

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 7 October 2019

PRESENT: Councillors: Garvey (Chair), Coupe (Vice Chair); Councillors: Dodds, Hill, Saunders, P Storey (substitute for Councillor Wright), Uddin and J Walker.

OFFICERS: A Brown, J Dixon and I Wright.

APOLOGIES for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cooke and Wright.

**** DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9 September 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of apologies.

MANAGING DEMAND IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES – FURTHER INFORMATION

At its previous meeting on 9 September 2019, the Scrutiny Panel was provided with an introduction to its new scrutiny topic, 'Managing Demand in Children's Social Care Services'. Subsequently, the Panel had requested further information, initially in relation to the Children's Services Transformation Themes.

A Brown, Director of Children's Care, and I Wright, Director of Business, Performance and Change, Children's Services, were in attendance at the meeting to provide the Panel with a presentation specifically in relation to the 'No Wrong Door' Trailblazer with North Yorkshire County Council. This was a primary strand of the 'Edge of Care and Early Intervention Services to reduce the number of children who need to become looked after' transformation theme.

The Panel was informed that as part of the Government's 'Strengthening Families Protecting Children Programme' (SFPC), £84 million would be invested over five years to support 20 local authorities to improve work with families and reduce the number of children entering care.

The SFPC Programme would support selected local authorities to adopt one of three Children's Social Care Innovation Programme projects in their own area.

The projects aimed to improve work with families and safely reduce the number of children/young people entering care by:-

- Strengthening local practice systems
- Developing services that build resilience in families
- Facilitating a confident social work ethos that manages risk safely within the home

The SFPC Innovation Programmes were:-

- Leeds – Family Valued
- Hertfordshire – Family Safeguarding
- North Yorkshire – No Wrong Door

The What Works Well Centre would be evaluating the impact of all three Innovation Programmes.

Local authorities were eligible to join the Programme if they had an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement to be good' and high rates of looked after children compared to their local authority statistical neighbours and rising rates of looked after children in each of the last three years.

Middlesbrough was approached by North Yorkshire County Council and was successful in being selected to be the Trailblazer authority for the No Wrong Door programme.

The model had been operating successfully in North Yorkshire for more than five years and had achieved the position of no child being placed in an external residential placement, other than those with complex disabilities; and all fostered children being placed with in-house foster carers. The Government was interested in testing whether the innovation models could work as successfully within different demographics.

The Panel was informed that this would mean the following for Middlesbrough:-

- £2.71 million of funding across three years (to be matched funded by Middlesbrough Council).
- Support to establish a No Wrong Door residential/edge of care Hub in Middlesbrough.
- Collaboratively developing a bespoke and phased implementation plan.
- Developing a shared vision, language and practice framework.
- Support from NYCC's Central Delivery Team to establish Middlesbrough's Hub.
- Benefitting from building an integrated team with embedded specialist roles.
- Safely reducing looked after children and reducing expensive out of area placements.
- Keeping young people more safely in their families and communities.
- Developing a Restorative Practice Training Academy.

It was explained that No Wrong Door was a new way of providing support to young people who were within or on the edge of the care system. It replaced traditional council-run young peoples' homes with hubs combining residential care with fostering. It aimed to keep young people safe but in a different way whilst building resilience in families.

In North Yorkshire, two six-bedroom Hubs had been created – one in Scarborough and one in Harrogate. The Hubs provided short term placements, with no young person staying at the Hub for more than one month, and edge of care support.

Each Hub had a dedicated team that included:-

- A life coach who was a clinical psychologist
- A speech therapist
- Two community foster families who worked out of the hub and were part of the professional team
- Community supported lodging places for 16 and 17-year-olds, again staffed by people who were specially trained and part of the professional team.

Every young person in the No Wrong Door programme was given one key worker supported by a single team of trusted and skilled workers. These workers remained with the young person throughout all circumstances to ensure they received the right services at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs.

The What Works Well Centre for Children's Social Care would be evaluating the impact of the programme.

No Wrong Door had eight 'non negotiables'. These were eight essential values, principles and ways of working together required to be faithful to the No Wrong Door approach. These were:-

- Is this good enough for my child? Placements should be as good as the care you would give your own child.
- Residential care was short term. Should not be long term for the vast majority of young people, always look for better options.
- No out of area placements. No placements with private companies.
- No young person was 'unfosterable'. All young people should be given an equal chance.
- High support, high challenge. Be clear on expectations.
- Right support, right place, right time. Fostering, residential hub and edge of care provision all managed by the Service Manager resulting in no gaps in the service.
- No move unless it's the right move. All resources devoted to a young person in NWD to achieve the objectives. Do not move too quickly.
- Forward looking and aspirational. Look to achieve the best outcomes for young people throughout their lives.

In addition, NWD had 10 'distinguishers' or practical elements of the operating model that set it apart from traditional services:-

- Progress to permanence
- Stickability of key worker
- Fewer referrals, less stigma.
- Robust training strategy.
- No 'heads on beds' culture.
- No appointment assessments.
- Core offer.
- Reduce risk.
- Close partnership working.
- Aspirations drive practice.

In short, NWD was a whole system approach to practice. It required Children's Care and its partners to think differently about risk management and safeguarding adolescents ensuring that the right services were available at the right time in the right place to meet the needs of young people.

The NWD specialist hub would provide high need supported lodgings, supported accommodation, bespoke placement options, hub community families – all linked to edge of care support. Each young person was supported by a dedicated key worker and had direct access to a support team consisting of speech and language therapist, clinical psychologist (life coach), homelessness support and bespoke placements, family relationship support, embedded Police intelligence roles, NWD carers and supported lodgings, flexible NWD Hub Team, NWD specialist tutor and NWD project support.

In relation to NWD's approach to contextual safeguarding, the Panel was informed that North Yorkshire had developed a multi-agency approach to managing and reducing risk for the most vulnerable young people. This approach was agreed with key partners and was underpinned by a legally based data and intelligence sharing agreement. North Yorkshire had established the 'RAISE' concept around being risk-sensible:-

R – Risk
A – Analysis
I – Intervention
S – Solution &
E – Evaluation

The Panel was presented with quantifiable evidence as to how NWD was working positively since its introduction in North Yorkshire. In the first 18 months there had been:-

- 92% reduction in hospital admissions.
- 88% reduction in visits to A&E.
- Arrests were down 38%, with charges down 52%.
- Missing children were down 68%.
- £205,585 savings to Police.
- 85% decrease in the use of Independent Fostering Agencies.
- The time young people spent in residential placements had reduced from 134 days in year one, to 107 days in year two and 5 days in year three.
- Only two external placements had been used since NWD started.
- Since the introduction of NWD, the number of new children becoming looked after had reduced from 16% to 11%.

North Yorkshire would work with local authorities to support culture change through NWD by sharing evaluation, evidence, data, narrative, experience, design and delivery, learning and challenges. It would support local authorities to:-

- Identify what was required for a transformational change journey.
- Translate NWD values into key design principles that reflected systemic culture change.
- Collaborate with young people, key teams and partners.
- Secure permissions, buy-in, participation and momentum.
- Develop an operational model – NWD central delivery and management team.
- Help capture the right data to support overarching evaluation and sustainability plans.

In terms of National reach and influence, NWD had been visited by several ministers and cited as good practice in the Narey report into residential care.

A discussion ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- A Panel Member commented that North Yorkshire covered a much larger area than Middlesbrough and that Harrogate and Scarborough were both different to Middlesbrough in terms of demographics. It was queried whether the programme could be compared 'like for like' in both areas as, for example, it would be more difficult for Middlesbrough to achieve the same position as North Yorkshire in relation to no out of area placements, as Middlesbrough was a significantly smaller area geographically. The Director acknowledged that both areas were very different and that this was why the model was being tested in Middlesbrough to assess whether the model could be successfully adapted to work in different areas. In terms of 'out of area placements', Middlesbrough used a measure of 'an area within 20 miles of Middlesbrough' which meant that a number of its in-house foster carers lived outside of Middlesbrough but within a 20 mile radius, (eg Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool). Those carers were still monitored and controlled by Middlesbrough Council. The task was to try and reduce the number of foster and residential placements that were not in-house, ie placements with other Councils/private companies/IFAs.
- It was highlighted that Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire had a similar number of looked after children but Middlesbrough had approximately a quarter of North Yorkshire's population. Children in Middlesbrough were more likely to have networks and to know each other and a number of children were placed well away from Middlesbrough deliberately for safety reasons.
- A Panel Member acknowledged that some children needed to be placed in external placements for safeguarding reasons and queried whether there were any other reasons for external placements. In response, it was explained that there were two factors: one was that some children were placed in residential homes located in Middlesbrough but that the homes were operated by private companies, such placements were usually made when Middlesbrough's in-house provision was unable to meet the child's needs, for example, complex problems, therapy required. Safety was another factor for out of area external placements. Middlesbrough currently had eleven children placed in in-house residential care but had 68 children that required residential care, meaning that 57 were placed in external residential placements.

- In response to a query, it was confirmed that Middlesbrough currently had two residential homes - one four-bedroomed and one three-bedroomed. The homes were intended to be more like a family home as this was better for the young people, although it made provision more expensive in terms of the level of fixed costs.
- In relation to the £2.7 million match funding over three years required by Middlesbrough Council, it was explained that the Council had already budgeted to undertake more edge of care work and that part of that money would be used to establish NWD. The cost of match-funding NWD would be less than the cost of providing a young person with a residential placement, therefore, NWD would effectively pay for itself during the three year period. Success of the programme would be evident towards the end of the three-year period in order for the appropriate way forward to be considered.
- In response to a query, it was confirmed that the location of the NWD hub would be in an existing Council building which was currently being renovated. The building was already registered for use as a children's facility and appropriate planning permission had been granted.
- It was queried what the success rate of family group conferencing was. The Director responded that family group conferencing (FGC) had been around for a long time, however, last year the department had recently been restructured to establish a dedicated team delivering FGC. The team included four practitioners. FGC was well established in Middlesbrough and fitted in with the work of Signs of Safety and No Wrong Door. It worked by bringing together family, extended family and friends to establish a safety plan and to provide support networks for children at risk of becoming looked after. The Director stated she would be happy to provide details of how many families had been worked with in FGC over the last six months.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance and informative presentation.

AGREED that the information provided be noted and considered in the context of the Panel's current scrutiny topic.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update to the Panel in relation to the business conducted at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 16 September and 3 October 2019, namely:-

16 September 2019

- Call-in - long term lease of land at Gresham to Thirteen Housing. (The decision was to refer back to the Executive for further consideration).

3 October 2019

- Strategic Plan Update, Quarter One 2019/20.
- Final Report - Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - Social Care Support for Older Carers.
- Final Report – Health Scrutiny Panel – Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services.
- New statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny: Creating a challenge culture.
- Executive Forward Work Programme.
- Scrutiny Panel Chair's updates.
- The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Strategic Director for Finance, Governance and Support - overview of the work within Finance, Governance and Support.
- Scrutiny Panel Work Programmes for 2019/20.
- Executive Forward Work Programme.
- Role of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel.
- Scrutiny Panel progress reports.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was scheduled for 4 November 2019 at 4.00pm.