

**22 November 2016**

**Learning from North Yorkshire – 'No Wrong Door'**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Councillor R Burley, Education and Children's Services

**Executive Summary:**

To provide an overview of the learning from the recent visit to North Yorkshire Children's Service in relation to the need to continue to improve services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers and reduce the costs associated with Looked After Children and Out of Borough placements as set out in the current medium term financial strategy options.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

To inform Scrutiny of the learning from the visit to North Yorkshire Children's Services and to enable Scrutiny to consider and challenge how this learning and good practice can be applied to benefit Walsall children and young carers.

**Recommendations:**

**That:**

1. Scrutiny notes the contents of the report and the potential for the implementation of some of the learning in Walsall.
2. Scrutiny challenge and hold Children's Services to account for improved outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers and to deliver associated savings as set out in the Council's medium term financial strategy.

**Background papers:**

The following report provide an overview:

'No Wrong Door' - Rethinking Care for Adolescents – North Yorkshire County Council (**Appendix 1**)

**Resource and legal considerations:**

None at this stage.

**Citizen impact:**

**Environmental impact:**

None

**Performance management:**

None

**Equality Implications:**

No

**Consultation:**

No

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## 1. Background Information:

- 1.1 North Yorkshire has been judged by an Ofsted inspection in May 2014 as 'good' under the Single Inspection Framework and has been identified as a Improvement Partner under the DFE innovation programme. On 21 September 2016 a group of Children's Services managers made a visit to North Yorkshire to explore various aspects of their service delivery and learn from their innovative practice. The Assistant Director, Group Managers for Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding Family Support and Provider Services spent the day with colleagues from North Yorkshire Children's Services.
- 1.2 It is important to note that demographically North Yorkshire is very different to Walsall, being one of the geographically largest Local Authorities and is a rural county. It is a much better funded Council than Walsall and Children's Services has access to greater resource. There is however significant transferable learning that Walsall can benefit from.

The areas of focus were:

- Performance management approaches
- The 'No Wrong Door' approach to working with Looked After Children and Care Leavers, particularly adolescents.
- Young people who enter care during their teenage years have a set of characteristics that make their long term care and support a challenge:
  - They spend considerable periods in residential care often without sufficient planning and support to re-engage in family relationships or form strong relationships with carers.
  - They are more likely to have placement breakdowns.
  - They can follow a path of multiple placements, with hand offs between services and changing relationships following each placement breakdown. Some develop multiple vulnerabilities through offending behaviour, substance misuse, disengagement from education and high risk taking behaviours such as repeatedly going missing.
  - Over time, young people can become distrusting of positive relationships and develop a self-preservation mechanism of distrust.

## 2. Specific Learning

- 2.1 Performance management arrangements: We met with the Head of Service for Performance and a Senior Analyst.

Key learning points:

- Importance of keeping simple format and concise range of performance indicators.
- The performance data being produced in an accessible format for the operational managers to analyse and use to inform and improve service provision for children.
- Role of data analyst to support the operational managers effectively interpret performance data and use it to make a difference.
- Importance of performance team understanding the operation culture and establishing effective communication mechanisms.
- Regular performance oversight, accountability and challenge mechanisms to receive updates on performance that drive improvements

This has provided assurance in relation to the current approach and practice in place in Walsall with many features already in place. There is a monthly performance board chaired by the DCS and this is driving service improvements. The link with colleagues in North Yorkshire has been established and there is scope for further support and guidance on specific issues when required.

There is ongoing work to refine the current reporting tools available on the Mosaic system to support managers with effective performance management. The development of service dash boards which provide 'real time' information about key areas of performance is a high priority which will improve managers' understanding of activity within their service and support improved performance management.

2.2 'No Wrong Door' project for adolescent Looked After Children. This project provides an integrated model of care, placements and outreach for complex adolescents. At its heart are 2 children's homes/specialist hubs. It promotes a systematic approach to working with;

- Children in Need
- Children on the Edge of Care
- Looked After Children
- Care leavers

It provides a holistic approach to 'wrap' services around the young person. It stresses the importance of one consistent person who builds a relationship with the young person and that person stays working with them no matter where they move through care. This can be in addition to the allocated social worker. This person is champion and advocate for the child and under takes this role pro-actively and as a good parent would.

There is strong Partnership commitment into specialist hubs working with young people to develop strengths and reduce risk. The priorities are to reduce high risk behaviour and empower young people to build and restore relationships

The 'No Wrong Door' approach ensures that, through one key worker, young people access the right services at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs

It ensures that their needs, no matter how diverse, are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers. The integrated team stays with the young person throughout their journey, be it to prevent care, in care, including health education and social care, across care and out of the care system. It ensures young people are not passed from service to service (door to door) and they have a dedicated, highly trained team around them.

The 'No Wrong Door' model operate from two hubs in different parts of North Yorkshire, bringing together a variety of accommodation options, a range of services and outreach support under one management umbrella. It provides consistent relationships and continuity of key worker as young people move to more independent accommodation.

It promotes a common approach to working with young people across different staff specialism through common training and management and aims to:

- Reduce vulnerabilities
- Engage in education, training and work readiness
- Improve emotional wellbeing
- Reduce criminal activity
- Raise levels of engagement
- Reduce costs to the Local Authority, the NHS and the Criminal Justice system
- For those in residential care it will maintain a relationship of key carers well beyond the physical move from a residential unit, affording our most complex young people a similar opportunity to those who 'stay put' with foster carers. A key aspect of this model is the maintenance of carer relationships throughout a journey

At the point of North Yorkshire developing this model (June 2014) there were 468 LAC of which 229 were aged 12 - 17 years. On an annual basis it is anticipated that the hubs will work with approximately 70 -100 of the hardest to engage young people in placements and 300 - 400 young people on the edge of care. 'No Wrong Door' has played a critical role in:

- reducing their LAC population from 468 to 400 by 2017/18)
- reducing the need for external residential beds (which cost on average £3250 per week)
- reduce remands to custody
- prevent placement breakdowns and crisis presentations to the NHS and other services

The multi-agency team comprises of new specialist roles including

- Life Coach (Clinical Psychologist)
- Communications Support (Speech Therapist),
- Family Circles Worker (to rebuild relationships between young people and their families)
- Education Training
- Placement Support and Homelessness Support

It aims to create a staff culture that is based on restorative and solutions focussed approaches and ensures all staff can deliver a range of evidence based interventions.

Following the learning visit the key initial actions for Children's Service is to:

- Promote and plan a stronger corporate and partnership approach to Walsall's Corporate Parenting role with a more determined champion and advocacy role.
- Develop Walsall's model and approach to achieve better outcomes and reduce costs for teenagers that are on the edge of or enter care and those leaving care.
- Start conversations with Partners initially from health, police, youth services and education about how we can achieve a better multi-disciplinary approach 'wrap' around service for young people.
- Strengthen the Service's current work to reduce the number of teenagers in care and better support those leaving care.

A project team with dedicated project management resource will be established in December to develop clear proposals for a Walsall model by the end of

February 2017. This will consist of representatives from a range of services. It will scope local needs by reviewing the profile of the current population of Looked After Children and Children on the edge of care and review current resources. Clear targets will be set to achieve the required reduction of Looked After Children and Children placed Out of Borough to meet the identified budget savings. The Looked After Children tracking process will be used to drive this and provide regular reports on progress to the Children's Performance Board.

The model will deliver improved outcomes for children and young people and there will be a clear set of performance indicators that will be reported on via the Mosaic system and monitored by the Children's Performance Board.

### **3. Potential Financial implications:**

- 3.1 North Yorkshire Children's Services received £2.15m from the DFE Innovation Fund to support the implementation of the model. This was to supplement £4.65m of local investment. The 'No Wrong Door' model will contribute to planned reductions in numbers of Looked After Children which in total is expected to realise savings in excess of £2m per annum. In addition it is expected that there will be financial benefits to the Local Authority, Police and NHS through reduced remands to custody, criminal behaviour, Out of Authority placements, young people missing, placement breakdown, and crisis presentations to CAMHS and A&E.

### **4. Conclusions:**

- 4.1 Given the proposed budget savings in respect of LAC and Out of Borough placements the model provides a potential framework for transforming the approach within Walsall of working with vulnerable teenagers and improving the quality of service they receive. There is work currently underway to explore a more systemic, multi –agency approach to working with this group of young people and there is significant potential, drawing on this and other models to reconfigure current resources to develop our own Walsall model that is better for children and makes savings.