

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL AND THE ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATES OF MEETINGS: 14TH NOVEMBER AND 21ST NOVEMBER 2014

SUBJECT OF REPORT: LIFE COURSE (CRADLE TO GRAVE) WORKING GROUP

TOWN OR PARISH: NONE SPECIFIC

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: COUNCILLOR ANNE KEMP

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member for Adult Care and the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services be recommended to approve

(1) that officers continue to develop and implement effective pathways for disabled children with complex needs to take them through to adulthood, to ensure that their progress through the health, education and social care cycles brings about the best outcomes for them and their families, with the aim of developing a near seamless pathway from childhood to adulthood, with particular emphasis on transition protocols;

(2) that officers further explore the funding implications of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans introduced by the Children and Families Act with particular regard to the provision for the age range 18-25 years;

(3) that officers further explore, consider and report back on the challenges and benefits of a developing the role of a 'key worker' for disabled children with complex needs to take them through to adulthood, with the aim of developing a near seamless pathway from childhood to adulthood;

(4) that having regard to the success of the Older People's Champions Group, officers explore and develop an engagement process for the parents of disabled children to enable them to communicate directly with Members;

(5) that officers explore the possibility of broadening the scope of the post in housing services currently working primarily with people with a learning disability to cover people with a physical or sensory impairment;

(6) that the report and recommendations be referred to the People and Communities Governance Group;

(7) that officers report back on the above matters in six months' time to the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel and the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel;

(8) that this working group endorses the outcomes of the Respite Care and Short Breaks Working Group.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out the detailed work undertaken by the Life Course (Cradle to Grave) Working Group, and contains a number of recommendations for further work.

2. POLICY

2.1 The work of the working group meets the corporate aim of enhancing health and well-being. There is also a range of legislation and policy relating to disabled children and young people, children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their parents, carers and families that the work of this group has touched on.

3. DETAILS

3.1 The working group was originally set up by the Panel to investigate the following-

- The opportunity to improve services and promote independence across the life course (including reviewing the transitions bridge) for disabled children and adults
- Identification of cost pressures and the potential for savings to impact on the 2015-16 budget
- Options for delivering services in alternative ways (this could include having one children and adult disability service/pathway).

3.2 The working group's investigation was in the following context-

- To improve where possible, the continuity of care around transition from childhood to adulthood (recognising the separate legal duties on local authorities for children and adults and noting also the coming Care Act)
- Possible opportunity to generate efficiencies in working practice and realise budget savings
- Service provision - To exploit opportunities for further integration and to support service transformations across the Council.

3.3 The working group comprised Councillors Anne Kemp (Chairman), Mary Blatchford, Colin Hall, Jill Iles, Annabel Tall and Roz Willis.

3.4 Members met with and/or received advice from a range of officers from the council and the North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group. These are listed in section 4 of this report.

3.5 The working group was asked to complete its investigation, finalise its report and submit its conclusions and recommendations to the 14th November and 21st November 2014 meetings of the Panels.

3.6 The sections below summarise the work and findings of the group.

Focus

3.7 The original focus of the working group was to consider options for delivering services in alternative ways. This could include having one children and adult disability service or a single pathway. At an early stage, the working group recognised and agreed the following-

- That the focus of the working group would be the cohort of people with the most complex needs. It was considered that if successful the lessons could be applied to other cohorts where applicable.
- That the initial focus was to be on the 18-25 age range having regard to the wish of the working group to improve services and promote independence across the life course.
- That it was more helpful to explore a "single seamless straight-forward pathway" for children and young people through services rather than a single team or service. This would reflect the direction of policy and service delivery in children and adult services over recent years.
- Focus on transitions and developing services contributing to a single pathway.

3.8 The working group in its discussions with officers were keen to know what worked well, where there were challenges, and what could be done to develop / improve services. The group was also keen to understand the impact of legislative change on current services, and to support any new opportunities which this presented for improving service users experiences of accessing and receiving support.

Children and Families Act

3.9 The working group were briefed in some detail of the changes that would be brought about in policy and services for disabled children and young people and children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by the Children and Families Act. A key change is the introduction of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). These will replace statements of SEN. The intention is for the EHCP to be much broader in their scope, to include all relevant agencies, and to run until the young person is 25. The North Somerset Vulnerable Learning Service (VLS) is embracing this desire for a fundamental change and is contributing to the implementation of the EHCP in North Somerset in partnership with health and social care.

3.10 Another key element of the changes to the Act is the introduction of a "Local Offer (LO). The LO is intended to provide disabled children and young people, children and young people with SEN and their parents, carers and families with a comprehensive source of information about services available to them. It is hoped that this will broaden and widen the choice they will have and also enable children, young people, their parents and carers to be informed as early as possible of potential services and support.

- 3.11 During discussions of the implication of the Act that children and young people will now be covered by an EHCP to the age of 25, it was identified by officers from the Clinical Commissioning Group that this could have implications for funding of services. It was not yet clear as to what these would be specifically, but members of the working group were concerned that these should be clarified at the earliest possible state.

It is anticipated that whilst needs will remain unchanged, the right to request a personal budget will raise expectations. Therefore, it will be important to manage those expectations. It is also important to bear in mind that the continuing healthcare package does not automatically continue beyond the age of 18.

Transitions

- 3.12 A previous member working group has considered the transition process. Over the last five years there have been significant changes and improvements made to the transition process. There is now an effective governance structure, policies and protocols and there is a clear transition process and specific transition workers in post.
- 3.13 The changes have assisted in significantly improving the experience of the transition process by disabled children and young people, children and young people with SEN and their parents and carers. They have also assisted in bringing about considerable reductions in the costs of care packages.
- 3.14 It was recognised however that the introduction of the Children and Families Act would have an impact on the existing policies and process. It was felt helpful therefore and supported by the working group that the existing transition protocols should be revised to take account of the introduction of the Act.
- 3.15 During the discussion on the transition process it was recognised that the service was predominantly focused on children and young people with a learning disability. This was to be expected as there are more children and young people with a learning disability, but members asked that a specific piece of work be undertaken exploring the experience of transition of children and young people with a physical or sensory impairment (psi) or those children with multiple needs and disabilities.
- 3.16 In terms of the numbers of disabled children and young people with psi who are known to and proceed through the transition process, this is put 3-4 a year on average. Most disabled children and young people with psi who come through the transition process are educated in mainstream schools.
- 3.17 The transition pathway is different for disabled children and young people with psi. The transition team if they are made aware become involved at 14 and 16. They attend the relevant transition and planning meetings. The disabled child and young person with psi should move over to the adult locality team at 17.5.
- 3.18 The aspirations of disabled children and young people with psi are no different from those of all children and young people. Overwhelmingly, it is to achieve living independently and to gain employment. Many go on to some form of further and higher education after college. Where employment is achieved it is often with the support of schemes such as Access to Work which provide various forms of

assistance to disabled people to maintain employment. There are still however higher levels of unemployment amongst disabled people of working age compared to non-disabled people.

- 3.19 In terms of any challenges in the transition of disabled children and young people with psi that are different from other disabled children and young people the one that was raised most often, was the difficulty of identifying accessible accommodation if this was required for a disabled young person wishing to live independently. The issue appears to be both the lack of suitably accessible accommodation being available where and when required and for disabled children and young people with a learning disability moving through transition, it does not seem as easy to plan for and identify suitable accommodation. There is a worker in strategic housing who supports developing accommodation for people with a learning disability but at present their brief does not include psi. Members agreed that they would recommend for officers to explore whether this post could be widened to include children and young people with a physical or sensory impairment too.

Key Working

- 3.20 The working group discussed the issue of key working. The concept of key working is that there would be a "key worker" who would be the main contact for the disabled children, young person and their family, and that this worker would try and co-ordinate and have a overview of all the services that the child, young person and there family were receiving. This approach is followed in some local authorities and is available to some families in North Somerset (i.e., those with an allocated social worker) but not to all families with children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- 3.21 In many cases the key worker is a professional already involved in supporting the child or family with a responsibility for securing or supporting access to services, such as a Social Worker. However, the group noted that it was not necessarily the case that it needed to be a specific professional role or type of worker, as the benefit of the "key worker" function was primarily focused on coordination, communication and supporting families along the "pathway" rather than specific therapeutic inputs.
- 3.22 Members of the working group reflected that the provision of key workers was something that parents and carers of disabled children and young people and children and young people with SEN had consistently raised as something they would wish to see considered. The working group also considered officers' reflections on the experience of implementing the 'lead professional' role in Children's Services - particularly noting the complexities of providing the continuity that parents sought and the potential differences in some professional roles across the age range. Therefore the working group agreed to recommend that officers in North Somerset should further explore the opportunities and challenges of a 'key worker' concept spanning the transition from children's to adults' services.

Personal Budgets

- 3.23 The working group were aware of the introduction and implementation of personalisation including personal budgets in adult care. In recent years a similar approach has been implemented in children's services and there has been a significant increase in the number of families receiving direct payments as part of their package of support. There is currently a pilot scheme to extend provision of

personal budgets in children and young people services. The Children and Families Act is seeking to drive forward the use of personalisation in services for Disabled children and young people and children and young people with SEN. The Council's approach is to carefully assess the impact of direct payments to children at present, given the high cost of some care packages and the highly individual nature of the commissioned services which provide support. However, parents and carers have clearly shown an interest in adopting this facility as it is more widely offered to them.

Transferable Skills

3.23 Members of the working group identified that there could be some benefit in people working in disabled children and young people services and disabled adult services respectively sharing with each other experience and knowledge. Members felt that some experience and knowledge could be transferable and that this would facilitate and further improve transition processes and the pathway from children to adult services.

Engagement

3.24 The working group recognised the importance of effective engagement and, consultation. A paper was requested by the working group setting out what engagement processes there were with disabled children and young people, children and young people with SEN and their parents, carers and families. The key points of the report were:

- North Somerset had a tradition of engagement with people who use its services. Over the past twenty years the focus of this engagement had been formal consultation with recognised organisations deemed to represent the community.
- This approach had evolved into engagement, involvement and most recently co-production and engaging with stakeholders from the earliest possible point and working together to produce a policy or service.
- The People and Communities Directorate had been developing a co-production policy and process with key stakeholders. This would be launched shortly.
- There was recognition that there will always be a tension around how much real change can be brought about through engagement and involvement. Best practise made clear from the outset what the engagement is, what it is intended to do and what it can or cannot change.
- One area of engagement where the Council had not been as strong as it would wish was engagement directly with both non disabled children and young people and disabled children and young people. Work was taking place to set up a forum of children and young people to be an engagement body, and direct engagement is taking place over the summer with disabled children and young people and children and young people with SEN.

3.25 The report also set-out a number of issues that have been consistently raised by parents, carers and families of disabled children and young people and children and young people with SEN over the last 10 years. Whilst it was acknowledged by

members of the working group that the Authority has been responding to and taking forward work in many of the areas, the group did express some concern that the issues do not appear to have changed significantly over a period of time.

- 3.26 The success of the Older People's Champions Group (OPCG) regarding the over 65s was acknowledged. It was suggested that the possibility of extending this good practice to engagement with the parents and carers of adults be explored.

The OPCG is made up of councillors from each of the Council's scrutiny panels, senior managers from NHS North Somerset and the Council's People and Communities Directorate and representatives from each of the five Senior Community Links. The OPCG proactively supports the agenda for early intervention and has a key role in reviewing the direction and progress of this strategy. It also considers issues outside health and social care. There is currently no comparable group in children's services, though there are numerous parallels with the experiences of parents of disabled children and young people, who are often using a number of health, education and care services at any given time, and could provide valuable insights into how our pathways and support services work in practice. This in turn could usefully inform ongoing strategic development of services for children and young people, especially those which support their transition to adulthood which is often a complex and confusing time for families.

- 3.27 The working group consider that it is crucial to engage with and talk to stakeholders and to do so from the earliest possible point, i.e., co-production - working together to produce a policy or service. The working group is confident that the move towards co-production will meet many of the views and concerns expressed by stakeholders about consultation and engagement. These have included involving people at the earliest possible point, having a real ability to change and influence decisions, making sure everyone who wants to, has the chance and opportunity to have their say and to allow enough time for people to get involved.

Conclusions

- 3.28 Based on the work undertaken to date, the group has concluded that:

- (1) Existing transition protocols should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act with particular reference to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans;
- (2) The funding implications of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans should be explored, particularly regarding the provision for the age range 18-25 years;
- (3) We would wish the feasibility of developing a key worker for disabled children with complex needs to be explored;
- (4) There was a need to ensure that the progress of disabled children with complex needs resulted in the best outcomes for them and their families. This could be best achieved by the continued development and implementation of effective pathways;
- (5) An engagement process for the parents of disabled children to enable them to communicate directly with Members would be beneficial;
- (6) Recognising that the transition pathway is different for disabled children and young

people with psi, the disabled child and young person with psi should move over to the adult locality team at 17.5; additionally, that a specific piece of work be undertaken exploring the experience of transition of children and young people with a physical or sensory impairment (psi) or those children with multiple needs and disabilities;

- (7) The working group was concerned about the difficulty of identifying accessible accommodation for children and young people with a physical or sensory impairment. It is considered therefore, that the feasibility of widening the role of the worker in strategic housing who supports developing accommodation for people with a learning disability to include psi should be explored;
- (8) The opportunities and challenges of a 'key worker' concept spanning the transition from children's to adults' services should be further explored.

Respite Care and Short Breaks Working Group

3.29 The working group is aware of the outcomes of the Respite Care and Short Breaks Working Group regarding the development of a 14-25 service which will provide more effective transitional arrangements between children's and adults' services, will promote individuals' journey towards independence and will ensure that high quality short breaks remain available to those families which need them (as reported to the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel on 12th September). Our working group supports and endorse those outcomes.

Recommendations

See the first page of this report.

4. CONSULTATION

The working group's findings were informed by consultation with the following officers of North Somerset Council and the North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group:

- John Wilkinson, Assistant Director Strategy, Commissioning and Performance
- Claire Leandro, Assistant Director, Adult Care
- Dali Sidebottom, Children's Commissioning Manager, North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Alun Davies, Planning and Policy Manager Finance and Resources, People and Communities
- Christine Jupp, Planning and Development Manager, People and Communities
- Donna Miles, Finance and Resource Service Manager, People and Communities
- Gabrielle Stacey, Professional Lead Educational Psychologist
- Amelia Oughtibridge, Team Leader, Transitions
- Mike Newman, Strategic Commissioning Team Leader

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Services for people with disabilities are a significant area of expenditure in both adults and children's services and for both the Council and NHS partners. The specific recommendations of the working group do not have significant direct financial implications. However the next phase of the work may identify proposals for improvements to processes which may have financial implications, both in the shape of potential efficiencies and additional costs. Given the current financial challenges facing the Council and the CCG, enhancements to services will not be affordable unless any costs are exceeded by efficiencies.

The working group identified a need for further work to understand the financial implications of the Children and Families Act 2014 for both the Council and the CCG. There is a recommendation to this effect.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

It is very important that any significant changes in services for people with disabilities are carefully thought through and widely consulted on, with the involvement of service users and carers at the earliest possible stage. If this does not happen there will be a risk of loss of service continuity and poorer outcomes for users. Equally, too cautious approach can lead to opportunities to improve services and outcomes being missed.

The recommendations of the working group offer a measured approach to improvement, focusing on aspects with the greatest opportunity for improvement. This mitigates the identified risks.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Public Sector Equality Duties (PSEDs) (as defined by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) help to ensure that goods and services are accessible to, and meet the diverse needs of all users to ensure that no one group is disadvantaged in accessing public goods and services. These duties apply to nine 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council's duties include advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between groups.

Making services for people with disabilities and their families and carers more coherent and integrated across the 'life course' should have a positive impact from an equalities point of view.

8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Improving outcomes and reducing the costs is a priority in the Corporate Plan.

This investigation by the working group aligns with the values in the Corporate Plan of putting people first and working with and involving others.

Members of the Working Group

Councillors Anne Kemp (Chairman), Mary Blatchford, Colin Hall, Jill Iles, Annabel Tall and Roz Willis.

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