

Update of the Review of FLASH Service

Executive Summary:

The FLASH service is commissioned by Walsall Council to provide specialist mental health services for Looked After Children. The services was set up in 2015 and provided by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and managed by the Walsall and Dudley Mental Health Trust. The services provided by the Trust have been rated as outstanding by the CQC in its recent inspection in 2018.

The FLASH team have a specific remit to support foster carers, residential homes and carers, provided post order to support to adopters and special guardians, to promote placement stability as well as meet the emotional and mental health issues impacting on the child or young person and their carers.

A service review is being undertaken to as part of normal cycle of reviewing commissioned services and to ensure that the service specification is aligned to the changes in Children's Services.

The review is being led by the Local Authority and is undertaken jointly with the CCG Commissioner for Mental Health and the Designated Nurse for Children Looked After. The need to review the service was identified in 2018, there have been a delay in progressing the review, this is now on track and this report provides an update.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

The report provides an update on the scope of the review and the timescales for the completion of the review of the service. A previous report on the role and remit of the Flash service was provided by the Walsall and Dudley Mental Health Trust to the Corporate Parenting Board in 2018.

Recommendations:

That:

The Board is asked to note the report and the timescales for the completion of the review.

Background papers:

None

Corporate Parenting Pledges

- We will improve the transition into adulthood so that all young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.

- We will improve access to education, employment and training and help you with your career plans.
- We will help you to experience stability in your lives, and feel safe and secure, including help to find and keep a stable place to live.
- We will provide improved access to health support, and go to medical appointments with you if you are worried to go alone.
- We will help you learn about budgeting and what bills to pay to help achievement of financial stability.
- We will respect you as individuals, not judge you on the past, and we will believe in your future.
- We will listen to you, hear what you say and spend some time with you away from the office.

Resource and legal considerations:

The service is commissioned by the local authority and the funded at £265,000.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall. The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes

Environmental impact:

None

Performance management:

The outcome of the review will set out a revised specification and arrangements for monitoring impact of the service and provide an annual report on the Directorate Management Team and Corporate Parenting Board.

Reducing inequalities:


The review seeks to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried as part of the review.

Consultation:

State here the organisations/service areas etc, that have been consulted on the preparation of this report or as part of the scrutiny exercise

Contact Officer:

Full Name – Jivan Sembi Head of Service

 01922 658412

Jivan.sembi@walsall.gov.uk

1. Report

1.1	In June 2018, the Assistant Director identified the need for the service to be reviewed to ensure that the service was aligned to the changes and transformation of children's services.
1.2	In addition it was agreed that the review would be undertaken jointly with Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group and the appointment of the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Mental Health Commissioner for Children.
1.3	The review team is now, led by the Head of Service for Children in Care and includes the Group Managers for Provider and Corporate Parenting, Children's Services Commissioners, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and the CCG's Mental Health Commissioner for Children.
1.4	The terms of reference have been revised and aligned with the Children's Transformation changes for example the establishment of Mocking Bird Hubs, Adolescent Support Service, Adoption@Heart and Permanence Hub.
1.5	The review will consider the service specification, quality and impact of the local authority commissioned mental health services for looked after children delivered by Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust. Review is being undertaken jointly with Walsall CCG.
1.6	<p>The terms of reference have agreed the following key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish the scope and criteria of the FLASH service. • To review the activity of the FLASH Service, presenting needs of children and young people and referral for service/support from the team. • To review referrals to the FLASH team and ensure pathways are appropriate • To review the role and function of the FLASH Team and establish the appropriateness of caseloads • To review the impact of the FLASH intervention in promoting placement stability. • To review interface between FLASH Service and Specialist CAMHS provision. • To review the Social Work posts in the FLASH Service. • Compare/benchmark local delivery with 'best in class' and workforce nationally. • To ensure that participation from service users (Children and Young People) and stakeholders (including Education, Social Worker, and Foster Carers) informs the review.
1.7	<p>The review will consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine referral activity, intervention activity and impact. • Identify a sample of case files to be audited to establish intervention and effectiveness/ outcome. • To develop options appraisal for the delivery of therapeutic support for looked after children. • To develop an updated service specification.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing the perspectives of Children, Young People and Families • Views of children and young people captured through the service, including with carers.
1.8	An extensive benchmarking exercise for mental health services for children looked after within the region and wider was completed which has identified that a wide variation of delivery models which include such services whole delivered by local authorities or jointly delivered through the NHS or through a range of other providers.
1.9	Preliminary data collection and scoping of the review was undertaken in the Autumn of 2018, however due to extraordinary pressures in across Operational and the Commissioning Services meant that the review paused.
1.10	<p>Review is on track and to date the following activity has been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings have taken place with managers of the FLASH and CAMHS to agree the scope of the review. • Members of the review team have met with FLASH team and their managers. • Focus groups have been held with foster carers, independent reviewing officers, personal advisors, social workers in Childrens' and fostering teams. • Data about the activity of the service has been provided and is being analysed. • A random dip sample of case work has taken place to evaluate the impact of interventions jointly with the CCG. • The review team will meet with young people to seek their views about the service and this is planned for November 2019.
1.11	The review team will evaluate the results of the focus group this activity in early November and the team are scheduling visits where similar services are commissioned and consider how these findings will inform the service specification.
1.12	<p>Governance: A final report will be submitted to the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team with the final report by December 2019 with proposed recommendations.</p> <p>The outcome of the report and proposed recommendations will be shared with the Trust in January 2020.</p> <p>The review team will then report the outcome to Corporate Parenting Board in February 2020.</p>