

MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

THE REPORT OF THE NO WRONG DOOR TASK GROUP

Purpose of report: to apprise the Select Committee of the work, findings and recommendations of the No Wrong Door Task Group.

Executive summary

1. Between July and September 2020, the No Wrong Door Task Group assessed the suitability of the No Wrong Door model with regard to its potential introduction in Surrey. The model was first developed by North Yorkshire County Council in 2015 and offers an integrated approach to supporting children and young people aged 12 to 25 who are either in care, on the edge of care or edging to care, or have recently moved to supported or independent accommodation whilst being supported under the No Wrong Door.
2. The Task Group found that the model has been effective at reducing care episodes, improving outcomes for service users and creating cost savings elsewhere. It is also consistent with the priorities and policies of Surrey County Council. The introduction of the model has strong support at member and senior officer level within the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate. Fundamental issues persist with Surrey's children's services; however, despite the presence of some barriers, the conditions in Surrey are such that the model will likely be efficacious if adopted.
3. The Task Group recommends:
 - that the development and introduction of a No Wrong Door service in Surrey continue;
 - that the Corporate Parenting service not agree to terms of accreditation for Surrey's No Wrong Door which are disproportionate to the benefits of the accreditation offered by North Yorkshire County Council or which will prevent the further development of Surrey's No Wrong Door to meet the needs of Surrey's children and young people;

- that when developing and implementing the local service, Corporate Parenting undertake targeted work to develop a shared culture between staff, have regard to the importance of consistent No Wrong Door key workers when developing those roles, wait until the service has become operational before finalising designs for No Wrong Door hubs, consider naming the service something other than 'No Wrong Door', and work with relevant children and young people to agree a name for the service other than 'No Wrong Door'; and
- that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families report on the development, implementation and impact of the No Wrong Door in Surrey, to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee in October 2021, subject to the timely implementation of the model.

Introduction

4. In May 2020, the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning, Councillor Mary Lewis, informed the Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee that the council's Corporate Parenting service ('Corporate Parenting') intended to introduce a new service delivery model to support children in, or at risk of entering, care and suggested that the Select Committee form a task group to assess the suitability of the model. Lesley Steeds, Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee, agreed to chair the task group if formed.
5. The Chairman of the prospective task group subsequently met with the Director of Corporate Parenting and the No Wrong Door Project Manager to discuss Corporate Parenting's proposals.
6. On 10 July 2020, the Select Committee agreed terms of reference formally establishing a task group to investigate and report on the proposed introduction of a No Wrong Door service in Surrey. It was agreed that the Task Group would report in early September 2020.¹ The Task Group comprised:
 - Councillor Lesley Steeds, Chairman
 - Councillor Kay Hammond (*ex officio*)
 - Councillor Chris Botten
 - Councillor Robert Evans
 - Councillor Liz Bowes
 - Councillor Barbara Thomson
 - Councillor Chris Townsend
7. The Task Group thanks those who contributed evidence to its inquiry.

¹ Annex 1

8. Any errors, factual inaccuracies or inconsistencies contained within the report are the responsibility of the Task Group alone and not of those who contributed their knowledge, insight and experiences to the formation of this report.

The objectives of the Task Group

9. The Task Group's agreed objectives were:
 - a) To map the relevant services provided by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate and partners.
 - b) To identify stakeholders and capture and amplify their views at an early stage of the model's development, particularly the views of looked-after children and care leavers.
 - c) To assess the suitability of the No Wrong Door model both in principle and with regard to the Surrey context.
 - d) To make recommendations on the development and implementation of the new model.
 - e) To establish how the success of the No Wrong Door model will be measured.

Evidence gathering

10. All of the evidence that was received in the course of this enquiry with permission for publication can be found in the annexes of this report.

Written evidence

11. The Task Group's first step was to request written evidence from Corporate Parenting, Surrey Police, and nine local authorities with experience of the No Wrong Door, including North Yorkshire County Council, which created the model in 2015. The Task Group periodically wrote to Corporate Parenting to request specific information throughout the course of this inquiry.
12. To understand the needs and views of those who would use a No Wrong Door service, the Task Group collaborated with colleagues in the council's User Voice and Participation service to put questions to the Care Council, a forum for looked-after children aged over 13 years, and the Care Leavers Forum, a forum for care leavers aged 18 to 25.
13. From 20 July 2020 to 4 August 2020, the Task Group ran a public call for evidence in the form of an online survey. The survey contained two sets of questions,² each applicable to one of two groups: 1) looked-after children and care leavers; 2) people and organisations with experience of supporting looked-after children and care leavers. The survey was promoted by Surrey County Council's communications service and Task Group Members.

² Questions available in Annex 2

14. To capture the views of Surrey's clinical commissioning groups and the other public services which are involved in supporting vulnerable children, the Task Group invited the organisations represented on the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board to complete the survey from their organisational perspectives. The membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board may be viewed here: <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=328>.

Table 1: responses to public survey

Respondent type	Number received
Care leaver	0
Looked-after children (LAC)	0
Individual with experience of supporting LAC and care leavers	4
Representative of an organisation with experience of supporting LAC and care leavers	6
Other with experience of supporting LAC and care leavers	2

Oral evidence

15. The Task Group met with the following people to discuss the No Wrong Door model and related matters on the dates stated:
- 5 August 2020: Lou Williams, Service Director for Children and Safeguarding, Cambridgeshire County Council
 - 7 August 2020: User Voice and Participation officers, Surrey County Council
 - 20 August 2020: Anne Tully, No Wrong Door – Project Manager, Rochdale Borough Council
 - 21 August 2020: Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting, Surrey County Council.

Limitations

16. Most organisations from which the Task Group requested evidence were unable to support the enquiry and those which replied to requests for information cited a lack of capacity. Similarly, the commencement and progress of this inquiry was hindered by capacity issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the timing of the inquiry during the August period when Members and officers commonly take annual leave.

Key legal provisions

17. Under the Children Act 2004, Surrey County Council is subject to a number of legal obligations relating to the safeguarding and promotion of child welfare, including to ensure that the council, and those who exercise the council's functions on its behalf, discharges its functions with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.³
18. Under the Children Act 1989, the council is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Surrey and, so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.⁴
19. A child shall be taken to be 'in need' if they are unlikely to, or unlikely to have the opportunity to, achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the council; or their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or they are disabled.⁵
20. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' if they are provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours or is subject to a Care Order or Placement Order. This can include disabled children in receipt of a series of 'respite care' placements. Children cease to be looked after when they return home and a care order is discharged, are adopted, are made subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order or reach 18 years of age.
21. The council's key duty towards looked-after children is to 'safeguard and promote' their welfare and to 'make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the Authority reasonable'.⁶

The Surrey context

22. Following Ofsted's 2018 judgement of Surrey's children's services as 'Inadequate', the council, as part of a wider transformation programme, embarked on an improvement programme to transform children's services. In 2018, the introduction of the No Wrong Door model was first suggested by the then Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning, Dave Hill; however, it was not immediately progressed.⁷

³ Children Act 2004, section 11

⁴ Children Act 1989, section 17

⁵ Children Act 1989, section 17(10)

⁶ Children Act 1989, section 22(3)

⁷ Annex 7

23. At 4 August 2020, there were 996 children and young people in the care of Surrey County Council and 708 care leavers (former looked-after children aged 18-21). Fifty-seven per cent of looked-after children and 66% of care leavers are male.⁸

The needs of looked-after children and care leavers

24. The Task Group asked Corporate Parenting to describe the needs and aspirations of looked-after children and care leavers. The Service identified that children and young people want to stay with their birth families where possible and, if this is not possible, they want to understand why they are in care and to be able to live in a safe and caring environment. They don't want to be moved around and want a consistent social worker, and to have staff and carers who understand them and their story. As they get older, they want to feel supported as they move to independence and want to live in good accommodation and receive support to learn independence skills.⁹
25. As regards the care system, service users have told Corporate Parenting that they need more/better/more readily available staff, foster carers and placements, better communication with young people and between professionals, and for young people and their carers to be listened to. They want better support with mental health, for staff and carers to be better trained, and for improved support in managing familial contact.¹⁰
26. The view of Corporate Parenting is supported by the evidence the Task Group received via the online survey (Appendix 1), the findings of the draft Big Survey 2020 (Annex 15), and the evidence of User Voice and Participation (Annexes 14 and 16).

Adolescent entrants

27. Young people who enter care as adolescents ('adolescent entrants') can traditionally spend considerable periods of time in residential care, often without sufficient planning and support to re-engage in family relationships or form strong relationships with carers. Adolescent entrants often have a wide range of complex social and emotional needs.¹¹
28. Research shows that adolescent entrants experience greater placement breakdown, instability and a greater likelihood of being placed in residential

⁸ Annex 5

⁹ Annex 4

¹⁰ Annex 4

¹¹ Turner, 'No Wrong Door: services for young adolescents in care in North Yorkshire' (Local Government Association, 2018) <https://www.local.gov.uk/no-wrong-door-services-young-adolescents-care-north-yorkshire>

care following a foster care breakdown than younger children. Looked-after children who enter care aged 14 and above perform worse than younger entrants in terms of educational outcomes and preparation for independence. They are also more likely to leave care at 16 or 17 and to experience poor outcomes in terms of post-care accommodation stability and participation in post-16 education, employment and training.¹² Children in care and care leavers are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system and in custody.¹³

The No Wrong Door innovation

29. The No Wrong Door (NWD) was first developed by North Yorkshire County Council to provide an integrated service for young people aged 12 to 25 who are either in care, on the edge of care or edging to care, or have recently moved to supported or independent accommodation whilst being supported under the No Wrong Door.
 - Edging to care: without an intervention package being put in place, there is a strong likelihood of the case progressing to edge of care.
 - Edge of care: those children and young people who are at imminent risk of becoming looked after due to significant child-protection concerns; or to prevent a long-term placement; or because they have ceased to be looked after and their needs are escalating.
30. No Wrong Door services are multidisciplinary and operate from hubs offering both residential placements and outreach support. All NWD staff are trained in Signs of Safety and restorative- and solutions-focused approaches. The integrated team supports each service user throughout their journey to ensure that they are not passed from service to service and, instead, have a dedicated team around them. Each service user maintains a consistent relationship with one NWD key worker. The integrated team and continuity of key worker are considered key to supporting young people with complex needs. Unlike many other evidence-based programmes, young people are not required to enter a formal agreement to receive NWD support.

¹² Dixon et al., 'Supporting Adolescents on the Edge of Care. The role of short term stays in residential care.' (Action for Children, 2015) <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/5222/edge-of-care-final-report-with-annexes.pdf>

¹³ Lord Laming, 'In Care, Out of Trouble' (Prison Reform Trust, 2016) www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/In%20care%20out%20of%20trouble%20summary.pdf; Police W1; and HM Prison and Probation Service, 'Care leavers in prison and probation' (HM Gov, 2019) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-leavers-in-prison-and-probation>

31. Each NWD hub in North Yorkshire is staffed by a manger; two deputy managers (one with responsibility for the residential element, the other for outreach); key workers who undertake shifts at the hubs as residential carers and complete outreach work with young people on the edge of care; portfolio leads;¹⁴ a life coach, who is a clinical psychologist; a communications support worker, who is a speech and language therapist; and a police liaison officer.
32. North Yorkshire County Council has identified ten distinguishing features of NWD, which constitute the core components of the innovation:
- always progressing to permanence within a family or community
 - high 'stickability' of the key worker
 - fewer referrals, less stigma
 - robust training strategy same/or similar to restorative practice or therapeutic support
 - no heads on beds culture
 - no appointment assessments
 - a core offer to all young people
 - multi-agency, intelligence-led approach to reduce risk
 - close partnership working
 - young people's aspirations drive practice.

© North Yorkshire County Council 2016

The aims of the NWD innovation

33. Improve:
- accommodation stability;
 - engagement and achievements in education, employment and training (EET);
 - relationships with others;
 - planning of transitions from care to independent living;
 - resilience, self-esteem and well-being; and
 - access to support in crisis.
34. Reduce high-risk behaviours, including:
- criminal activity;
 - self-harm;
 - child sexual exploitation;
 - missing-from-home incidents; and
 - drug and alcohol substance misuse.

¹⁴ Portfolio leads work shifts in hubs as team shift leaders alongside NWD key workers. Each portfolio lead has a focus on improving outcomes for service users: education, employment and training; risk management; activities; building relationships; transitions to independence/adulthood; and self-esteem, well-being and resilience.

35. Reduce costs to society, including to a range of agencies which includes the National Health Service and the police.

Evaluating the impact of No Wrong Door

36. At the outset of this inquiry, the Task Group wrote to North Yorkshire County Council requesting, amongst other things, evidence of NWD's impact. The council declined the request; therefore, this report relies upon pre-existing academic evaluation of the impact of NWD.
37. With Department for Education funding, Loughborough University used quantitative and qualitative approaches to complete an evaluation of North Yorkshire County Council's No Wrong Door service for the period April 2015 to September 2016.¹⁵
38. The review found that the No Wrong Door improved outcomes for service users, including improved accommodation stability and decreased placement moves, increased engagement with education, employment and training, and decreased high-risk behaviours such as criminal activity, missing incidents and substance misuse. Furthermore, the No Wrong Door demonstrated a reduction in costs to a range of agencies.

Reducing care

39. The evaluation found NWD to be effective at preventing, and reducing time spent in, care. Eighty-six per cent of NWD service users who were edging to, or on the edge of, care remained outside of the care system during the evaluation period – this was higher than for non-NWD looked-after children. Forty per cent of service users who were already looked after at the beginning of the evaluation period ceased to be looked after. Twenty-five service users (15%) re-entered care during the evaluation period, seven of which experienced more than one return to care.

Accommodation stability

40. There was found to be a decrease in placements moves during the review period: two moves per year was modal (most common) in the year prior to NWD and one move per year was modal in the final year of the review period.

¹⁵ Lushey et al., 'Research Report: Evaluation of the No Wrong Door Innovation Programme' (Department for Education, 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625366/Evaluation_of_the_No_Wrong_Door_Innovation_Programme.pdf

41. The length of care placements decreased for NWD service users during the review period. Prior to NWD and in its first year, the modal care duration was over 180 days; in the second year of NWD, it reduced to between 32 and 180 days.
42. Only one NWD service user was placed out of area during the review period. It is notable that out-of-area/-county placements are rarer in North Yorkshire than most other local authorities: at 31 March 2016, 61% of looked-after children were placed out of county nationally, compared to 21% in North Yorkshire.
43. Data from interviews with service users provided further evidence of better accommodation stability under NWD. There was evidence of NWD promoting accommodation stability in respect of 32% of service users (19 individuals) at baseline interview and for a further 13 service users at follow-up interview.

Education, employment and training

44. Seventy-six per cent of service users were in education, employment or training (EET) and remained so. Twenty-five per cent of service users who were not in EET when they entered the NWD went on to become engaged in EET. Service users described instances of NWD staff helping them find employment by providing encouragement or details of specific vacancies.

Criminal activity

45. In March 2015, immediately prior to NWD commencing, there were 63 arrests of young people who would go on to be supported by NWD during the evaluation period. By September 2016, this had reduced to 39 arrests, a reduction of 38%. Conversely, there had been a concurrent increase in the number of arrests of all young people aged 12 to 15 in North Yorkshire.

High-risk behaviours

46. Thirty-two per cent of NWD service users either ceased or reduced their substance use during the evaluation period; 53% reported that their substance use had not changed; and 16% reported that their substance use had increased.
47. In the year prior to the introduction of NWD, there was a total of 503 missing incidents for the young people who were subsequently referred to NWD. For the same cohort, this figure reduced to 253 following their receipt of NWD support, a reduction of approximately 50%. For a matched cohort of young people not in

receipt of NWD support, there was a reduction in missing from home incidents of 9%. A moderate-to-strong negative correlation was found between missing incidents and the number of interventions from the life coach and communications support worker: service users with higher levels of support from the life coach and communications support worker went missing less frequently. A higher negative correlation was identified for involvement by the police liaison officer.

48. The evaluation found that there was evidence of Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendances decreasing during the evaluation period. In the year prior to the evaluation, there were 21 presentations at A&E; whereas, in the first year of NWD, there were nine presentations.
49. It was not possible for the evaluation to determine whether NWD was effective at preventing child sexual exploitation.

Planning transitions from care to independent living and adulthood

50. Findings in terms of transitions to independence were mixed. Some service users reported being prepared and supported during their transition to independent living and adulthood, whilst others described more abrupt moves.

Improving self-esteem, resilience and well-being

51. During the evaluation period, mean Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)¹⁶ scores of NWD service users reduced from 19.5 to 16.8 – a high score means a child is displaying more problems – whereas the scores of a comparator cohort remained static (11.7 to 11.5). A strong negative correlation was found between SDQ scores and intervention from life coaches and communications support workers: as interventions from specialist staff increased, SDQ scores decreased.
52. Of the 32 service users for whom data on mental health were available at both baseline and follow-up interview, 13 (65%) reported mental health issues or that they were attending therapy at baseline; at follow-up, the number reporting mental health issues or therapy had reduced to 11 (55%). NWD key workers referred to implementing a range of different strategies with young people,

¹⁶ SDQ is a behavioural screening questionnaire which queries 25 attributes, some positive and others negative: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer-relationship problems and pro-social behaviour.

depending upon the nature of the problem, including arranging referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or the NWD life coach.

Relationships with key workers

53. Evidence obtained through interviews suggests positive relationships between young people and their NWD key worker.
54. Young people valued their key workers being available to meet their needs, rather than only being available by appointment, and sensed that they genuinely cared for them. Examples were given of workers supporting service users in their own time and continuing to respond to young people in need after a new key worker had been appointed.
55. NWD key workers emphasised how relationships had to develop gradually with workers needing to earn the trust of, and prove their reliability to, service users who initially refused to engage with support. There were also examples of young people wanting to receive support from NWD key workers after formal engagement with the service had ended, and of young people refusing to engage with anyone else when a decision was made to change key worker. This demonstrates the importance of the consistency of key worker under NWD.

Value for money

56. Part of the rationale for the development of the NWD was to create a cost-effective approach to supporting young people with complex needs at the edge of care – achieving cost savings by improving the outcomes for service users.
57. There is evidence of costs avoided to North Yorkshire Police of approximately £200,000 in the first year of NWD. This was a result of a reduction in arrests and missing from home incidents.
58. Since the model was evaluated by Loughborough University, the Innovation Unit has identified NWD as generating annual cost savings of approximately £600,000.¹⁷ North Yorkshire County Council has identified NWD as generating year-on-year cost savings of £2 million due to an 18% reduction in the county's looked-after children population.¹⁸

¹⁷ Dillon, 'Delivering asset-based services for young people' (Innovation Unit)

<https://www.innovationunit.org/thoughts/why-asset-based-services-are-important-for-young-people/>

¹⁸ North Yorkshire County Council, 'North Yorkshire leads on £84m Government roll-out for young people at risk in UK' (2019) <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/north-yorkshire-leads-ps84m-government-roll-out-young-people-risk-uk>

59. When the Task Group met with Anne Tully, Project Manager – No Wrong Door, Rochdale Borough Council, she gave the following examples of the cost-saving impact of Rochdale's NWD since it became operational on 1 April 2020. The service had:

- led to a reduction of eight out-of-area placements in the previous twelve months, saving £3 million;
- supported three young people with histories of placement breakdown to move into fostering placements where they were doing well; and
- enabled a high-risk service user to return to her family home from a Tier 4 CAMHS placement.¹⁹

Conclusion: the No Wrong Door model is effective at improving outcomes for service users and generating cost savings.

Suitability of the No Wrong Door model for introduction in Surrey

60. This section evaluates the suitability of the No Wrong Door model for introduction in Surrey; that is, considers whether the conditions in Surrey will facilitate the introduction of an NWD which is effective at achieving its intended outcomes: reducing care episodes, improving service user outcomes and generating cost savings.

Surrey County Council's proposals

61. Surrey County Council's Corporate Parenting service has begun to develop a local No Wrong Door service, which it intends to run in shadow form from early 2021 until the service becomes fully operational in April 2021. In March 2020, the council hired a part-time project manager to coordinate the development and implementation of the model in Surrey.

62. The proposed NWD will initially operate from two pre-existing children's homes before two purpose-built hubs are completed in 2022 under the capital development programme for Surrey's children's home estate.²⁰

63. The development, introduction and operation of the service will primarily be funded from within existing budgets. Negotiations with partners are at an early stage and joint funding has not yet been agreed. Indicative costs to Surrey County Council for each NWD hub are detailed below.

Table 2: indicative NWD costs per hub per annum, including overhead costs for staffing posts²¹

Registered manager	£60,420
--------------------	---------

¹⁹ Annex 13

²⁰ Annex 6

²¹ Annex 19

2 x deputy manager	£90,900
6 x portfolio leads (assumed PS8 grade)	£237,696
8.5 x residential and outreach workers (assumed PS7 grade)	£298,792
Sessional staff budget	£25,000
Current non-staff costs for a children's home	£85,000
Flexible accommodation offer	£25,000
2 x hub foster carers	£90,000
2 x supported lodgings carers	£20,000
Speech and Language Therapist (potentially clinical commissioning group funded)	£45,450
Life coach (clinical psychologist or family therapist)	£45,450
0.5 data analyst	£17,576
Training budget	£15,000
Total	£1,056,284
Embedded police officer	£45,000, funded by Surrey Police

64. To illustrate the cost-saving potential of a No Wrong Door in Surrey, Corporate Parenting provided the Task Group with the average costs of a range of residential placements and estimates of how the NWD may reduce demand for those placements.
- Each NWD hub will contain two emergency-placement beds, the occupants of which would otherwise be placed in an external residential bed. Assuming 60% capacity of the emergency placement beds, this will avoid costs of approximately £138,000 per annum.
 - Each NWD hub will contain six medium-term beds (four residential and two fostering). A conservative assumed occupancy of three children returning from external residential placements would generate savings of approximately £692,000 per annum. An assumed occupancy rate of one fostering bed, for children returning from Independent Fostering Agency placements, would generate savings of approximately £50,000 per annum.
 - At any one time, each NWD hub will be able to work with up to 40 children at risk of becoming looked after. Assuming that each child

receives NWD support for four months (a total of 120 children per year per hub) and that, without NWD support, 20% of those service users would have become looked after for six months before returning home, and that 75% of those service users would otherwise be placed in Independent Fostering Association placements, with the remaining 25% placed in residential placements, this would lead to cost avoidance of approximately £1,149,000.

Whilst the figures above are estimates and not forecasts of NWD usage and impact, they clearly demonstrate the potential of an NWD to reduce costs to the council by reducing demand for costly placements, in addition to the model's potential to improve its service users' outcomes and generate efficiencies for partner agencies, such as the police and health. Moreover, if all the above savings were, in fact, achieved by the NWD (approximately £2,029,000 per hub per annum), they would substantially exceed the cost to the council of operating the hubs (approximately £1,056,284 per hub per annum).

65. When the Task Group requested written evidence from Yorkshire County Council, the council informed the Task Group that it holds a trademark and copyright for the name 'No Wrong Door' and the ten distinguishing features of NWD, respectively, and that Surrey County Council had not consulted North Yorkshire County Council regarding the proposed introduction of the model in Surrey. North Yorkshire County Council, through the Strengthening Families Protecting Children programme, is supporting six local authorities to adopt the No Wrong Door model and this Task Group would have preferred Surrey County Council to have sought North Yorkshire County Council's input before beginning to progress its plans. However, it is commendable that the two councils are now in discussions over the potential accreditation of Surrey's No Wrong Door. This is a pragmatic approach which will enable Surrey County Council to progress its plans whilst providing North Yorkshire County Council with assurance that the local service is faithful to the No Wrong Door model.
66. The requirements of accreditation are so far unknown. However, it has been indicated that fidelity to North Yorkshire County Council's model, a programme of quality assurance, and a service level agreement will be required along with the payment of a fee.
67. The Task Group has two concerns regarding accreditation: 1) that the requirements of accreditation may prevent Surrey County Council from further developing its No Wrong Door service to better meet local need; and 2) that the still unknown cost of accreditation may be disproportionate to the benefits received.

68. Wiltshire County Council's Stronger Families Team incorporates some elements of NWD in an outreach-focused service aimed at preventing young people from entering care, through direct, intensive intervention. The service adopts a multi-agency approach with police and CAMHS input (with health input still being developed) and has worked with children's social care, youth offending and child exploitation teams to develop interventions which prevent/reduce the probability of family breakdown. The Stronger Families Team's residential service is expected to open for approximately 50 to 60 nights per year on an *ad hoc* basis to support families and young people at risk of family breakdown.²²
69. The Stronger Families Team comprises a team manager, assistant team manager, seconded police officer, senior residential outreach workers, residential outreach workers, and outreach workers. The staff skillset includes social workers, drug and alcohol specialists, special educational needs and disabilities, youth workers, teaching and residential experience, including registered residential experience.

Conclusion: Surrey County Council need not adopt the No Wrong Door model to introduce a multi-disciplinary service aimed at preventing, and reducing the duration of, care episodes.

Recommendation 1: that Corporate Parenting not agree to terms of accreditation which will prevent the further development of Surrey County Council's No Wrong Door service.

Recommendation 2: that Corporate Parenting not agree to an accreditation fee which it considers to be disproportionate to the benefits of accreditation.

Consistency with other council policy

70. The principles and aims of the No Wrong Door are consistent with the council's strategic priorities of supporting independence, increasing partnership working and supporting the local economy;²³ embody strategic principles guiding the council's work – focusing on ensuring no one is left behind, taking a fresh approach to working in partnership, supporting people to help themselves and each other, and responding to challenges;²⁴ are consistent with the current priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Surrey Children's Safeguarding Partnership, and the Police and Crime Panel;²⁵ and are consistent with the

²² Annex 12

²³ Surrey County Council, 'Our Focus for the Next 5 Years: 2020 – 2025'

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/213289/Annex-C-Organisation-Strategy-one-pager.pdf

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Annex 7

general duty, found in section 17 of the Children Act 1989, that local authorities shall safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need and, so far as is consistent with that duty, promote the upbringing of such children by their families.

71. The introduction of the NWD model in Surrey has been described as a cornerstone of the council's children's improvement programme which follows the rating of the council's children's services as 'Inadequate' by Ofsted in 2018;²⁶ and was cited as 'an appropriate initiative' by the then Non-Executive Commissioner for Children's Services, Trevor Doughty, who was appointed to review the council's children's services following the Ofsted inspection.²⁷
72. The NWD model is consistent with Surrey County Council's Family Resilience Model, which similarly adopts a relationship-based approach to preventing escalations of service user need which require more intensive and costly intervention.²⁸

Conclusion: that the principles of the No Wrong Door model are consistent with Surrey County Council's existing strategies, priorities, and policies.

Children's social care in Surrey in 2020

73. From the outset of this inquiry, the Task Group was concerned that the standard of children's social care in Surrey may be a barrier to the success of the No Wrong Door and that improving the general standard of children's social care should be prioritised, rather than the introduction of new service delivery models.
74. The detailed analysis of the quality of children's social care was agreed as being outside of the scope of this inquiry;²⁹ however, the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee continually monitors the progress of the children's service improvement programme and this knowledge has been used along with up-to-date data on Surrey's children's services to reach conclusions on the standard of children's social care in Surrey. In this section, the number of looked-after children in out-of-area/county placements, children's social worker caseloads, audits of social care cases, and the frequency of contact with looked-after children, which the Task Group considers to be key performance indicators, are examined.

²⁶ Annex 3

²⁷ Trevor Doughty, 'Report of the Children's Services Commissioner for Surrey County Council' (Department for Education, September 2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752455/2018-09-independent-report-Trevor-Doughty-Surrey.pdf

²⁸ Annex 7

²⁹ Annex 1

75. At 18 August 2020, 44.5% of Surrey's looked-after children live outside of Surrey and 28% of all looked-after children are classed as living out of area: outside of Surrey and over 20 miles from home.³⁰ In some cases, out-of-county/area placements will be the best option for the individual; however, whilst steadily reducing since the beginning of 2019,³¹ the number of such placements remains too high. When the Task Group met with Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting, she submitted that the introduction of the No Wrong Door will assist the council's efforts to reduce the number of out-of-county/area placements by reducing the overall demand for care placements, as it has done in North Yorkshire and Rochdale.
76. Approximately 15 cases per full-time-equivalent children's social worker is optimal.³² At 9 September 2020, the mean and modal caseloads per full-time-equivalent children's social worker were 16.1 and 15, respectively, in Surrey.³³
77. Case audits have found that the quality of children's social work has been steadily improving in Surrey since the 2018 Ofsted inspection of the council's children's services. However, the majority of cases continue to be found to require improvement.

Chart 1: Case Audit Judgements November 2018 - February 2020³⁴



³⁰ Annex 6

³¹ Annex 18

³² Annex 10

³³ Annex 17

³⁴ Chart prepared using data from Item 5, Annex 1, Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee (28 July 2020)

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=791&MId=7743&Ver=4>

78. Under regulation 28 of The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, local authorities were required to visit most looked-after children at least every six weeks. At 10 March 2020, Surrey County Council was meeting the visiting requirements for 93% of looked-after children. Despite the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting relaxing of visiting requirements,³⁵ at 18 August 2020, Surrey County Council had made contact with 95% of looked-after children within the six-week timescale, 77% of contacts were in person.

Conclusion: fundamental issues with Surrey's children's services continue to persist; however, the continuing improvement of those services is noted and commended.

Support from Directorate leadership

79. For the No Wrong Door model to be successfully implemented, an authorising environment of consistent and committed leadership is required throughout the implementation of the model.³⁶
80. The introduction of the No Wrong Door was first proposed by Dave Hill, then Executive Director for Children, Families and Learning. The project is being driven and overseen by the Director – Corporate Parenting and Assistant Director – Children's Resources and is supported by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, who, as aforementioned, invited the formation of this Task Group.
81. Noting that a new Director of Children's Services has recently been appointed,³⁷ there is a risk that the new post-holder may not support the introduction of NWD once they assume the role in December 2020. However, the Task Group does not consider this possibility as militating against the continuation of the project at this time.
82. Support for the project from NWD partner organisations is another element of the requisite authorising environment. Corporate Parenting, understandably, has not yet obtained formal support for an NWD from all of those organisations; however, it is engaged in relevant discussions with them.³⁸

³⁵ Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

³⁶ Rochdale OE; and Lushey et al., 'Research Report: Evaluation of the No Wrong Door Innovation Programme' (Department for Education, 2017) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625366/Evaluation_of_the_No_Wrong_Door_Innovation_Programme.pdf

³⁷ Surrey County Council, 'Surrey County Council appoints new Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning' (Surrey News, 2 September 2020) <https://news.surreycc.gov.uk/2020/09/02/surrey-county-council-appoints-new-executive-director-of-children-families-and-lifelong-learning/>

³⁸ Annex 7

Conclusion: there is strong support for the introduction of the No Wrong Door model at both Member and senior officer level within the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate.

Staffing the No Wrong Door

83. The recruitment and retention of social workers is a local and national challenge and the Task Group has been concerned that the recruitment and retention of NWD staff may be similarly difficult.
84. When Cambridgeshire County Council was exploring the introduction of a No Wrong Door, part of the rationale for the council's decision not to adopt the model was a lack of confidence that it would be able to recruit NWD staff possessing the characteristics which were, in the view of the council, required to successfully implement the model.³⁹
85. Rochdale Borough Council, the NWD of which became operational on 1 April 2020, reported that the council had initially struggled to recruit a hub manager (deputy managers were required to act up in the interim) but had been successful in recruiting a speech and language therapist and a life coach. The COVID-19 pandemic had stalled the recruitment of portfolio leads. Sixty-three applications had been received in response to the most recent advertisement for a key worker. Residential staff had not yet been recruited. The main challenge was the retention, rather than recruitment, of staff.
86. When the Task Group met with the Director – Corporate Parenting, Tina Benjamin, she acknowledged the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining social workers but believed that the innovative nature of the model and the relationship-based support delivered thereunder would attract motivated applicants for NWD roles, adding that the council would utilise the expertise of existing staff. Challenges were foreseen in the recruitment of team managers.

Conclusion: the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled staff poses a risk to the success of the No Wrong Door in Surrey.

Foster carers

87. It is intended that NWD service users would be supported by specialist foster carers on a one-to-one basis. Such foster carers may be salaried and required to work as part of the NWD when not caring for a foster child. However, there are national and local shortages of foster carers.⁴⁰

³⁹ Annex 10

⁴⁰ Annex 7

Conclusion: the availability of appropriately skilled foster carers poses a risk to the success of the No Wrong Door in Surrey.

88. Challenges concerning the standard of children's social care, the availability of foster carers and the recruitment and retention of staff may limit the efficacy of the No Wrong Door if it is introduced in Surrey. However, the Task Group considers that the conditions will rarely be optimal for the introduction of any policy and that Surrey County Council's children's services have demonstrated continued improvement following their rating as 'Inadequate' by Ofsted in 2018. Noting the significant impact of the No Wrong Door in short periods of time in North Yorkshire and Rochdale, the Task Group believes that the model will likely be effective at reducing care episodes, improving service user outcomes, and generating cost savings if introduced in Surrey, and will help to remediate some of the aforementioned issues experienced by Surrey's children's services.

Conclusion: the continued improvement of Surrey's children's services has created conditions which, whilst not optimal, will permit the introduction and operation of an efficacious No Wrong Door service. This will not be without risk, but the Task Group encourages the introduction of ambitious policies which will further the ongoing improvement of children's services.

Recommendation 3: that the development and introduction of a No Wrong Door service in Surrey continue.

Developing and implementing the No Wrong Door locally

89. This section addresses key elements of the development and implementation processes for the No Wrong Door and makes related recommendations.

Workforce culture and organisation

90. Creating a shared culture between workers from different disciplines and organisations was repeatedly highlighted as a challenge when implementing the No Wrong Door model.⁴¹ For example, police officers may not be familiar with the residential care environment and may take time to align with the shared focus of NWD roles – reducing care episodes and improving outcomes for service users.
91. Clear lines of accountability are required for partnership roles so that staff understand which issues should be raised with their employer and which issues should be raised with their NWD manager.⁴²

⁴¹ Annex 12; Annex 13; and Annex 7

⁴² Annex 13

92. The operation of the NWD in shadow form prior to full implementation will create the opportunity for a shared culture to develop. However, on the basis of comments made by the No Wrong Door – Project Manager, Rochdale Borough Council,⁴³ the Task Group believes a proactive approach is required.

Recommendation 4: that Corporate Parenting undertake targeted work to foster a shared culture between No Wrong Door staff at an early stage of the implementation of the model; and develop clear lines of accountability for staff.

Promising consistency of key worker

93. Changes in social worker can negatively impact service users.⁴⁴ Frequent changes have been found to reduce looked-after children's trust in services and staff, as they are reluctant to form trusting relationships with social workers when they cannot be sure for how long that person will support them.⁴⁵ The consequence of those weak relationships can be less-effective support leading to sub-optimal outcomes. The relationships between social workers and service users and the relationships between key workers and service users are similar.
94. The consistency of the key workers supporting service users under NWD is emphasised as key distinguisher of the model and this inquiry has found consistent support from key workers to be critical to the efficacy of the model. However, the Task Group is concerned that promising consistent support from an individual may give service users expectations which, in fact, cannot always be met as staff, for a range of reasons, will unavoidably leave the service; and that the failure to deliver on this promise may detrimentally affect service user engagement with support. North Yorkshire County Council, where possible, utilised bank contracts when NWD staff left to enable those staff to deliver a degree of continuity to service users as sessional staff.
95. Those concerns are supported by the comments of User Voice and Participation officers who believed that consistent support from a key worker would not always be deliverable.⁴⁶

Recommendation 5: that Corporate Parenting have regard to the importance of the consistency of No Wrong Door key workers when developing those roles and the job

⁴³ Annex

⁴⁴ Annex 16

⁴⁵ Carson, 'Looked-after children 'unanimously unhappy' about changes of social workers at 'inadequate' council (Community Care, 2018) <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2018/01/26/looked-children-unanimously-unhappy-changes-social-workers-inadequate-council/>; and Selwyn et al., 'Our Lives Our Care' (Coram, 2018) <https://coramvoice.org.uk/sites/default/files/1053-CV-Our-Lives-Our-Care-report5.pdf>

⁴⁶ Annex 16

descriptions therefore; and explore ways to promote the retention of key workers and other NWD staff.

96. One member of the Care Council drew the following analogy regarding the No Wrong Door model:

*'It's a bit like make up brushes. You have your make up brush pot, you take out the pow[d]er brush and you have other brushes that all make you look nice. One brush does one thing, another brush does another, but all the brushes have the same goal. To make you look pretty / make your life better. Brushes last long and don't need replacing, just like workers should.'*⁴⁷

97. To manage service user expectations, the emphasis on consistent support from NWD key workers should be shifted onto consistent support from the NWD team, the members of which may change from time to time.

Recommendation 6: that consistent support from the No Wrong Door team be emphasised, rather than consistent support from individual No Wrong Door staff members.

The development of NWD hubs

98. Corporate Parenting intends to initially deliver NWD from two pre-existing children's homes before developing two bespoke NWD hubs using capital which has already been allocated for this purpose.⁴⁸
99. When the Task Group met with the No Wrong Door – Project Manager, Rochdale Borough Council, it heard that the council had underestimated the outreach requirements of its NWD hub, leading to an overspend on its development. However, the council had since recouped the additional spend through cost savings achieved by the No Wrong Door.
100. When North Yorkshire County Council first implemented NWD, it located its hub within an existing children's home whilst it was being renovated and the model's implementation was disrupted as a result. Similarly, Wiltshire's Stronger Families Team became operational before its building had been equipped with adequate internet access.

Conclusion: the decision to develop Surrey's NWD hubs after the service has become operational is a prudent one.

⁴⁷ Annex 14

⁴⁸ Surrey County Council, Cabinet, Item 13 (21 July 2020)

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s68519/Cabinet%20Report%20-%20LAAC%20Childrens%20Homes%20and%20Shaw%20Centre%20Final.pdf>

Recommendation 7: that designs for No Wrong Door hubs not be finalised until after the service has been operational for at least six months, including operating in shadow form.

Case management

101. Written evidence from Wiltshire County Council identified the need for a dedicated workspace for the NWD team to use within the children's social care case management programme, Liquidlogic, to be prepared in advance of the service becoming operational.⁴⁹

102. Corporate Parenting has included the development of processes within Liquidlogic in its project milestones document.⁵⁰

Naming the service

103. At the beginning of this inquiry, the Task Group became immediately concerned that the name 'No Wrong Door' carries negative connotations and therefore asked the Care Council and Care Leavers Forum for their views on the name. The members of those groups described the name as 'misleading, overpromising and unrealistic', and said that they would prefer it to contain the term 'one' to reflect the integrated nature of NWD support.⁵¹

104. The Task Group would like the proposed service to have a name which is not off-putting to potential service users. However, on the other hand, naming the service something other than 'No Wrong Door' may impair the recruitment of staff as the service may not fully benefit from the No Wrong Door's reputation for innovative and relationship-based practice when advertising roles.

Recommendation 8: that Corporate Parenting work with User Voice and Participation to agree a name for Surrey's No Wrong Door service other than 'No Wrong Door', if doing so is compatible with any terms of accreditation agreed with North Yorkshire County Council and will not significantly impair the recruitment of No Wrong Door staff.

Measuring the impact of the No Wrong Door

105. Corporate Parenting expects to use the following measures to assess the impact of the No Wrong Door, although these are not yet agreed:

- Numbers of young people in the cohort becoming looked after (reduction expected)
- Length of time spent in care (reduction expected)

⁴⁹ Annex 12

⁵⁰ Annex 3

⁵¹ Annex 14

- Repeat admission to care (reduction expected)
- Placement stability (fewer placements expected)
- Number and length of missing episodes (reduction expected)
- Involvement with the criminal justice system - arrests, charges, repeat offending (reduction expected)
- Involvement with drug/alcohol services (increase in positive engagement with services/reduction in substance misuse)
- Reduction in out of county placements
- Reduction in use of children's homes beds
- Increase in EET for 16+ (education, employment and training)
- Engagement with education/learning for under 16s.

106. It will take several years for the NWD to become fully implemented and embedded⁵² but it is expected that the service's impact will become evident within the first year of operation.

Recommendation 9: that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families report on the development, implementation and impact of the No Wrong Door, with reference to the recommendations of this report and agreed performance measures for the No Wrong Door, to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee in October 2021, subject to the implementation of the No Wrong Door by April 2021.

Consolidated list of conclusions:
--

Conclusion: the No Wrong Door model is effective at improving outcomes for service users and generating cost savings.

Conclusion: Surrey County Council need not adopt the No Wrong Door model to introduce a multi-disciplinary service aimed at preventing, and reducing the duration of, care episodes.

Conclusion: the principles of the No Wrong Door model are consistent with Surrey County Council's existing strategies, priorities, and policies.

Conclusion: fundamental issues with Surrey's children's services continue to persist; however, the continuing improvement of those services is noted and commended.

⁵² Lushey et al., 'Research Report: Evaluation of the No Wrong Door Innovation Programme' (Department for Education, 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625366/Evaluation_of_the_No_Wrong_Door_Innovation_Programme.pdf, page 21

Conclusion: there is strong support for the introduction of the No Wrong Door model at both Member and senior officer level within the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate.

Conclusion: the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled staff poses a risk to the success of the No Wrong Door in Surrey.

Conclusion: the availability of appropriately skilled foster carers poses a risk to the success of the No Wrong Door in Surrey.

Conclusion: the continued improvement of Surrey's children's services has created conditions which, whilst not optimal, will permit the introduction and operation of an efficacious No Wrong Door service. This will not be without risk, but the Task Group encourages the introduction of ambitious policies which will further the ongoing improvement of children's services.

Conclusion: the decision to develop Surrey's NWD hubs after the service has become operational is a prudent one.

Consolidated list of recommendations:
--

Recommendation 1: that Corporate Parenting not agree to terms of accreditation which will prevent the further development of Surrey County Council's No Wrong Door service.

Recommendation 2: that Corporate Parenting not agree to an accreditation fee which it considers to be disproportionate to the benefits of accreditation.

Recommendation 3: that the development and introduction of a No Wrong Door service in Surrey continue.

Recommendation 4: that Corporate Parenting undertake targeted work to foster a shared culture between No Wrong Door staff at an early stage of the implementation of the model; and develop clear lines of accountability for staff.

Recommendation 5: that Corporate Parenting have regard to the importance of the consistency of No Wrong Door key workers when developing those roles and the job descriptions therefore; and explore ways to promote the retention of key workers and other NWD staff.

Recommendation 6: that consistent support from the No Wrong Door team be emphasised, rather than consistent support from individual No Wrong Door staff members.

Recommendation 7: that designs for No Wrong Door hubs not be finalised until after the service has been operational for at least six months, including operating in shadow form.

Recommendation 8: that Corporate Parenting work with User Voice and Participation to agree a name for Surrey's No Wrong Door service other than 'No Wrong Door', if doing so is compatible with any terms of accreditation agreed with North Yorkshire County Council and will not significantly impair the recruitment of No Wrong Door staff.

Recommendation 9: that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families report on the development, implementation and impact of the No Wrong Door, with reference to the recommendations of this report and agreed performance measures for the No Wrong Door, to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee in October 2021, subject to the implementation of the No Wrong Door by April 2021.

Councillor Lesley Steeds, Chairman of the No Wrong Door Task Group

Report contact

Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny Officer, Democratic Services

Contact details

benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Collated responses to the public survey conducted between 20 July 2020 and 4 August 2020 by the No Wrong Door Task Group

Annexes

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Annex 2 – Public Survey

Annex 3 – NWD model proposed for Surrey

Annex 4 – Written submission from Director – Corporate Parenting dated 5 August 2020

Annex 5 – Supplementary written submission from Director – Corporate Parenting dated 5 August 2020

Annex 6 – Written submission from Director – Corporate Parenting dated 19 August 2020

Annex 7 – Minutes of an oral evidence session with Director – Corporate Parenting on 21 August 2020

- Annex 8 – Written submission from Detective Chief Superintendent Carwyn Hughes, Head of Public Protection, Surrey Police, dated 26 July 2020
- Annex 9 – Written submission from Lou Williams, Service Director for Children and Safeguarding, Cambridgeshire County Council, dated 13 July 2020
- Annex 10 – Minutes of an oral evidence session with Lou Williams, Service Director for Children and Safeguarding, Cambridgeshire County Council, on 5 August 2020
- Annex 11 – Written submission from Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, dated 19 August 2020
- Annex 12 – Written submission from Andrea Brazier, Service Manager – Young People, Wiltshire Council
- Annex 13 – Minutes of an oral evidence session with Anne Tully, No Wrong Door – Project Manager, Rochdale Borough Council, on 20 August 2020
- Annex 14 – Written submission from Jamie-Leigh Clark, Assistant Manager, User Voice and Participation, dated 27 July 2020
- Annex 15 – Draft Big Survey 2020
- Annex 16 – Minutes of an oral evidence session with User Voice and Participation officers on 7 August 2020
- Annex 17 – Mean and modal Surrey County Council children’s social worker caseloads at 10 September 2020
- Annex 18 – Out-of-area and out-of-county placements 1 September 2018 to 1 September 2020
- Annex 19 – Written submission from Lindsey Ellis, Management Coordinator to Director – Corporate Parenting, dated 17 September 2020

This page is intentionally left blank