



Report of Service Delivery Manager for Family Support

Report to the director of Children & Families

Date: November 2019 2019

Subject: Additional resource for adolescence through Targeted Support



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| Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Has consultation been carried out? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will the decision be open for call-in? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary

1. Main issues

- A proportion of Earned Autonomy funding (£375,000) has been earmarked for investment in the development of support services across the city working with adolescents and their families.
- A review has been completed on the Signpost service, which has resulted in the need for further investment in expanding resources. Our intention to refocus the work of this established service on working with adolescents on the edge of care but also to connect with Leeds residential strategy to utilise the service to support young people’s rehabilitation back into their families from care. High quality, responsive family support is crucial in both avoiding young people coming into care but also allowing them to return home quickly but safely if they have come into care in a crisis.
- We would also want to use this money to embed a re-thinker in early help including signpost to embed formulation and the Leeds Practice Principles.
- There is a recognition that potential also exists to extend Leeds FGC offer deeper into our Early Help services, that utilising wider networks of family or community support is one way we can better support young people and their families, harnessing more natural forms of localised support.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- Supporting adolescents and their families to ensure positive outcomes such as reducing anti-social behaviour, offending and persistent non-attendance. This would reduce the number of children that are NEET, working with families and education to get young people back into school which would support the 3 A strategy.
- Young people remaining within their own home and communities and receiving the right support from an experienced and well-resourced service would reduce the number of adolescents coming into care and as such safely reduced the number of children being Looked After by the Local Authority.
- The service will work towards supporting the 3 obsessions named within the Children's and Young People's plan 2018-2023. Safely and appropriately reduce the number of children looked after. Reduce the number of young people not education, employment and training. Improve achievement, attainment and attendance at school
- This would in turn save money by supporting young people and their families within their own home.

3. Resource Implications

- It is proposed that a small 6 month pilot project is undertaken around the Emergency Duty Team to enhance access to the support young people and their families receive out of hours. The intention is to assist families, deescalate critical situations and connect with family and community supports to avoid children and young people unnecessarily becoming looked after through the Emergency Duty Team. In order to undertake this pilot it is proposed that the following posts are created;
- 3 x Family Support workers based in Signpost at PO2 - £104,364 exc on costs
- 1 x Lead Practice Development Facilitator at P06 £ £45,591 exc on costs.1 year contract.
- 1 x FGC co-ordinator PO2 £34,788 exc on costs. 1 year contract.
- The funding for these post will come from the £375,000 set aside from the adolescent Early Help innovation and development as part of the Earned Autonomy.
- The expectation is that these developments can be sustained next year and beyond through government commitments to sustain the Troubled Families programme beyond 2020.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children & Families is recommended to use the investment through the adolescent strand of the Early Autonomy money to create three new posts within Signpost and an additional post within the rethink team and FGC to support this service in delivering sustainable change for young people and their families as detailed in paragraph 3.

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The proposal is to re-position, reprioritise and invest in the Signpost project a well-established and highly regarded Family support service operating in the 3 main areas within the city. This would allow the service to work in the main with children and young people, 10 years and over with an emphasis on more intensive family support and intervention, in an effort to avoid family breakdown and unnecessary receptions into care. In addition, Signpost have a part to play in working to safely rehabilitate children home from care. This includes the 28 day approach.

2. Background information

2.1 Leeds were one of 13 Local Authorities that were given Earned Autonomy through the troubled families' agenda. Earned Autonomy funding has already allowed additional investment to be made in our MST programmes and mapping of our adolescent risk management arrangements with a view to streamlining.

2.2 The bringing together of a range of services under the generic heading of Early Help provides an exciting opportunity to better integrate and connect a range of services working in a more consistent way with adolescents utilising the Leeds Practice Principles and adopting formulation approaches to better understand family's difficulties, working with them in a more focused and supportive ways.

2.3 We are investing additional resources into our formulation team to build capacity and provide greater support to our clusters, RES teams, Signpost and Family Action (our third sector commissioned Family Support service) to utilise and better embed formulation and develop more consistent service delivery specifically around working with adolescents and the families.

3. Main issues

3.1 The focus of investment in adolescent early help needs to be around those young people where there are escalating concerns around; school attendance, criminality, violence, substance misuse, exploitation etc. where without intervention and support there are dangers of family breakdown and these young people having to come into Local Authority care or becoming homeless.

3.2 In practical terms we are looking to recruit 3 additional Family Support workers; based in each of the 3 Signpost teams (this will augment current recruitment to fill existing vacancies).

3.3 Signpost will be closely aligned and be an embedded part of each of the 3 Early Help Hubs contributing to an "adolescent" offer within the Hubs. Signpost will work closely with all of the Domestic Violence, Family Support and Mental Health Specialists in the Hubs with an expectation of very close collaborative working with the embedded PSO's. We are also exploring the deployment of an education specialist to connect with Signpost and potentially the Early Help hubs and help to smooth education, transitions and broker appropriate education support.

3.4 The Signpost service will undertake a crucial role in providing expertise and support around the provision of creative, robust, collaborative but evidenced supports to families in relation to the young people in their care. Delivery of parenting programmes for families caring for teenagers will form an element of the Signpost offer.

3.5 It is proposed that an additional Rethink Facilitator will be employed initially for a year to the Formulation team as part of the Earned Autonomy adolescent response and provide specific and ring-fenced support to the Early Help hubs, Signpost and Family Action, with an objective of embedding Formulation as the cornerstone of the work of these services. In practical terms this will involve the formulator; awareness raising, modelling and coaching practice within these new services with the objective of developing a foundation of consistent practice and interconnected communication and joined-up working.

3.6 Family Group Conferencing appears to be underdeveloped and insufficiently utilised within Early Help and has traditionally presented engagement challenges. We are proposing the secondment of an FGC co-ordinator, initially for a year, to scope, develop but also deliver some additional FGC practice into Early Help. They will utilise wider networks to support families where there are growing concerns about young people but also investigate the role of FGC in sustainability planning at the conclusion of Early Help interventions.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 These proposals have been developed with Managers from the following services; Families First, Signpost, Rethink and Family Group Conferencing. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Safeguarding and Targeted Senior Leadership Team.

4.1.2 Trade Union colleagues and the lead Elected Member will be consulted with. These proposals have also been shared with Finance and HR colleagues.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The proposal will be working with some of the most vulnerable adolescence and their families who often struggle to engage with universal service such as education, Leeds City Council services, such as housing, LASBAT and the Police.

4.2.2 We will be working to keep young people with their families, reduce anti-social behaviour and offending. To support the young person to either continue or re-engage with education or training.

4.2.3 Throughout the work we will support the young person and their families to engage with both other targeted and universal services depending on need.

4.2.4 See Impact Assessment Screening form

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 Please see section 2 which highlights implications for the Best Council Plan.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 Signpost are working towards becoming a paperless office and will be using the Mosaic recording system by January 2020.

4.3.3 The team are encouraged to work flexibly, including working from home, taking public transport or hot desking at their nearest office.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 Please see resource implications in section 3.
- 4.4.2 The proposal is that working and engaging young people and their families within the home or return home within 28 days will reduced the number of children becoming looked after which will have a resource implication.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 This is a significant operational decision and as such is not subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The risk is that if we do not provide the additionality to a service that supports adolescence remaining and returning to their families, then these young people may become looked after children.
- 4.6.2 The young people may become or remain NEET and not engage with universal service.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Having considered all the possible implication, the creation of these additional posts using funding that has already been agreed through Earned Autonomy would be beneficial for Leeds City Council, both in value for money and linking to the Children's and Young People Plan, but also for the young people, their families and the local communities.

6. Recommendations

The Director of Children & Families is recommended to use the investment through the adolescent strand of the Early Autonomy money to create three new posts within Signpost and an additional post within the rethink team and FGC to support this service in delivering sustainable change for young people and their families as detailed in paragraph 3.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.