

## Benjamin Awkal

---

**From:** Mary Lewis  
**Sent:** 19 August 2020 15:32  
**To:** Benjamin Awkal; Tina Benjamin  
**Cc:** Lesley Steeds; Lesley Steeds; Christopher Botten; Fiona Mackirdy  
**Subject:** RE: Minutes of meeting with Cambridgeshire DCS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Benjamin

Thank you for sending me these minutes of what sounds like an interesting session. I really do appreciate the work the MRG is doing in exploring the pros and cons of the No Wrong Door policy.

I apologise once again for not being able to attend the session on Friday due to a caring commitment.

You suggested that I might make written points, so here are a few, all from a laymen's perspective, to complement the professional view you will get on Friday:

One of the Improvements to previous SCC practice encouraged by Dave was to look at best practice elsewhere (well-evaluated models) and to use it here. No Wrong Door in North Yorkshire is one such model and could help us with our 'teenager' issue.

We know that outcomes for teenagers who come into care are poor. It is too late to make big changes for them, it is hard to find suitable placements for them and they can end up far from Surrey and from meaningful levels of contact with Social Workers etc. We need to have different options for keeping teenagers safe at home. No Wrong Door gives a breathing space in which high quality direct work can happen and families/teenagers can be brought into a workable relationship. It seems therefore to fit well with our Family Resilience Model. The multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding teams and TYS and Adolescent Safeguarding services should all support this model, with expertise from each feeding into the other. These teams have been long-awaited but many professionals arrived in April time and are now settling into the teams as people get back into offices.

Closer to Home is a County Council agreed priority and making fewer teenage placements away from Surrey by using our own residential estate will help with this. Many Members, including those on your committee, write to complain about young people from their areas being placed in Supported Accommodation out of county: this should reduce this.

Unlike Norfolk, we do have a range of Good and Outstanding Residential Homes for Children which we can utilise for NWD. We have experienced management in residential with a proven track record. We currently have capital to spend on upgrading the homes and the opportunity of including some NWD spaces in two of them – I don't want us to miss this opportunity.

During Lockdown, the St Faith's Centre in Leatherhead was quickly adapted by some of our very keen residential social workers to be an emergency placement centre. This was not the same as, but along the lines of, what is envisaged in No Wrong Door. I was very impressed by the enthusiastic way our officers embraced the challenge/opportunity to set this up. I visited the centre and found the work they were doing to be inspiring and making a difference for young people. I don't think all the charisma has to be at the very top of an organisation! We have some charismatic, hard-working and enthusiastic people at different levels and I am confident that they will rise to the challenge of No Wrong Door, having seen what they did during lockdown.

Like all Local Authorities, Surrey faces challenges in Recruitment and Retention of staff. However, being innovative and introducing things like No Wrong Door is a way to attract staff and to retain good people by giving them a new challenge.

So overall I feel that we need to try something new with teenagers and if you come to the conclusion that trying a No Wrong Door approach is not for us, I'd be grateful for your ideas on what we should do, as I don't think more of the same is an option. Perhaps you might also have a view on timing of No Wrong Door or any other new initiative and that too would be useful.

I look forward to hearing what conclusions you come to after your session on Friday. Apologies again for not being there and thank you for your work- in August!

Kind regards,  
Mary

**Mary Lewis**

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families  
Surrey County Councillor, Cobham

**Rosy Beer**

Cabinet Support Officer.

**Leadership Office**

Room 121 | Surrey County Council | County Hall | Penrhyn Road | Kingston upon Thames | Surrey | KT1 2DN

Email: [REDACTED]

**#stayathomesavelives**



---

**From:** Benjamin Awkal <Benjamin.Awkal@surreycc.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 06 August 2020 09:31

**To:** Tina Benjamin <Tina.Benjamin@surreycc.gov.uk>; Mary Lewis <mary.lewis@surreycc.gov.uk>

**Cc:** Lesley Steeds <lesley\_steeds@yahoo.com>; Lesley Steeds <lesley.steeds@surreycc.gov.uk>; Christopher Botten <chris.botten@surreycc.gov.uk>; Fiona Mackirdy <Fiona.Mackirdy@surreycc.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Minutes of meeting with Cambridgeshire DCS

Dear Tina and Mary

Yesterday afternoon, the No Wrong Door Task Group met with the Director for Children and Safeguarding at Cambridgeshire CC, which previously considered introducing the NWD but decided against doing so. At the meeting, concerns were raised about recruiting and retaining the right calibre of staff to enable a NWD to be successful.

I have attached the minutes of the meeting to this email. If the Directorate would like to respond to any of the points raised, the Task Group would welcome that comment.

Kind regards

Benjamin

Benjamin Awkal  
Scrutiny Officer – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee  
Legal & Democratic Services

Democratic Services (Room 122) | Surrey County Council | County Hall | Penrhyn Road | Kingston upon Thames |  
Surrey | KT1 2DN

Email: [benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk)



[Follow Democratic Services: @SCCdemocracy](https://twitter.com/SCCdemocracy)

This page is intentionally left blank