

Corporate Parenting Panel

25 May 2018

Supporting Solutions - edge of care



Report of Lisa Wood, Operations Manager, Supporting Solutions Service, Durham County Council

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report will update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on activity and developments of the Supporting Solutions Service (SSS).

Background

- 2 In August 2017, it was acknowledged that Children's Services were experiencing a number of issues, these included :-
 - As of the 4th August 2017, there were over 800 children in the care of the authority, a 29.9% increase since April 2015. This equates to an additional 185 children and young people.
 - A need for more targeted intervention and support offered to families that results in fewer children and young people entering looked after service and therefore a reduced financial impact on the LAC budget.
 - Lack of appropriate overnight accommodation for children and young people that present to the Emergency Duty Team, who are unable to remain with their family.
 - Limited in-house respite foster carers available. The change in the statement of purpose at Moorside (an in-house Children's Home), from emergency / respite provision to long-term.

Supporting Solutions Service

- 3 In order to address the above ongoing issues identified, a new multi-agency/disciplinary service which prevents children and young people from moving into the care of the authority has been developed, and was launched on the 1st February 2018.
- 4 The service works with children and young people aged 11 to 17 and their families, offering:
 - An overnight emergency response for children and young people who need to be accommodated outside of the family home or current living arrangement, with a view to working with the family to facilitate the child returning to parents/carers/family/friends.

- Intensive outreach support to children / young people and their families during the day with a view to sustaining current living arrangements and enabling the child / young person to remain at home.
- Respite to children / young people and their families on the cusp of care, whilst working alongside families to sustain and support current living arrangements.
- Mediation and a facilitated Family Group Conferencing.

Flexible Operating Model

- 5 The service recognises that intensive support to families at crisis point is often needed outside of normal working hours. The service operates 7 days per week and operates a duty system until 10pm each night. The Emergency Duty Team also provide crisis cover for children on the edge of care from 10pm – 9am. Families tell us that providing weekend and evening support has been a key factor of the early success of the service.

Supporting Solutions Service

- 6 In the first three months of operation the service has supported **61 young people** (this equates to 51 families).
- 7 During this period **4 young people have had an episode of being looked after** by the local authority. Only **1 young person is currently accommodated** with no imminent plans for a return to the care of parents or family, therefore no role at the present time for SSS.
- 8 As a method of comparing costs. If the 57 young people who were on the edge of care, without the support of the service had become looked after by in-house foster carers for an initial 4 week period. Based on standard Foster carer rates, cost to Children's Services would have been **£91,067.76**

Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

- 9 The service has recruited 3.5 additional full time FGC Workers. This additional resource will enable the service to facilitate an additional 15 conferences per month, with a view to **empowering families to come together and find alternative solutions to families to stay together, and as an alternative to care**. Since February 2017, the FGC service has received **92 referrals for 163 children**.
- 10 In 2016/17 The FGC Service facilitated conferences for 302 children.

- 11 The living arrangement outcomes for the **302 young people** involved with the Family Group Conference Service that were held are demonstrated below;

Outcome for children	Referrals	Young People
Ceased to be Looked After – returned to parent/carers care	7	13
Contact Plan devised	19	41
No agreement could be reached between family members in relation to contact	2	3
Rehabilitation from extended family to parents	13	21
Remain with extended family with support from family members	13	17
Remained Looked After in Local Authority Care	7	9
Remained with extended family	18	34
Remained with parents with support from extended family	82	164
Total	161	302

Conclusion

- 12 The Supporting Solutions Service has now been in operation for 3 months, and has supported 224 children and young people on the edge of care or in need of a family group conference.

Next Steps

- 13 Develop a dedicated edge of care hub, which will include an emergency bed, which will be used to place young people for one night, if the young person cannot remain in their family out of hours or on a weekend.
- 14 Forge strong links with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure families are connected to support services in their own community and can sustain their positive outcomes once planned services via the Supporting Solutions Service come to an end.

Recommendations

- 15 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
- Note the contents of this report
 - Receive a presentation at the meeting on 25 May 2018.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – It is anticipated that more targeted intervention and support offered to families will result in fewer children and young people entering the looked after service and therefore there will be a reduced financial impact on the LAC budget.

Staffing – SSS is suitably staffed, and commissioning to ensure that the service offers appropriate staffing levels based on current need.

Risk – Without the service there is a risk that a lack of appropriate overnight accommodation would be available for children and young people who are unable to remain with their family, and present to the Emergency Duty Team. Risk of YP's entering into the looked after system, making it harder to return and drift into care.

Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty - The needs of all young people are considered on an individual basis

Accommodation – Plans are in place to develop a dedicated edge of care hub, which will include an emergency bed, which will be used to place young people for one night, if the young person cannot remain in their family out of hours or on a weekend.

Crime and disorder – No implications

Human rights – All children and young people have the right to suitable accommodation

Consultation – No implications

Procurement – No implications

Disability Issues - The service will ensure it meets the needs of young people with a disability.

Legal Implications – As Corporate Parents, there is a legal duty to care for our Looked After Children.