

Annex 13 – Minutes of an oral evidence session with Anne Tully, No Wrong Door – Project Manager, Rochdale Borough Council, on 20 August 2020

No Wrong Door Task Group

Minutes of a meeting with Anne Tully, Project Manager – No Wrong Door at Rochdale

Borough Council

Microsoft Teams
3 pm on 20 August 2020

In attendance:

Councillor Lesley Steeds (Chairman)
Councillor Chris Botten
Councillor Liz Bowes
Councillor Barbara Thomson
Councillor Kay Hammond (*ex officio*)
Councillor Chris Townsend

Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny Officer
Bryony Crossland Davies, Democratic Services Assistant

Anne Tully, No Wrong Door Project Manager at Rochdale Borough Council

Key points from the discussion:

1. The attendees agreed that the minutes of the meeting could be published by the Task Group.
2. The Chairman welcomed Anne Tully to the meeting and invited her to give an overview of the process by which Rochdale Borough Council (BC) adopted the No Wrong Door (NWD) model and any insight relating to the model's impact.
3. The Project Manager stated Rochdale BC children's services had been on a journey of innovation over the previous two years and NWD had been part of this systemic change. Rochdale BC worked closely with North Yorkshire County Council on the development and implementation of the model locally, which went live on 1 April 2020.
4. There was an authorising environment from senior management and partners and the Chief Executive was the accountable officer for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Rochdale. The NWD Project Manager stated that both partner buy-in from the beginning and shared common values had been crucial.
5. NWD worked with the premise that no young person is unable to be fostered. Out-of-county placements were not used, and it was acknowledged that some young people may require a residential placement at some point in their lives. NWD enabled flexible and imaginative working within a multidisciplinary team to create bespoke packages.

6. The Project Manager stated that this shared vision did not happen overnight. Workshops on the theory of change were held with all partners to help foster the shared vision underpinning the NWD model.
7. The Project Manager summarised that implementation of the project required an authorising environment from partners, elected members, senior officers, corporate parenting, and those delivering it on an operational basis. The strategic triangle proved helpful for Rochdale in galvanizing an authorising environment. Grant money from the Department for Education (DfE) helped establish NWD from 1 April 2020. Cost-benefit analysis was also important and should be undertaken by local authorities endeavouring to adopt the NWD model.
8. A Member asked about the relationship with North Yorkshire County Council during the project in Rochdale. The Project Manager informed the group that North Yorkshire had supported and challenged Rochdale BC and ensured the ethos of the model was reflected in the local service; during development, North Yorkshire also helped Rochdale BC to anticipate likely challenges that may have arisen.
9. A Member questioned how Rochdale BC had dealt with staffing and recruitment issues. The Project Manager stated that the council had performed better than other local authorities in some areas of recruitment but had performed worse in other areas. They struggled to recruit a hub manager – a registered manager had since been recruited and deputy managers had acted up in the interim. A speech and language coach and a life coach had been recruited successfully. The COVID-19 pandemic had stalled recruitment of portfolio leads and it had been a difficult period generally, due to some staff being required to shield. Regarding key workers, 63 applications were received for the most recently advertised vacancy. No NWD hub carers had been recruited yet but there had been a big increase in foster carer interest and conversion from interest into applications. Discussions with the police regarding the police analyst role had been held. Overall, staff retention had been a more pressing issue than staff recruitment (apart from the hub manager).
10. A Member asked whether there were any noteworthy challenges that SCC should keep under careful observation. The Project Manager stated that it was important to recognise that bringing partner organisations together could be challenging. Training around culture at the beginning of the project and understanding lines of accountability and risk management was also key, particularly for staff from partner organisations who did not have prior experience of residential work. A culture of trust and honesty from the start has a large impact on the quality of care for service users.
11. A Member asked, if Rochdale BC was to introduce the model again, whether anything would be done differently. The Project Manager explained that the capital spend on building the hub in Rochester had been underestimated and thus it was important to acknowledge that additional finance may be required. Despite this, savings had already been made at Rochdale BC. Work with NWD staff on culture, expectations, and the role of specialists was also key. Rochdale BC had five days of training planned before COVID-19, which was subsequently

delivered virtually but needed to be delivered in person; intense face-to-face team working is important at the beginning.

12. A Member asked to what extent with out-of-county placements had been a problem and how the NWD had improved this issue. The Project Manager stated that there had been a reduction of 45 external placements from 2019-2020, including residential, fostering and semi-independent provision as NWD became operational. This had reduced by eight in the previous year, resulting in estimated savings of £3m.
13. The Project Manager highlighted some outcomes since 1 April 2020: three young people who entered into care quickly moved into fostering placements supported by a life coach and were doing very well despite their record of placement breakdowns; a high risk service user who had been placed in a Tier 4 hospital bed was given wrap around support from a life coach who negotiated and worked closely with the community team, enabling them to support the service user, who eventually returned to her family home with short breaks offered when needed. Overall and given the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of lockdown, good achievements had been made

Meeting closed at 3:30 pm

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