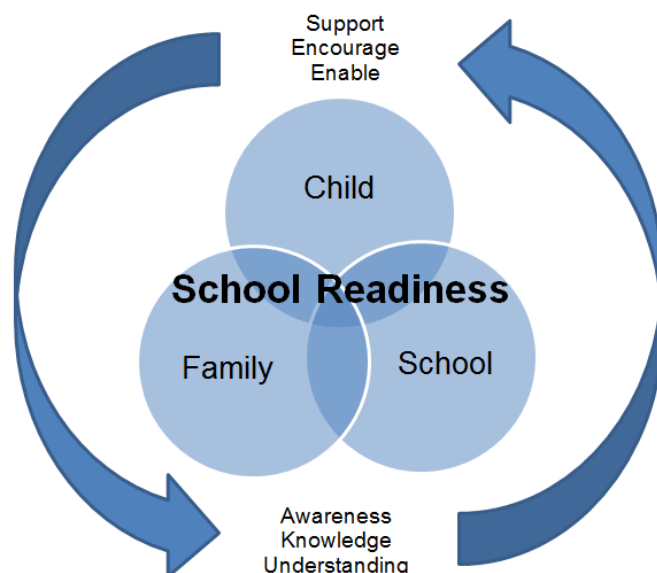
- 7.81 Silver Springs Primary Academy is located in the Ridgehill area of Stalybridge. The school is situated in a relatively deprived area of Tameside and figures from 2013 show a school readiness figure of 18.2%. It was reported that over recent years the level of entry has noticeably reduced and the number of referrals for speech and language therapy has increased.
- 7.82 The school has adopted a proactive approach towards improving school readiness outcomes in the local area. A school readiness action plan has been developed, which sets out a number of key priorities and issues. The plan has three key priorities:
1. To improve parents' support with preparing children for school
 2. To improve speech and communication on entry to school
 3. To accelerate the progress of nursery children towards age related expectations
- 7.83 The school benefits from having a Children's Centre on site and are committed to building and sustaining relationships with parents. The school understands the difficulties that they face in relation to the surrounding area. This ranges from parents who are unwilling to engage with the school and parents not knowing or recognising development stages of their children.
- 7.84 It is important that work is undertaken to ensure parents understand the expectations of the school in relation to social and learning requirements. The school's action plan has set out some clear milestones that need to be achieved in order for the work to be effective and successful. An example of the ambition is shown by the school wanting to work closely with at least 20 families over the course of the academic year, for 90%+ children in nursery to make at least good progress from their original starting points; and to see a 25% increase in on score through nursery and entry to reception.
- 7.85 The school has invested in some marketing and communications work to improvement engagement with parents. They have introduced schemes such as FAST which stands for Families and Schools Together, allowing parents to come into to school to do activities with their children. They have also provided options for groups of parents to join an 8 week offer that takes place outside of school hours.

Joined up approach

- 7.86 One of the main elements of the public sector reform programme focuses on Early Years provision and improving school readiness outcomes in Greater Manchester. As a result of consultation and development a new delivery model has been agreed and will be adopted by local authorities in Greater Manchester.
- 7.87 Tameside has also introduced the Integrated Early Help Strategy 2013-16. The strategy sets out a clear ambition to ensure that services are able to provide the most appropriate level of support to meet the needs of children and families at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.88 Research shows that there is a clear correlation between deprivation and school readiness outcomes. The new Early Years delivery model focuses on reducing dependency and the future demand for services; creating a focus on improving the skills of residents and reducing worklessness. The programme highlights the importance of early years work during a child's vital development stages from conception to 2 years.
- 7.89 In 2012 40% of children in Greater Manchester were not school ready, representing a

disproportionate number of children who are on a poor life trajectory from the outset. It was reported that Early Years services costs around £300 million a year in Greater Manchester and it is estimated that the same amount again is spent on interventions and failure demand, such as special educational needs and anti-social behaviour.

- 7.90 The new delivery model has eight components, with interventions having a much stronger evidence base. The new model will also unify the way that information is recorded and shared across partner organisations. The new model will adopt a whole family approach, looking at attachment, mental and physical health, economic wellbeing and raising overall aspirations.
- 7.91 Sitting within the model is a new 8 stage evidence based assessment tool, creating a collaborative multi-agency approach towards gathering and recording essential early years data from birth to age 5. Two locations in Tameside (Hattersley and Ridgehill) are early adopter sites for the new assessment process from April 2014; one year before it comes into effect across Greater Manchester.
- 7.92 Working in partnership will allow the Council to make a positive difference by empowering families to create solutions that build on their strengths and developing a whole family intervention approach supported by a range of commissioned programmes and interventions that are evidence based.
- 7.93 As a Council we want to make sure that children and young people are safe, have aspirations and are allowed to reach their full potential. It is important that families across the borough are supported and empowered; building resilience that allows them to be able to tackle future problems and challenges.
- 7.94 With the limited resources available it is also important that families in Tameside are being support within their local communities; and by their local community. This can be achieved by continued involvement of community and voluntary groups to deliver vital services that contribute towards the overall outcomes for children and families in Tameside.
- 7.95 Due to the large number of contributing needs that can affect school readiness Tameside is reliant on a diverse range and mix of service providers, with the necessary knowledge and experience to support children and families. It is also important that continued work is undertaken to increase the participation of children, families and all stakeholders in service developments.
- 7.96 The information received by the Panel both highlights and shows the need for a sustainable and joined-up approach going forward. When looking at the reform that is taking place in Early Years and the on-going work and support that is being provided to families with complex needs across the borough, it becomes clear that families will need a sequenced, holistic and consistent package of support.
- 7.97 Breaking down the stages that contribute to school readiness is key to ensuring that the best levels of support are achieved. It is important that work is undertaken to:
- Improve the health and wellbeing of families
 - Improve economic wellbeing
 - Improve parents aspirations, skills and self esteem
- 7.98 The information provided has allowed the Panel to understand the importance of the roles that both families and schools play in relation to school readiness. The diagram below shows that in order for children to be truly school ready all three aspects of the child, family and school need to be supported and working effectively together.



Conclusions

13. Schools play a vital role in supporting children and parents during the transition to full-time education.
14. Ongoing communication between schools and parents helps to increase engagement and awareness of learning requirements.
15. Improving partnerships and information sharing will allow interventions to be supported by a comprehensive evidence base.

Recommendations

8. That work is undertaken to engage parents at the start of the reception year by providing a hand-out/email about expected learning requirements and the range of complementary work that can be done at home to support this.
9. That schools with low levels of school readiness are encouraged and supported to explore bespoke interventions that meet the individual needs of their community.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 A more focused approach towards the way school readiness is measured was introduced nationally from September 2012 onwards.
- 8.2 Due to changes in the way school readiness is measured figures prior to 2013 are unable to be compared.
- 8.3 Tameside is ranked in the bottom 3rd of Greater Manchester authorities for school readiness.
- 8.4 There is a significant variation in school readiness results across all primary schools in Tameside.

- 8.5 A relationship between deprivation and low levels of school readiness is apparent across the borough.
- 8.6 Addressing attachment and parental problems at the earliest opportunity can have a positive impact on outcomes along the course of a person's life.
- 8.7 Some parents are unaware of the positive impact that social and emotional interaction has on a child; and the crucial role they need to play in relation to providing development opportunities.
- 8.8 It is essential that barriers are removed which prevent new and expectant parents from accessing the wide range of early years services that are available in the borough.
- 8.9 Providing quality support and interventions to children under the age of 3 plays a key role in improving school readiness outcomes.
- 8.10 Home-Start provides a vital service to vulnerable families across Tameside.
- 8.11 Using volunteers, who are parents themselves, has a positive impact when working with often hard to reach and complex families.
- 8.12 Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of children being identified as having a speech and language delay.
- 8.13 Schools play a vital role in supporting children and parents during the transition to full-time education.
- 8.14 Ongoing communication between schools and parents helps to increase engagement and awareness of learning requirements.
- 8.15 Improving partnerships and information sharing will allow interventions to be supported by a comprehensive evidence base.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Council carry out further examination in relation to the degree of variation of school readiness outcomes for 2013; and work is undertaken with all primary schools to ensure a consistent approach is being adopted across the borough for the assessment of school readiness.
- 9.2 That work is undertaken with primary schools to highlight the importance of school readiness and to support any training needs where required.
- 9.3 That the Council work with partners to explore new ways to provide information to parents about being a child's first educator; and raise awareness of age related expectations (local media, radio, text message, doctors waiting rooms etc).
- 9.4 That work is undertaken with Registered Social Landlords such as New Charter to raise awareness of early years provision to their residents and highlight proximity to Children's Centres and community and voluntary organisations.
- 9.5 That joint working relationships are explored between the Council's Early Years Development Team, Children's Centres and the School Performance and Standards Team, in relation to the services provided to children from birth to 3 years.

- 9.6 That the Council work with partners such as Home-Start to seek advice and explore how the introduction of a volunteer peer support scheme can help encourage isolated and disengaged parents to access a range of universal services.
- 9.7 That the Council work with health partners to address the growing demand for speech and language therapy.
- 9.8 That work is undertaken to engage parents at the start of the reception year by providing a hand-out/email about expected learning requirements and the range of complementary work that can be done at home to support this.
- 9.9 That schools are supported in their efforts to work more closely with parents before their children begin school.