

The Needs of and Support for Young People Who are in Care or Have Been in Care

Overview

Surrey County Council intends to introduce a new service delivery model to support children and young people who are in care or at risk of transitioning into care without intervention.

The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee has established a Task Group to assess the suitability of the model and make recommendations on how it should be developed and implemented if its introduction is found to be desirable. To do this, the Task Group would like to better understand the journey through care and is seeking the views of looked-after children and care leavers and the people and organisations who support them, but also welcomes submissions from anyone else who wishes to comment on these matters. The Task Group will draw out common themes from responses and use them, along with other evidence, to assess the suitability of the model in principle and recommend which factors should be given special consideration during its development and implementation to achieve the best outcomes for Surrey residents. The Task Group will ultimately publish a report containing those recommendations, which will be considered by both Surrey County Council's Cabinet and Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.

The report of a recent task group can be viewed here:

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s67033/item%2005%20-%20SEND%20TG%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>
<<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s67033/item%2005%20-%20SEND%20TG%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>>

The Task Group will not take a view on individual cases but will use them to inform its understanding of how current the current service delivery model impacts service users.

Submissions by care leavers and looked-after children will be anonymous and will not be published. Their content may be paraphrased in the Task Group's report.

Submissions by individuals and organisations with experience of supporting care leavers and looked-after children will only be published with the express consent of the respondent and at the discretion of the Task Group. Individuals have the option to remain anonymous.

The privacy notice for this survey is available at <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/your-privacy/our-privacy-notice/no-wrong-door-taskgroup-privacy-notice> <<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/your-privacy/our-privacy-notice/no-wrong-door-taskgroup-privacy-notice>>

The proposals

Young people who enter care during their teenage years traditionally spend considerable periods in residential care often without sufficient planning and support to re-engage in family relationships or form strong relationships with carers. They are more likely to have placement breakdowns as a result of poor experiences in their formative years and lack of effective engagement with services. They can follow a path of multiple placements, with hand offs between services and changing relationships following each placement breakdown. Some develop multiple vulnerabilities through offending behaviour, substance misuse, disengagement from education and high risk taking behaviours such as repeatedly going missing. Over time, young people can become distrusting of positive relationships and develop a self-preservation mechanism of distrust.^[1] <#_ftn1>

Surrey County Council is proposing to introduce a local version of the No Wrong Door^{RTM} (NWD) model first developed by North Yorkshire County Council. Under the model, children and young people who are in or at the edge of care are supported by a single team of workers who stay with the service user. By integrating services, the model aims to reduce referrals between services, reduce the number of assessments and plans to which service users are subject and ensure consistency of key worker even after a child ceases to be looked after, to ultimately generate better outcomes for service users – primarily by preventing young people (particularly 16-17 year olds) from entering care and reducing the time young people spend in care. Under the model, services would eventually be delivered from hubs containing a range of residential placements. It is important to note that, if introduced, the model would not significantly change the services which are provided by the council, but rather how they are delivered and accessed; therefore, the Task Group's focus will be on delivery model rather than the quality or range of services available. The proposed introduction of this model of service delivery forms part of the council's wider transformation of children's services which is continually subject to scrutiny and oversight by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.

Importantly, young people are not required to enter a formal agreement to access support delivered under the model.

If the model is adopted, the following assessments and support are expected to be available from hubs in Surrey without need for referral: Life Coach, Communication Support Worker, Data Analyst, Police Case Workers, liaison with allocated social worker, maths and English tuition delivered when and where necessary, Restorative Practice, Motivational Interview, and collaborative work with social workers and care-leaving services.

The integrated service will ensure young people have access to a range of accommodation options (including residential care home beds, emergency residential beds, foster family placements, supported accommodation, supported lodgings and bespoke placements). Young people will be placed in a hub, not a type of residential home or care placement.

There are 10 distinguishing factors of North Yorkshire's NWD:

- always progressing to permanence with a family or to community independence;

- high-stickability of the keyworker;
- fewer referrals to other services;
- the workforce training offer, with strong roots in restorative approaches;
- no 'heads on beds' culture – success is an empty children's home;
- no assessment appointments;
- a core offer to all young people;
- multi-agency intelligence-based approach to risk;
- effective governance and close partnership; and
- young people's aspirations drive practice.[2] <#_ftn1>

The anticipated impact of the proposed model is:

- no matter how diverse or complex, young people's needs are met within one team of skilled and trusted workers;
- trusted relationships and stickability are the foundations of building resilience and self-worth;
- strengths-based and positive risk management improve safety and stability;
- reduce vulnerabilities;
- increase engagement in education, training and work readiness;
- improve physical and emotional well-being;
- reduce criminal activity and involvement with the police, e.g. periods of being missing; and
- reduce costs to the council, police, NHS, etc.

The NWD in North Yorkshire was independently evaluated by Loughborough University just under two years after it was introduced. The evaluation found that:

- there was a reduction in Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scores over time; the more involvement from specialist roles, the better the outcome;
- more involvement from specialist roles led to less missing incidents, indicating participants are happier at home or in their placement;
- evidence of improvements in mental wellbeing from an interview sample, including in a reporting of mental health issues;
- staff were able to use a range of strategies with the young people;
- resilience and self-esteem increased, including the use of bespoke activities which were viewed positively by the young people and raised their self-esteem; and
- No Wrong Door workers were a key support to the young people in time of a crisis.[3] <#_ftn1>

[1] <#_ftnref1> North Yorkshire County Council, 'No Wrong Door: Rethinking Care for Adolescents' (2014) <http://icha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/North-Yorkshire-No-Wrong-Door-model.pdf> <<http://icha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/North-Yorkshire-No-Wrong-Door-model.pdf>>

[2] <#_ftnref1> © North Yorkshire County Council 2016

[3] <#_ftnref1> Lushey et al., 'Evaluation of the No Wrong Door Innovation Programme' (2017) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625366/Evaluation_of_the_No_Wrong_Do <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625366/Evaluation_of_the_No_Wrong_Door_Innova>

About you

1 Are you - (Required)

Please select only one item

- a child or young person in the care of Surrey County Council; or a care leaver; or
- a person with experience of supporting looked-after children or care leavers; or
- a representative of an organisation with experience of supporting looked-after children or care leavers; or other.

Dates in care

i In which year did you first enter care?

The year in which you first entered care

ii In which year were you last in care?

The year in which you left care for the last time

Individuals

i If you wish for your response to this survey to be identifiable, please provide your name (optional)

Organisations

i What is the name of the organisation you represent?

Please enter the name of your organisation

'Others'

i As you answered 'other' to the previous question, please briefly explain why you are completing this survey. You may wish to identify yourself.

Questions for care leavers and looked-after children

Related Information

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Importantly, young people are not required to enter a formal agreement to access support delivered under the model.

If the model is adopted, the following assessments and support are expected to be available from hubs in Surrey without need for referral: Life Coach, Communication Support Worker, Data Analyst, Police Case Workers, liaison with allocated social worker, maths and English tuition delivered when and where necessary, Restorative Practice, Motivational Interview, and collaborative work with social workers and care-leaving services.

The integrated service will ensure young people have access to a range of accommodation options (including residential care home beds, emergency residential beds, foster family placements, supported accommodation, supported lodgings and bespoke placements). Young people will be placed in a hub, not a type of residential home or care placement.

There are 10 distinguishing factors of North Yorkshire's NWD:

- always progressing to permanence with a family or to community independence;
- high-stickability of the keyworker;
- fewer referrals to other services;
- the workforce training offer, with strong roots in restorative approaches;
- no 'heads on beds' culture – success is an empty children's home;
- no assessment appointments;
- a core offer to all young people;
- multi-agency intelligence-based approach to risk;
- effective governance and close partnership; and
- young people's aspirations drive practice.[1] <#_ftn1>

The anticipated impact of the proposed model is:

- no matter how diverse or complex, young people's needs are met within one team of skilled and trusted workers;
- trusted relationships and stickability are the foundations of building resilience and self-worth;
- strengths-based and positive risk management improve safety and stability;
- reduce vulnerabilities;
- increase engagement in education, training and work readiness;
- improve physical and emotional well-being;
- reduce criminal activity and involvement with the police, e.g. periods of being missing; and
- reduce costs to the council, police, NHS, etc.

The NWD in North Yorkshire was independently evaluated by Loughborough University just under two years after it was introduced. The evaluation found that:

- there was a reduction in Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scores over time; the more involvement from specialist roles, the better the outcome;
- more involvement from specialist roles led to less missing incidents, indicating participants are happier at home or in their placement;
- evidence of improvements in mental wellbeing from an interview sample, including in a reporting of mental health issues;
- staff were able to use a range of strategies with the young people;
- resilience and self-esteem increased, including the use of bespoke activities which were viewed positively by the young people and raised their self-esteem; and
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2 What are/were your needs and goals as a looked-after child or care leaver?

Please explain what you need/needed help with as looked-after child and what your personal goals are/were as a looked-after child.

3 As a care leaver or looked-after child, what stopped you from having your needs met/achieving your goals?

Explain what makes/made it difficult for you to achieve your goals and the things which stop/stopped your needs from being.

4 If you were responsible for the services supporting young people who are at risk of entering care, are looked after or who have left care, what would you do differently?

Explain the changes that would make it, or would have made it, easier for you to meet your needs and achieve your goals.

5 If you would like to make any further comment about these matters, please do so here.

6 Would you would be willing to meet with the Task Group to discuss this submission further? Please note that any meeting would be conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Please select only one item

Yes No

If you would be willing to meet with the Task Group, please provide an email address at which you may be contacted

Questions for those who support care leavers and looked-after children

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2 How do you/does your organisation support looked-after children and care leavers?

3 What are the common needs and aspirations of looked-after children and care leavers?

4 What commonly prevents looked-after children and care leavers from achieving their aspirations and having their needs met?

5 What could be done to better support looked-after children, children at risk of entering care and care leavers?

When answering this, please consider the way that services are delivered and the proposed changes to the way in which some children's services are delivered - see 'Relevant Information' at the top of this page

6 If you would like to make any further comment about these matters, please do so here.

7 Are you content for your response to this survey to be published as part of the Task Group's report? Please be aware that publication is at the Task Group's discretion and not all submissions will be published.

Please select only one item

Yes No

8 Please indicate if you or a representative of your organisation would be willing to meet with the Task Group to discuss this submission further. Please note that any meeting would be conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Please select only one item

Yes No

If you or a representative of your organisation would be prepared to meet with the Task Group, please also provide an email address at which you may be contacted.