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# That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence

## Appendix of Practice Submissions

The ADCS Families, Communities and Young People Policy Committee was particularly interested in gathering examples of effective practice for working with:

- > 16 and 17 year olds presenting as homeless (or at risk of becoming).
- > Adolescents once identified as being at risk of significant harm (under Sec 47 proceedings), particularly where the risk is from exposure to significant drug or alcohol use, sexual exploitation, gang activity, suicide attempts/serious self-harm, intimate partner violence.
- > Young people who go in and out of formal care due to family relationship breakdown, the young person's 'behaviour', etc.

These examples of effective practice are collated together within this appendix. Any documentation submitted to the ADCS as evidence of effective practice is reproduced here in its entirety as unedited text, but without (where applicable) any photos. The Appendix also includes any contact details provided.

**Please note that these practice submissions have *not* been validated by either The Association of Directors of Children's Services or Research in Practice. As such, their inclusion here makes no statement about their proven effectiveness. Nonetheless, it is hoped colleagues will find these practice examples interesting and inspiring in their own efforts to ensure the most effective practice for working with adolescents at risk of harm.**

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## Ealing – Pathways Programme

### Contact:

Marcella Phelan - [PhelanM@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:PhelanM@ealing.gov.uk)

### Target groups:

Older LAC, care leavers, young offenders, homeless young people, NEETs, Travellers, Gang members and other young offenders

A pre-employment 6 month programme, targeting their accommodation, health and support needs but has a key focus on engaging them in Education, Training and Employment. The young person is provided with intensive support from a Connexions adviser who works in partnership with their social worker. They undertake a 6 month employment based placement in the Council for 3 days a week eg Play Service, Comms, IT, Finance, Youth Service etc and then receive 2 days group and individual training in a group of 12 per cohort. This is provided by an external training company and focuses on personal development, work skills, self-confidence etc

It is run in partnership between Children's Services and the Council's Regeneration Team. It has a success rate of approx. 85% with a very vulnerable group. The young people receive a payment of £100 per week to cover subsistence etc. At the end of the course they are supported to go onto either a Council or external Apprenticeship scheme, employment opportunities, training or education.

The scheme has been shortlisted for the upcoming LGC Awards 2013.

The basic philosophy is that helping improve young people's self-esteem, make a fresh start whatever their past, provide a structure and a reasonable level of payment is the best way to protect them and improve their life chances.

### Supporting statement for the programme from a young person:

*Before starting Pathways I wasn't exactly on the right path, schooling never went well for me and there was a point where I thought crime was my only option. That led to me being in prison twice before leaving high school. As you can imagine I thought that was really the end of any opportunities available for me. But it wasn't, I had a number of professionals working with and supporting me, pushing me in the direction I needed to be heading.*

*I was asked to do voluntary work with The Forward Steps Project, using my own experiences to guide other young people down the right road. This is where my mentality matured and changed me from a young offender to a young adult. But without being paid my will to work for free was slowly deteriorating and it was then just before I started to head back down the wrong way that I was introduced to the Pathways programme.*

*I was hesitant at first as I thought about the fact it was a full time commitment, but I realised it was an opportunity to gain qualifications and earn money. So I went through with it, put my all into it, grasping any and every opportunity offered to me along the way. Doing things I had never thought I would be doing like; sailing a ship around the English channel, hiking around the countryside with 50kilograms of equipment on my back staring at beautiful sights I thought I would never see, and wanting to do it again.*

*I found myself being challenged and nearly breaking from these physical and mental challenges. But with the help and encouragement of the friends I had made along the way, I broke through these barriers and reached my goals, gaining all the qualifications offered to me. I had never been so proud of myself in my entire life.*

*Now I'm working with Ealing Councils one and only architect. And the boy who once woke up in the morning refusing to go to school is now ready to commit ten years of his life in studying at university or whatever it takes to get wherever he wants to be.*

*I realised that the person in my past wasn't who I am, that this person standing before you now is who I am. I have come further than I thought my legs could take me and I know now that my legs can and will take me as far as I want them to.*

*Thank you for listening.*

## Northumberland – Risk Management Group (RMG)

### Contact:

Rachael Farnham – [Rachael.farnham@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Rachael.farnham@northumberland.gov.uk)

### Target group:

Any adolescent considered to be at high or very high risk due to their 'own behaviour'.

A practitioner undertakes an assessment using the Vulnerability Checklist. Multi-agency meeting is then held to do full risk assessment and lead professional identified. YP medium and low risk stay responsibility of the key agency working with them. Practice guidance provides advice about escalating risk level and the immediate response to risk of harm during this entire process. The vulnerability checklist covers a range of risk and protective factors including emotional health, physical health, sexual health, social and environmental factors, substance misuse, offending behaviour and whether there are patterns of being reported missing to police.

If the assessed risk remains high after the multi-agency assessment then the young person is referred to the risk management group and a detailed multi-agency plan is developed beforehand. RMG chaired by senior manager and attended by team managers. This and the centrally held risk management log enhances the corporate parenting responsibility, whether they are a LAC or living at home. Plan reviewed every 3 weeks until risk goes to medium or low then returned to an appropriate agency.

The Risk Management tool itself has had other benefits including helping other agencies improve understanding of risk assessment, recognising the issues with non-engagement and continuity in safeguarding between authorities if young people move in and out of the area. SW and staff from other LAs are invited to contribute to the risk management plan and original plan is also shared with a new LA if a yp moves.

RMG has bid for £230,000 capital funding to create supported housing for young people leaving care, custody or residential drug treatment. Transition is a key point of risk for these children.

### Impact:

RMG overseen by LSCB and a vulnerable adolescents sub-group to look at patterns and service design etc. For example, pathway from A&E to children's services as routine part of drug treatment interventions. Working together through the group has increased understanding of risks and engagement with young people provides valuable information about risky adults or other victims.

70% reduction in use of custody over the past 4 years, 80% reduction in youth offending for first time entrants and 20% reduction in alcohol-related anti-social behaviour. Reductions in number of children missing.

### **Briefing published on 9 May 2013, *Managing high risk behaviours in adolescents: Northumberland County Council***

### **Brief description:**

Northumberland has implemented an effective risk management model to safeguard adolescents who are at risk of significant harm from their own behaviour and their approach is having a good impact on safeguarding outcomes. This example provides an overview of the processes in place in Northumberland and the impact that this way of working is having. It includes information about the risk management framework, a multi-agency partnership approach and engaging young people.

**Overview – the provider’s message:**

*‘It is widely recognised that adolescents with complex behaviours present a particularly difficult challenge to local authorities as a result of their high-risk behaviours and their unwillingness or inability to positively engage with services.*

*Here, in Northumberland, we began to develop a strategic response to these challenges that was based on the premise that adolescents were still children and that they were still entitled to the same protections under the Children Act (1989).*

*This approach was developed as a response to a number of local factors, including the high use of secure accommodation, high levels of first-time entrants to the youth justice system and, tragically, the death of a young person in 2007 as a result of substance misuse. A combination of these factors led to the development of a clear strategy to support adolescents and the provision of services specifically designed to promote better outcomes for these young people.’*

**Paul Moffat, Corporate Director, Children’s Services**

**The good practice in detail****Background:**

Safeguarding services for children and young people in Northumberland were judged outstanding at the most recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children’s services in March 2012.

Research (Ages of Concern, Ofsted) clearly demonstrates that the highest risk of death or serious injury to children occurs in very early childhood or adolescence. In December 2007, Ethan, a 14-year-old boy, died as a result of a heroin overdose. Ethan was looked after and being supported by a range of services that were intended to protect him. Following his death, an independent management review was undertaken to establish what lessons could be learnt and what actions needed to be taken to minimise the risks to other young people.

The review identified that there was a gap in support available to young people who were at risk of significant harm as a result of their own behaviours and that poor communication between agencies had led to a lack of coordinated intervention. The review recommended that the local authority considered how to improve these aspects of its work with vulnerable adolescents. As a result of this recommendation, Northumberland’s multi-agency Risk Management Group (RMG) was formed in August 2008.

**The risk management framework**

*“The worker provided us with a link to other agencies. This opened doors and made the process manageable.”*

**Parent**

The Risk Management Group is a multi-agency group that works with young people to develop a consistent approach to risk management. A tool, the Vulnerability Checklist, has been developed and the assessment covers a range of risk and protective factors, including emotional health, physical health, sexual health, social and environmental factors, substance misuse, offending behaviour and whether a young person has been reported missing to the police.

The risk management process can be used for any adolescent considered to be at high or very high risk due to their own behaviour. The practitioner undertakes an assessment of the risks based on a scoring matrix. A multi-agency meeting is then held to undertake a risk assessment and a lead professional is identified. This will be the practitioner considered to have the best relationship with the young person to take the lead in coordinating meetings and sharing information. Young people who are at low or medium risk remain the responsibility of the key agency who is working with them. Practice guidance provides advice about the escalating nature of risk and the importance of immediacy of harm when determining the levels of risk.

If the assessed risk remains high or very high after the multi-agency assessment then the young person is referred to the risk management group and a detailed plan is developed before the meeting to manage and reduce the risks on a multiagency basis. The plan will identify the support services that will be or are being provided to manage the identified risks. The plan will also identify the agencies responsible for providing the support and the timescales.

The risk management group is chaired by a senior manager and attended by team managers and this along with a centrally held risk management log enhances the 'corporate parenting' responsibility, whether this is for a young person who is looked after or living at home. The plan is reviewed every three weeks during which time evidence of risk reduction is gathered. The young person's name will not be removed from the risk management log until the risk is considered medium or low. At this stage, the management and oversight of the plan will return to the appropriate agency.

The risk management plan is not intended to replace any action, which an individual agency may consider necessary, to safeguard and protect the welfare of a child or young person. Rather, the plan is intended to enhance the planning process in respect of individual children and ensure coordinated multiagency planning is in place.

### **A multi-agency partnership approach**

*"I wouldn't be here without the risk management group."*

**Young person**

The work of the risk management group is overseen and monitored by Northumberland Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) and has resulted in the formation of a vulnerable adolescents sub group which provides a focus for monitoring and evaluating the work of agencies; and safeguarding development across the area. To date, the risk management group has helped to reduce the levels of risk for 91 young people.

Before the formation of the risk management group, a range of agencies working with young people used different risk assessment tools and applied different thresholds and approaches to managing risk. This single risk assessment tool has enabled practitioners to work to a single document to inform multi-agency intervention and coordinate their work. Practitioners say that they use the tool to provide focus to cases where there is lower level risk too. The sharp focus of the multi-agency plan has also facilitated an improvement in the quality of planning across the agencies.

Agencies report that they no longer feel that they are managing risk alone; there is a shared approach to working with young people and a shared accountability for managing risk, which has led to an enhanced understanding of each other's roles. There is a strong sense of ownership throughout, from the Director of children's services to front line practitioners. Partnerships have been strengthened over time with this approach and practitioners feel that this has contributed to effective working relationships at all levels. One practitioner said 'there are no barriers to partnership working in Northumberland'.

Lack of engagement by young people is addressed fully as part of the risk assessment and helps to understand current risk. Practitioners say that this approach to risk management ensures that the complexities of working with young people who are hard to engage are well understood, addressed, monitored and reviewed.

On an individual case basis this approach is facilitating a shared understanding of risks and continuity in safeguarding between authorities as young people move in and out of the area. Social workers and practitioners from other authorities are invited to contribute to the risk management plan and to attend the risk management group where appropriate. The risk management plan is also shared with other authorities when children move area.

### **Young people and parents' perspective**

*"I feel like a weight is lifted off my shoulders."*

*"I felt like I couldn't breathe for the different support I had before."*

Young people and parents report a clearer understanding of the risks and are fully involved in the formation of the vulnerability checklist and decision making. The identification of a key worker who they get on with enhances their engagement and enables them to see for themselves the level of risks reducing over time.

The coordination of a group of practitioners working to one plan also ensures that young people and parents do not have to repeat their story to several different agencies. Competing demands for appointments and young people's time is reduced and this enables clarity of focus in the work.

### **Parents say:**

*"I was unsure at first about what I saw as an outside intrusion into our lives...but the worker was very non-judgemental and it helped to have someone outside of the family to talk about the dangers of my daughter's actions."*

*"The stress of dealing with your child going missing and at severe risk of sexual exploitation is extremely difficult and scary. The worker was always there to support us... and helped to keep communication open between us and my daughter."*

### **A case study: Jane**

*Jane is a 15 year old who has been known to Children's Services since she was 13. It was at this point her mental health began to deteriorate and her risk-taking behaviours escalated. Jane would regularly go missing from home, and this resulted in a difficult relationship with her adoptive parents. After Jane's home situation broke down, she was admitted into care. The primary concern was that Jane would regularly went missing and met with adult males who were known to pose a risk to children.*

*Jane did not see herself as being sexually exploited and felt she was making choices about her relationships as she had been sexually groomed by the men. Jane was supported by the multi-agency Risk Management Group for 10 months. During this time, a number of strategy meetings were held with the police and other safeguarding partners to develop a consistent plan of response to Jane going missing and being sexually exploited. At the same time, direct work was carried out with Jane around going missing and staying safe in relationships.*

*This work explored areas such as when and why a child needs to be reported as missing to Police, what the risks of going are, and how to stay safe in relationships. Although Jane continued to go missing for prolonged periods, she would always be offered a Return Interview by the social worker. The Return Interview allowed Jane to discuss her experience and share information about individuals with whom she had been associating.*



*Subsequently, through information shared by Jane and through working to the Joint Protocol for Missing Children in care, custody or residential drug treatment, Northumberland, a series of Child Abduction Warnings and Harbours Notices were served on a number of adults living in the local community. Presently, while Jane does abscond from care periodically, she now spends time with other young people of a similar age and no longer engages with adults who pose a risk to her.*

## **Impact of the work**

*The work of the group has led to a reduction in the use of secure accommodation from approximately seven places a year to an average of one.*

Professionals in Northumberland have been able to clearly identify the types of risk that exist for young people within different communities across the county and have allocated resources accordingly. For example, the creation of an A&E pathway to children's services as a routine part of drug treatment interventions offered at A&E.

Strengthening of partnership working with the police has led to greater levels of awareness of the nature of child sexual exploitation within Northumberland. This has led to an increase in the use of Harbours Notices and disruption techniques. The police is using the intelligence gathered from the group to target individuals and there has been an increase in the numbers of arrests of individuals believed to be involved in the trafficking of children.

The risk management group has also been successful in developing a bid for £230,000 capital funding to create a provision of supported housing for young people who are leaving care, custody or residential drug treatment. There are 12 properties within the 'moving on' scheme which provides high quality and stable accommodation for young people at a point of transition - a key risk factor in increasing vulnerability. Work in this area has contributed to a 70% reduction in the use of custody over the past four years. There has also been an 80% reduction in youth offending for first time entrants since 2007 and a reduction of 20% in alcohol-related anti-social behaviour. All care leavers are in suitable accommodation.

There has been improved joint monitoring of children who go missing from home or care through the risk management group and, as a result, a new partnership agreement with the police and children's services has been developed. The work to safeguard and monitor young people who run away has been successful in reducing the numbers of children and young people at risk of going missing.

The work of the group has contributed to a reduction in the use of secure accommodation from approximately seven places a year to an average of one. There are currently no children or young people in secure accommodation.

And, importantly, as a result of the risk management group there have been no further deaths of young people from substance misuse.

Northumberland is keen to share this approach with other authorities. Work has already been undertaken with a number of local authorities interested in adopting this approach to managing risk. Rachel Farnham, service manager and coordinator for the risk management group, is keen to stress the flexibility of the framework and the fact that it is easily adaptable to local needs.

### **Provider background**

Northumberland is geographically the sixth largest county in England but with a population of approximately 313,000 people is the least densely populated. Children and young people aged 0 to 19 years constitute 21.5% of the total population. Sixteen areas of the county are ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in England with 18.6% children aged below 16 years defined as living in poverty. Almost two out of every three children live in households which are dependent on worklessness benefits. Annually, children's services receive in the region of 4,600 referrals, process 9,000 contacts and complete 2,600 initial assessments and 2,200 core assessments. A further 700 child protection investigations are undertaken jointly with Northumbria Police.

## Southend – Risk Management Meetings

### Contact:

Laurence Doe - [laurencedoe@southend.gov.uk](mailto:laurencedoe@southend.gov.uk)

We have an approach for managing young people whose behaviour or lifestyle experiences put them at risk, called Risk Management Meetings. We are currently in the position of reviewing this approach but it was commented upon by OFSTED in their inspection in 2012

*“Where young people are at risk from their own behaviour, multi-agency risk management meetings are held, including for those who are placed outside of the borough. These meetings effectively assess the level of risk to the young person and agree a multi-agency plan to ensure the young person is safe and placement disruption is avoided.”*

### Target group:

Young people who we want to be managed in community settings but where there are high risk behaviours/ exposure such as:

- > Behaviour which is a risk to others – this includes acts of violence including sexually harmful behaviour.
- > Behaviour which is a risk to self – this includes children who run away, self-harm, are involved in the sex industry, use drugs.
- > Behaviour which is a risk to self and others – this includes driving motor vehicles dangerously.

## Risk Management Protocol – stage 4 intervention

*Endorsed and adopted by Southend Children and Young People Strategic Partnership in September 2006 – policy refreshed and presented to the Children’s Partnership Executive in August 2010*

### Background

Staff working with vulnerable children constantly work in a risk environment. When working with constant risk, workers can lose their objectivity either by becoming complacent and over-optimistic (and so under react) or by becoming anxious (and therefore over react).

Most risk is managed appropriately within plans which are decided in various planning for a – court, child protection conference, looked after child review, core group meeting, other multi-agency case discussions.

However, there are some situations where even with these plans in place, there is a high and immediate level of risk and/or a high complexity of risk. It is that area of risk which this policy addresses.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the risk management policy and procedure is to ensure that when young people are involved in behaviours which pose a high and/or complex risk to themselves or others, firstly, the resources of all community agencies are called upon and the risk is owned at an agency level, rather than being left with the individual worker and team manager; and, secondly, the risk and risk management plan is reported at the appropriate level within organisations.

### 2. Aim of proposal

The aim of the proposal is to ensure that, wherever it is compatible with their safety and the safety of others, young people are cared for in community settings. Highly concerning behaviour can lead to a crisis response if workers feel isolated, and this can be inappropriate. This policy allows space to make a more considered response.

### 3. Types of high risk behaviour

- > Behaviour which is a risk to others – this includes acts of violence including sexually harmful behaviour.
- > Behaviour which is a risk to self – this includes children who run away, self-harm, are involved in the sex industry, use drugs.
- > Behaviour, which is a risk to self and others – this includes driving motor vehicles.

### 4. Why manage high risk cases in the community?

The most compelling reason for helping young people to manage their situation in the community is that it gives them a strong message that they can, with help, address their difficulties without being removed from their home, school and support networks. If young people are removed to institutions, they learn how to manage in institutions, but this does not necessarily prepare them for resolving their difficulties in their families and in their communities.

A study of “near misses” in social work cases (managing risk and minimising mistakes in services to children and Families : Children and families’ services Report, SCIE 2005 – chapter 4) concludes that there are 2 main reasons identified for near misses; firstly the needs of children had been overlooked or not sufficiently resourced at an early stage; and, secondly, there has been defensive decision making where risks to children have been over estimated at the expense of working to support families.

In addition, all local services have limited budgets (the above study also identifies “active failures that occur at the frontline and which suggest that latent failures are embedded in the system, including lack of sufficient resources to meet the needs of children and families”). The move to institutional care, unless absolutely necessary, is unsustainable financially and takes away the ability to fund local support services.

The risk management protocol will encourage local services to be flexible and find solutions.

## 5. Risks to the services of managing cases in the communities

All services have a duty to care for children in need and children at risk and it is not defensible to continue to care for or educate young people in community settings if to do so reaches a particular threshold of risk (see later for thresholds). If children and young people require a place of immediate safety then it must be provided; if children pose a significant risk to others, those others must be protected from that threat. In these circumstances, the immediate removal of a child from a situation of danger to themselves or others will be considered.

However, a risk management meeting may decide that although there are risks in a young person remaining in the community and that in the short term that those risks would be minimised by a period in institutional or secure care, in the long term such a move may not be in the interest of the young person because of the long term negative effects (the DfES research report RR749 “The use by local authorities of secure children’s homes” (2006) identified that half of the welfare placements in secure children’s homes had poor outcomes and did not ameliorate the young person’s risk taking behaviours, keep them more stable or reduce anxiety about them (para 5.9)).

This policy provides a structure within which such decisions should be made and in which such risks should be supported.

## 6. The value of a risk management protocol

The protocol is of value because:

- > It involves all agencies so that the risk assessment is based on the best information available and is subject to input from specialists from fields such as mental health, education, social work and police.
- > It ensures that there is clarity about the information on which a decision is being made.
- > It ensures that senior staff at 3<sup>rd</sup> tier level have detailed knowledge of the case - that this information is shared with 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, and if necessary 1<sup>st</sup> tier and CEO (as required by the Victoria Climbié report recommendations).

## 7. Time commitment

The time commitment for such meetings is high.

For the chair, planning, chairing and minuting is required. The policy requires detailed case oversight at Group Manager (Specialist Services) level.

Such meetings will be convened at short notice, and may require regular Head of Service (Specialist Services) oversight for extended periods.

All partnership agencies are expected to ensure that personnel with relevant knowledge of the case or who are able to provide specialist knowledge in relation to the particular risk(s) will attend the meeting. Staff from all agencies attending should have sufficient authority to act on decisions and, if necessary, negotiate for resources.

## 8. Thresholds

Research undertaken for the SCIE report (see above) (pages 21-22) shows the difficulty of accurately predicting events in child welfare and protection – “it is surprisingly hard to develop a high accuracy rate when predicting a relatively rare event “ and “what is clear is that it is mighty difficult to develop any predictive instrument with a high degree of accuracy in child protection” and “what is known about risk factors in a population of children does not necessarily translate into understanding the risk to particular children”.

The research goes on to identify the difficulties with reliance on assessment tools and the need to categorise type of risk, arguing that this leads to algorithmic thinking – it reports that near misses often occur during the referral and assessment phase which is laden with performance indicators and defined timetables for action.

This policy therefore will not over-define the threshold for referral or pre-define the timetable for action. The meeting is not a substitute for other processes which manage risk, but the threshold for team managers to refer for a risk management meeting (and for a group manager to agree) will be that the risks are such that they require to be owned and underwritten by a high level multi-agency group. Previous experience is that there will be between 10 and 15 cases (though each case may have more than one meeting) per year.

Each risk management meeting will define its own timetable. All cases where secure accommodation is being considered will be subject to a risk management meeting.

## **Risk Management Meetings – stage 4 Procedure**

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of a risk management meeting is to ensure that when young people are involved in behaviour which poses a high risk to themselves or others, the resources of all community agencies are called upon and the risk is shared at an agency level, rather than being left to an individual worker, team or agency.

### 2. Involvement

Such meetings require the commitment of all services within the council; the other statutory services such as police, transport police, health, fire etc; the voluntary sector. All services are required to attend meetings to ensure that all information and any specialist knowledge can be taken into account and to ensure that there will be coordinated access to all services by the young person. These meetings may be at short notice. The meeting will be chaired by a Group Manager in Specialist Services.

### 3. Who can call a risk management meeting?

Children who are at this level of risk will be children with complex needs, they will have a high level child in need plan, a child protection plan or will be a looked after child, they will therefore be a service user of Specialist Services. The team manager responsible for the case will consider (after assessing the level and type of risk) whether a risk management meeting or another type of meeting would be the most appropriate forum in which to address concerns. The team manager will then make a recommendation to their Service Manager who will decide whether a risk management meeting will be requested.

It is conceivable that service users of other council services or other agencies have a sudden escalation in very high risk behaviour or very complex risk behaviour may come to light. If it is considered that these cases should be managed by Specialist Services, then referral can be made to the First Contact Team. The risk management process is not a vehicle to access Specialist Services.

### 4. What will a risk management meeting do?

- a) The risk management meeting will assess immediate risk in relation to the young person's behaviour and/or living environment and produce a plan to manage that risk.
- b) All agencies with a knowledge of the case and/or with specialist knowledge in relation to the particular risk(s) will attend.
- c) If secure accommodation is being considered, the meeting will be chaired by the Group Manager for Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance, legal services should be informed and should be copied into minutes. No decision to progress towards secure accommodation will be made without a Departmental Planning Meeting (to include Legal Services) being held.
- d) The outcome of the risk management meeting, together with updates, will be distributed to members of the meeting, all Heads of Service and Service Manager, the chair of a looked after child review or child protection conference (as appropriate), the Head of Service (Specialist Services), Head of Service (School Support & Preventative Services) and the Director of Children and Learning, the relevant Inspector if police involvement and the Emergency Duty Service.
- e) The risk management plan will identify the responsible person for each action.
- f) The dates of any future risk management meeting will be agreed. In some cases, a regular series of meetings will be appropriate.

## 5. Relationship of Risk Management Meetings to other planning

Many children who are subject to a risk management meeting will be subject to other planning fora such as a Looked After Child Review or a Child Protection Conference, a Care Programme Approach (CPA) meeting.

It is important that young people and parents are aware that a RMM is taking place, have their views represented, are aware of any decision made and have the opportunity to discuss this with the Chair if they so wish. Young people and their parents are not invited to the meeting.

This meeting is a planning meeting for professionals to ensure that they are clear about the professional information which informs any plan and that work is co-ordinated with a focus on risk management – it does not take the place of the planning meeting which involves the young person and parents. If the proposed risk management plan is not consistent with the plan decided at the Review or Conference, then the proposed risk management plan must go back to the main planning forum for consideration.

If the primary planning meeting decides that the risk management plan does not to meet the needs of the young person, this should immediately be communicated to the team manager. It may be that the case has moved on, the risk subsided and there will be no need for a further risk management meeting - the planning meeting will simply have taken the plan forward. If the risk remains high however, the team manager will request a further risk management meeting that will take account of the planning meeting considerations.

## 6. Process

1) **Team manager** refers case by completing form 1 and forwards to their own Group Manager or Service Manager (or, in their absence, Group Manager for Specialist Resources and Quality assurance).

2) The **Service Manager** decides on whether a risk management meeting is appropriate and records decision and reasons on form 1 and forwards the form to the Group Manager for Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance.

3) The **Group Manager (Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance)** convenes the meeting with representatives of appropriate agencies.

4) The **social worker** ensures that all invitations are sent out and room is booked.



- 5) The **social worker** arranges for the views of the child/young person and parents to be sought. If secure accommodation is being considered, the **child's social worker** should help the child/young person complete form 2.
- 6) The **Group Manager (Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance)** chairs the meeting and will consider whether additional resources are required to support the Risk Management Plan.
- 7) The **Chair** makes a note of the meeting (or arranges for a note to be taken) using form 4; the note is distributed within 2 working days of the meeting.
- 8) Included in the distribution list will be the Director of Children's Services, the Head of Specialist Services, the Head of School Support & Preventative Services, the Emergency Duty Service, the Chair, the Inspector if police are involved, the Planning & Reviewing Officer if the child is subject to a CP plan or LAC plan.
- 9) The dates of any future meetings will be agreed as will the requirement for any updates between meetings.
- 10) If a LAC Review or Child Protection Conference is required because the risk management plan is not consistent with the LAC/Child Protection plan, the **social worker** will follow up with the reviewing officer
- 12) In the event of secure accommodation being recommended, the Group Manager for Specialist Resources and Quality Assurance will convene a Departmental Planning Meeting to include Legal Services. The final decision to move a child to secure accommodation on welfare grounds will lie with the Director of Children and Learning or the Officer nominated to make the decision in his/her absence.

**FORM 1**

**To be completed by Team Manager – Specialist Services**

**RISK MANAGEMENT MEETING – REQUEST FOR MEETING**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Legal Status: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hazards	Resilience Factors
Why is a risk management meeting required in addition to current planning arrangements?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date:.....

**To be completed by Head of Service/ Service Manager**

Agreed/not Agreed \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons \_\_\_\_\_

.....Signed .....Date

**FORM 2**

	I put myself at risk	I put others at risk	If I get the chance I'll run away	Being in secure accommodation would help me
What I think	I agree* I don't agree *	I agree* I don't agree *	I agree* I don't agree *	I agree* I don't agree *
Reasons why I think this				

What I think should happen				
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I completed this myself \*    The person who completed this for me is.....

Name of Young Person (print)..... Date of Birth  
 ...../...../.....      Date of Completion ...../...../.....

Signature of young person..... signature of person completing form (if different).....



Hazards to others:(nature of behaviour, attitude to victim, pre-planning? Use of coercion, attitude to professionals)

Strength / Resilience (employment/ accommodation, networks, contributions, capacity for enjoyment)

View of Young Person

View of Parents /Significant others

Assessment of Risk:

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If secure accommodation is recommended – how does this meet the best interest of child?

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i) in the short term

ii) in the long term

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Risk Management Plan:

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Is this consistent with Looked After Child or Child Protection plans?

Arrangements to inform young person / others of outcome of meeting

Ongoing updated information required to go to chair? Details of by whom and when

Date of Next Meeting/s

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**FORM 4**

Form to be completed by chair and distributed to attendees Heads of Service/Service Manager AD Specialist Services, Director of Children and Learning as it is updated.

Child's Name: ..... Date of Birth .....Date of initial RMM.....

Child's Address.....Legal Status.....

Reason for RMM
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Outcome of initial RMM
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Updates

Date	Update provided by	Information	Comment

## Wirral – Response

### Contact:

Pat Rice - [patrice@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:patrice@wirral.gov.uk)

### Target group:

Children 13-19 year olds with a range of needs/vulnerabilities. In particular, working with 16/17 year old homeless or threatened /at risk of homelessness.

Response is a free and confidential service for young people between 13 –19. Support is offered in the following areas:

- > **Crisis Support** – Confidential help, whatever the problem.
- > **Benefit & Housing** – Facts made clear just for young people.
- > **Drugs & Alcohol** – Support, education and advice, 1 to 1 and in groups.
- > **Well Being** – Whatever the worry, young people are listened to by professional counsellors.
- > **Education** – Interactive workshops and informal education.
- > **Outreach** – Wherever young people are, we offer information and advice about what matters.

Response is the Wirral ‘Homeless Gateway’ for all young people age 16-17 years (up to 18th birthday) who are homeless or who are threatened with homelessness. The gateway protocol was launched in August 2012 in response to the House of Lords judgement of May 2009 in the case of *G v LB Southwark* and the subsequent statutory guidance issued by the department for Children, Schools and Families, and Communities and Local Government department in April 2010.

The protocol sets out Wirral Council’s responsibilities in the identification, assessment and management of the needs of young people ages 16 to 17 who present as homeless. The aim of the protocol is to enable joint working to ensure the best outcome for the homeless young person and to ensure that homeless young people are identified and provided with appropriate support.

When a young person presents to Response as homeless or is at risk of homelessness there needs to be an immediate and realistic response.

It is intended that unless there is clear safeguarding evidence, it is recognised that it is in the best interests of most young people aged 16-17 to live in the family home or with responsible adults within their wider family network. Therefore the initial response is to work proactively with the young person and their family to identify and resolve the issues which have led to the homelessness or threatened homelessness crisis.

Areas which are discussed with the young person include:

- > **The current situation** – i.e. why is the young person presenting as homeless?
- > **Welfare** e.g. money, food, shelter, ID, medicines ,clothes, etc.
- > **Background history** – family make up, accommodation history and whether, previously known to CYPD.



- > **Support networks** – what family members are there, extended family, friends that can offer support?
- > **Vulnerability** – to determine if there any immediate concerns re vulnerability of the young person – e.g. learning disabilities, mental health issues, child protection / safeguarding concerns.
- > **The young person's views** – what is the young person saying about the need for accommodation? Where are they most likely to stay if interim accommodation is required?
- > **Views of those with parental responsibility** – what are those with parental responsibility saying? Can the young person return home? What can be put in place to help improve the situation?
- > **Communication needs e.g.** interpreter needs?

Although homelessness/ risk of homelessness is the presenting issue when young people arrive, it is evident after discussion that a variety of complex issues underly the immediate problem. Often only by addressing some, if not all of these issues can the situation be resolved in a way which offers stability and hope.

It is recognised that family support and the assumed protective factors that provide stability and security to young people are missing from the lives of the majority of young people presenting to the Response housing support team. Relationship breakdown and emotional detachment at an early age, poverty, experiences of poor parenting, lack of love and any sense of belonging can create a complex crescendo of challenging behaviour which places a young person in crisis.

The following list of problems facing young people being supported by the housing team is by no means exhaustive, nor should it be assumed that the young person only faces one or two of these difficulties. The majority are affected by several.

- > Alcohol and/or drug misuse
- > Bullying – usually the victim, sometimes the perpetrator
- > Lack of social skills/ understanding or personal boundaries
- > Lack of understanding of consequences
- > Inability to accept responsibility
- > Issues with anger or aggression
- > Relationship problems
- > Anxiety or depression/ mental health problems
- > Low self esteem
- > Self harm
- > Suicide ideation
- > NEET
- > Teenage pregnancy
- > Criminal involvement
- > Anti-social behaviour
- > Gang involvement/violent activity

There is a housing duty worker available at Response daily to listen, clarify and address the issues facing young people. The dedicated team offer support and advice, refer to other teams within Response and other relevant agencies, carry out home visits and can liaise, negotiate and advocate on behalf of young people.

Where a young person is unable to remain in the family home and requires emergency accommodation they will receive intensive support from a Stop Gap worker, who are part of the Response housing team. They will work with the young person and Children's Social Care to ensure their needs are met through to their resettlement.

192 young people have come through the Response gateway since Aug 2012 –March 2013. Of those 192 young people presenting to Response 53 have required an initial assessment by social care to determine duties under the Children Act 1989. The remainder have either been supported to remain at home, given advice and guidance or have been accommodated as part of a planned move.

## **The Guide to you people's services at Response - Wirral Borough Council, June 2013**

### **Welcome to Response**

Response does just what the name implies. As part of the Universal Youth Support Service within the Children and Young People's Department, our agency responds to the many diverse needs of young people between the ages of 13 – 19 years (up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) across Wirral. We offer a warm and welcoming reception and create an atmosphere of safety and respect for young people.

As Head of Response I am continually amazed by the stories that young people tell us about their lives and their vulnerabilities that have led them to Response. Young people that tell of their problems far beyond what they should be having to deal with at such a young age. They often experience situations of feeling helpless and are not able to find a way forward, which have led to risks and vulnerabilities in their lives. Problems that they can't face alone, which become more complex the longer they are left. These range from one off requests for support to very complex issues requiring time and expertise. I am constantly astounded by the onslaught of difficulties that many young people face and am in awe of the resilience and tenacity they demonstrate as they work with the team to tackle these difficulties, overcome their challenges and improve their outcomes.

The Response agency is made up of dedicated, caring workers who not only understand the issues affecting young people but who are trained and experienced in working with them towards solutions. They spend time listening, clarifying and planning routes through the problems presented and help create change. Staff are always willing to go that extra will to me a difference.

Our service has grown considerably over the years and I am very proud of its deservedly excellent reputation, much of which has been generated by 'word of mouth' from young people. They are not passive recipients; more often success has led to young people being our best advert as they tell their friends who we are, that we can be trusted and what we can do to help.

In this pack we set out to inform you of, and direct you to, the appropriate team for your needs.

I hope you find this information useful and helpful.

Thank you,

Pat Rice

Head of Response

### **The Response Service**

Response is a free and confidential service for young people between 13 – 19. Support is offered in the following areas:

**Crisis Support** – confidential help, whatever the problem

**Benefit & Housing** – facts made clear just for young people

**Drugs & Alcohol** – Support, education and advice, 1 to 1 and in groups

**Well Being** – Whatever the worry, young people are listened to by professional counsellors

**Education** – Interactive workshops and informal education

**Outreach** – Wherever young people are, we offer information and advice about what matters

**Callister Centre**

**19 Argyle Street**

**BIRKENHEAD**

**CH41 1AD**

**0151 - 666 4123**

[response@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:response@wirral.gov.uk)

## Range of services

### Counselling

Qualified counsellors at Response provide a safe place for young people to look at difficulties and problems they might be having. It is an opportunity to talk about experiences, thoughts and feelings without being judged. Counselling can help the young person gain a better understanding of their situation and look at alternative ways to cope and build resilience, both now and in the future.

Young people come to Response with all sorts of issues including family breakdown, relationships problems, death of a family member or friend, stress, anxiety, bullying, sexuality, loneliness, self harm, feeling worried, depressed and suicidal.

The counsellors use a variety of interventions to engage young people in the sessions – this could include art, games and worksheets. Most of the counselling is done in a quiet place with the counsellor, but we also recognise that for some young people a different approach may be needed as it may be difficult to sit and talk.

We have trained staff who use Electro Stimulation Therapy (EST), an alternative therapy based on the same principles as acupuncture. It is used as a relaxation therapy which can help alleviate symptoms such as substance misuse, stress, panic attacks, low mood, insomnia and anger.

After an initial appointment six counselling sessions are offered, with the offer of more should they be needed. This helps the team to keep the waiting list down.

In addition we run a drop-in counselling service every Tuesday from 1pm until 6pm. The drop-in allows young people to call into Response and see a counsellor without waiting for an appointment. It gives young people a chance to explore if counselling is for them and a swift response can be made if the need arises.

### Housing Support

Response is the Wirral gateway for all young people age 16-17yrs (up to 18th birthday) who are homeless or who are threatened with homelessness. Support and advice is offered to those older than this age range up to 19yrs. The aim is to reduce youth homelessness across the borough and provide vulnerable young people with a personalised support plan to meet their needs.

When a young person presents as homeless or at risk of homelessness there needs to be an immediate and realistic response. There is a housing duty worker available at Response daily to listen, clarify and address the issues facing young people. These are usually complex and often involve relationship (family) breakdown, poverty, drug and alcohol misuse, unemployment, crime, pregnancy, emotional distress, poor health and/or low mood.

Where it is safe, appropriate and in their best interests we work with young people and their family to help them remain at home. The dedicated team offer support and advice; refer to other teams within Response and other relevant agencies; carry out home visits and can liaise, negotiate and advocate on behalf of young people.

Where a young person is unable to remain in the family home and requires emergency accommodation they will receive intensive support from a Stop Gap worker, who are part of the Response housing team. They will work with the young person and Children's Social Care to ensure their needs are met through to their resettlement.

The housing team also offer homelessness prevention workshops in schools to support the social curriculum and to raise awareness of issues leading to homelessness.

All young people are treated with respect and attention. They are instrumental in any decision-making and empowered to move forward in a positive way which confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

Young people can call into Response for support, telephone for advice or be referred by any other person provided they have the young person's permission. Confidentiality, information sharing and child protection policies apply.

## **Drug, Alcohol and New Psychoactive Substances Service**

The service provided should be seen within the national context described in the 'National Drugs Strategy 2010 (annual review May 2012) and in the Government's White Paper 'Every Child Matters'. The core principles of these strategies are that every child and young person has a right to be safe and healthy and protected from drug related harm.

The range of services provided by the Response agency includes:

### **Universal Work**

Substance misuse education delivered to large numbers of Wirral's young people giving them generic drug/alcohol information. This work is delivered to young people either in groups or as individuals. It is also offered to parents, carers and other professionals. The work takes place in a variety of borough wide locations, including schools, colleges, Accident & Emergency and any other settings where young people gather.

### **Targeted Work**

This is an extension of our universal work offering more in depth support and guidance for young people who are using drugs/alcohol recreationally. This work takes into account the wider needs of each young person, working with them, their family and other professionals to assess risk and to work to reduce substance/alcohol use. This work is normally one to one but may also involve working with targeted groups involved in substance/alcohol misuse and related anti-social behaviour, either in youth settings or in hot spot locations in communities.

## Specialist Work

This is an extension of our targeted work and requires the young person to have an assessment undertaken by a specialist substance misuse worker leading to an agreed treatment plan. The explicit objectives of this plan indicate achievement of outcomes involving reduction/cessation of their substance misuse and associative problematic behaviours to positively influence change. This level of intervention often involves other agencies and where appropriate parents/carers. It may take place in context of a TAC/TAF, CIN formal action plan or where the young person has been identified for support in response to having multiple needs of which substance misuse is a core issue.

Further interventions that may require specialist medical help and in-patient treatment are referred to services provided by Wirral Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Referrals for these services are made with the explicit consent of the young person and where appropriate their parents/carers.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Policies apply to all referrals.

## Educational Support

Requests are received on a regular basis and we are always eager to provide the curriculum support schools and academies need. We offer drug education sessions on drug awareness, risks / consequences and health impact. We try to be flexible with requests although we find that delivering three consecutive sessions to targeted groups of young people has a much better outcome than delivering a one off session to a large audience.

Homelessness prevention is also a key topic and again we offer educational workshops to groups of young people. These educational workshops give young people an opportunity to look at the issues surrounding homelessness and enable participants to take a close look at the myths and realities involved. Our aim is to be real about the issues, dispel myths and prevent young people becoming homeless.

Response work in partnership with other services such as Wirral Brook to deliver the BiteSize programme to all secondary schools in Wirral. The overall aim is to ensure that all children and young people have access to high quality, free and confidential information, as well as education and support that enables them to make informed, active choices about their health and well-being. This includes relationship and sexual health advice, drug and alcohol use, keeping safe and the risk factors involved in taking and distributing sexual images.

BiteSize provides an educational event that creates opportunities for young people to engage in learning that is both relevant and transferable to their lives. This initiative works with approximately 100 young people at a time meaning that it is ideally suited to secondary schools and colleges as it caters for a whole year group over the course of one or two events. Young people work in smaller teams of 12-15 and rotate around a number of themed learning zones.

Overall the events are big, bold and colourful; creating a positive atmosphere and fantastic learning opportunities. Since the development of BiteSize we have seen an increase in the amount of young people accessing services for early help and support.

## Information and Resources

The most important resource that Response has to offer is the knowledge and skills of its staff. All staff are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with other professionals in our attempt to improve outcomes for young people. An example of this would be our drug and alcohol resources in which staff are happy to show, demonstrate and coach on the use of such materials and include handy hints on what we have found to work well with young people.

The counselling team has books which can be taken out on loan to enable staff from other services to support continuing professional development. The library is not extensive and may not cover all subjects but counsellors are also willing to share their knowledge and advise staff about where information might be sourced.

We have recently developed a set of Alcohol Alright? resources, which include information on alcohol related harm; top tips on keeping safe; Parents' Guide; Quiz to help rethink drink and also includes an interactive game young people can play on their iPad or smart phone.

Staff can use Alcohol Alright? resources following minimum training and use it as a brief intervention and talking point toolkit. The resources are effective in encouraging young people to rethink drink.

These resources are available from Response along with support on how to get the best out of the materials. Information is also available at [www.teenwirral.com](http://www.teenwirral.com).

## Confidentiality & Information Sharing

Response is committed to providing confidential advice to its users and the principles of confidentiality that are integrated across the wider Universal Youth Support Service (UYSS). Young people have a legally upheld right to privacy and confidentiality. Confidentiality is assured unless there are circumstances which may threaten the safety of themselves or others. This policy is explained clearly to all service users.

Young people need to feel secure in using available services in a confidential manner. All young people are afforded a confidential interview space (if it is required) and we ensure no breach of confidentiality occurs inadvertently. On occasions young people may bring a friend or supporter to their appointment. The worker will point out the boundaries of confidentiality. In all of the above circumstances no guarantee of confidentiality can be given if there is a safeguarding issue.

Response understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a young person shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party without that service user's prior consent to disclose such information, unless there is a safeguarding issue. The key worker may confirm or deny attendance of a young person, but no other information will be divulged without the permission of the young person. In all circumstances the key worker or manager will require proof of identity from the service and person asking for information. This will usually involve taking details and phoning back.

Workers have a responsibility to ensure that where any action is taken on behalf of a young person, including working on their behalf with outside agencies, this will be agreed with the young person. This ensures that they understand who the information will be shared with or sought from, why it is being shared or sought and the desired outcome. The young person must first sign an authorisation form.

## Young People's Participation

The young people who use Response are the agency's best advocates. Participation is actively encouraged in all service users, many of whom are delighted to get involved.

### Young people become involved in Response in a variety of ways:

- > Producing training materials which help to raise awareness with other young people.
- > Young people bringing their friends along who need support.
- > Writing poems and words of encouragement for other young people to read.
- > Getting involved in presentations about the value of Response.
- > Helping with funding applications so that other disadvantaged young people get help.
- > Sharing their experiences.
- > Getting involved in peer mentoring training.
- > Producing a DVD to take into schools.
- > Distributing hampers to vulnerable young people at Christmas.
- > Making up healthy food packs for homeless young people.
- > Putting together basic needs packs for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- > Taking part in focus groups about issues affecting young people.
- > Representing Response at events.
- > Complete surveys in attempts to improve services for young people.

Response have a group of young people who offer their time to act as Young Ambassadors. These young people want to make sure that the voices of young people are heard. They recognise the importance of this especially as for many vulnerable young people they feel invisible, powerless and unable to effect change. One young woman said:

*"Being involved with this group has helped build my confidence to speak in front of people. This is a good thing because I want to be able to get other young people to go to Response to get support and not leave things."*



## Comments about Response

*I have found Response services invaluable. It provides a safe environment for young people to reflect on their life and the choices they make. I have referred many young people to the service and have seen first hand how it can turn a young person's life around and make them a positive member of society.*

### **Police Officer - Safer Schools**

Comments about outcomes for young people referred to Response

*I can say categorically that nobody else could reach out to him like Response did and without them he would be a jobless, desperate forgotten young man with no hopes or aspirations. The service was there at the right time.*

### **Mother**

Comments about support received for her son

*Before Response I was scared of the future, now I can't wait for what's ahead. Without this place I would still have nothing. It has changed my life.*

### **Male aged 17**

*Response helped me when I was 14yrs. Now I am 21yrs and I know exactly where to bring young people for any guidance. Thanks Response.*

### **Male aged 21**

*I can't thank Response enough for everything they have helped me through, my schooling and home life have improved so much. And mum said : Thank you for putting my family back together.*

### **Female aged 15**

*No matter how you feel the staff make you feel better. Sometimes all it takes is a chat and a cuppa. Response Rocks!*

### **Male aged 16**

*Response have been amazing. I would advise other young people to come here if they have problems. Thanks guys!*

### **Female aged 16**

## Team Contacts & Roles

HEAD OF RESPONSE - 0151 666 4123

OPERATIONS MANAGER - 0151 666 4123

COUNSELLING SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR - 0151 666 4123

ALCOHOL SERVICE - 0151 666 4123 or 07748932571

DRUG SERVICE - 0151 666 4123 or 07917267062

SPECIALIST DRUG SERVICE - 0151 666 4123 or 07798882693 / 07917174479

HOUSING SERVICE - 0151 666 4123

ADMINISTRATION & DUTY - 0151 666 4123

Thank you to all our dedicated team of volunteers and sessional staff, we couldn't do it without you.

## Performance

During January to December 2012 the agency supported a total of 785 individual young people presenting in crisis, saw those young people on 3916 occasions and delivered preventative / education workshops to 7278 young people in schools and other settings.

A breakdown of how we achieved this is as follows:

Number of individual young people coming into Response - **703**

Number of individual young people seen outside Response - **82**

Number of 1-1 support sessions delivered to those young people:

Housing - **1334**

Counselling - **1250**

Substance Misuse - **1332**

Total - **3916**

Group Work (number of young people attending workshops):

School Bitesize YR9 - **2823**

Homeless Prevention - **2094**

Drug & Alcohol (targeted young people) - **1346**

General advice about Response - **1015**

Total - **7278**

## **Response Opening Times**

**Monday** 10am - 3pm

**Tuesday** 10am - 8.30pm

**Wednesday** 10am - 8.30pm

**Thursday** 10am - 4pm

**Friday** 10am - 3pm

**Staff available outside of opening / drop in hours**

**Home visits - Monday - Saturday evenings**

**Outreach - Monday - Saturday (including A&E base)**

## RB Kensington & Chelsea – Capable Families / Families Forward

### Contact:

Glen Peache – [glen.peache@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:glen.peache@rbkc.gov.uk)

### Target group:

Families at imminent risk of breakdown (so on the edge of care) and/or where more universal services have been unable to engage the families and effect change. The young people are often in crises with a number of presenting issues, such as substance misuse, putting themselves at risk (physically, emotionally or sexually) involved in gangs, Youth Offending Service etc. Cases are referred by a social worker and stay open during their involvement in the service.

The family takes part in a programme of activities based on systemic therapeutic practice. Families engage in activities that require them to support each other and work together. Narrative themes come into play as parents and children see each other over-coming challenges, growing in confidence and having fun. All the activities are facilitated by experienced and highly qualified coaches and systemic practitioners from Families Forward.

Speaking to the father the week after a session with his son with additional needs, he gave this feedback:

*“The weekend was very successful for both S (Son) and I, as well as the other parents and kids. We all learned something about camping but also about what matters in life.*

*I enjoyed spending time with S (Son) but also having some time with the other parents as we shared stories, problems, experiences at home with the behaviours etc...*

*There was a moment Saturday night near the fire and we were all sitting around and I think J (staff member) was telling us a story. S (Son) came over and sat on my lap and put his arm around me and hugged me. Priceless.*

*Overall the weekend adventure was very affirming and therapeutic. We were all exhausted and filthy but it was more than worth it.”*

### Capable Families: an example of good practice

Families Forward are a non-statutory team within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Family and Children’s Services. Referrals are received from social workers and cases remain open to a social worker throughout the period they are open to the team. The main criteria for referrals are that there is an imminent risk of family breakdown leading to a young person being on the edge of care. Other criteria required for the team to work with a case include a prior history of more universal services being unable to engage with the families and effect change. The young people referred are often in crises with a number of presenting issues, such as; substance misuse, putting themselves at risk, physically, emotionally or sexually, involved in gangs, Youth Offending Service etc.

Families tend to have been known to Family and Children's Services over a long time period and usually have multiple episodes of engagement. Within the framework used by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea the cases worked with are seen as sitting at a tier 3 level.

A programme of Family Activities has been piloted and built up by the team and this year won a Bi-Borough Star Award for Innovative Practice. The principles of the activities are based on systemic therapeutic practice. The shared experience and challenge of undertaking exciting activities together allow families to re-author their personal and family narratives and in so doing challenge unhealthy dynamics and hierarchies. To be together in a different context where families can explore their strengths.

The programme as a whole can be seen to sit broadly within the ideas of strategic therapy. Families engage in activities that require them to support each other and work together. Narrative themes come into play as parents and children see each other over-coming challenges, growing in confidence and having fun. They are able to challenge the stories they have created for themselves or others.

All the activities are facilitated by experienced and highly qualified coaches and systemic practitioners from Families Forward. We work together to tailor every part of the programme to ensure families gain as much as possible from their engagement. Healthy and supportive communication is encouraged and role modelled. Systemic Practitioners are present throughout to facilitate these broader brush strokes of family development as well as to work through any difficulties that may arise and to spend time with each family or individual where possible and appropriate.

The programme has developed over the last three years and grown from year to year. The birth of the programme came from some joint work with a Youth Service kayaking centre on the North bank of the Thames and an interesting story about a man who had been taken on the river with his daughter. The session went well and it was only afterwards, when the father explained how powerful the time had been, that the coach realised that the father had rare and intermittent contact with his daughter and that this was the first time he had spent time with her for some time.

Thinking about the strength of the experience and thinking about new and flexible ways of helping families connect and construct meaningful change it was felt there was room to try something new.

A pilot programme in tandem with the kayaking centre was run and the Family Kayaking Programme was born. The kayaking has moved on at pace, it is now a six session programme where families learn to kayak and explore the rich social and geographical history of the Thames. The first five sessions see families gaining paddling skills in both single and double kayaks as they take part in other activities such as mud-larking, bush-craft skills and learning about the varied flora and fauna of the tidal Thames as well as experiencing how to navigate one of the busiest stretches of river-way in Europe.

The culmination of the programme is a trip down through central London to Tower Bridge and back. The experience is powerful and unique. Families see their city and their connection with it in a whole new light.

Systemic practitioners and coaches meet together before and after all sessions in order to specifically fit each element of the programme to the needs of the individual families within the group. This includes exercises and games that look to strengthen communication, challenge unhealthy power dynamics, gain increased insight in personal risk management and much more!!!

The experience from the start until the end is rich ground for working with families. It is rare for families to come along brimming over with confidence and helping families to help each other through the challenge of getting in a kayak for the first time is a great way to see the family dynamic in action and start the process of having to work together. Families start off in double kayaks and swiftly have to learn to work together. The early stages of the session require smooth and coordinated support from the systemic practitioners and coaches who work as a team to guide and support the families through this challenging time.

The beauty of the environment we are on is that the facilitating staff can move freely between the participants and look to encourage and motivate families through our differing styles. All the facilitators have different natural styles; supportive, motivational, encouraging, nurturing, instructive and autocratic. To name a few!! Through working together as a team we have honed our ability to segue between positions for families individually as well as the wider group. The Thames is a potentially very dangerous environment with strong tidal flow and many other river users.

Too many chiefs in a double kayak lead to zigzagging, spinning, directionless and ultimately unstable boats!! The full gamut of facilitator's skills and styles combine to empower families to take charge of their kayaks and achieve together. At this stage a great exercise for the whole group is to "raft" the kayaks together and get everyone to clamber over the boats in turn and swap boats and positions with other families in the group. This takes some courage and it is frequently a time when young people start to really see their parents from a fresh perspective. Once everyone has swapped craft, niggles and frustrations that parents and young people may have had when together are recognised as being difficulties of piloting a kayak in general rather than due to the fault of each other and once they return to a shared family boat tensions ease and you can see families really starting to work together.

Over the six sessions families paddle single and double kayaks and it is towards the end of the second session and into the third that the activity and the environment come into their own as skills and confidence increase. Systemic practitioners are able to spend time with individuals and groups as they explore the river over further distances. Once confident, paddling on the river tends to be a relaxing and soothing experience. Families are able to make use of the time to talk about life, hopes, relationships and whatever comes along. Practitioners use examples of behaviours and attitudes demonstrated throughout the programme to challenge negative views and to help families build new stories of strength and capability.

The positions taken up by families when they are in single kayaks is akin to family sculpting. Who is closest to who, who looks out most for who and who takes a lead within the family. These demonstrations of dynamics in the family are a visible and discernible route into exploring the hierarchies and supportive relationships within families.

In the pre and post session meetings of systemic practitioners and coaches each family is discussed and thought about. A fresh perspective from a coach/youth work angle is often fantastic for broadening hypotheses and thinking differently.

As the kayaking programme's success became evident it seemed a shame to limit the model of families gaining in strength and confidence to a single activity. We developed links with a local Kensington based charity and together we have worked to provide an ever diversifying programme of activities for targeted local families to take part in.

The essential elements of the original model remain unchanged. Each activity is led by a highly competent coach or practitioner and Families Forward Practitioners work alongside to plan the activity, think about the needs of participants and are present to bring in threads of therapeutic practice and thought as families take part.

The next step along the path was to implement a Family Climbing Programme.

There is a great deal to learn from knots to equipment to climbing skills. Parents and young people actively encourage each other and take it in turns to hold each other's safety ropes and keep them safe on the way up to the top as well as all the way down. Young people and parents of any weight can support each other as there are regular anchor points on the floor that allow much smaller people to support larger people.

The element of connection via the rope and the need to communicate with your partner fosters great opportunity for all to experience the necessity of working supportively together. There is a real sense of achievement each week for all as they first work to get to the top and then as the weeks go on take more of an independent role in tying their own knots and climbing more complex routes.

The supporting facilitators are able to move around the groups supporting all participants to make the most of the sessions and encouraging ideas of working together safely and supportively.

Once the programme is completed we take a day trip out of London to take the skills learnt indoors to the outdoors. The trip is a great addition to the programme and not only cements the learning and ethos of working together but also allows families the chance to enjoy a new experience in the countryside. Many families we took had not left London for long periods of time and for one family this was their first trip out of London ever.

A particular high point in the development of the work came about last year when we piloted a Weekend Survival Trip.

Three families were taken to the outskirts of London by public transport where they met the highly experienced bush craft coaches who led the weekend. All cooking was done communally on an open fire that was lit and tended by the families. Facilities were intentionally Spartan....a long drop toilet to one side of the field and a tap on the other. Activities included; knife skills and safety, Dutch Arrow making with subsequent throwing competitions, wide games, map reading, nature walks, night walks and the space and quiet to sit back around a fire and reflect on everything from family life to the wider universe!!

Families were lulled to sleep by the squeaks of dormice and the rustling of deer and badgers.

One of the families who attended the excursion last year were a father and his twelve year old son. The son had specific needs that meant he was educated at a specialist weekly residential school and things were very tricky at home for them both. On their return from the trip it was noted, by other professionals in the network, how much their relationship had shifted. Speaking to the father the week after he gave this feedback:

**“The weekend was very successful for both S (Son) and I, as well as the other parents and kids. We all learned something about camping but also about what matters in life.**

**I enjoyed spending time with S (Son) but also having some time with the other parents as we shared stories, problems, experiences at home with the behaviours etc...**

**There was a moment Saturday night near the fire and we were all sitting around and I think J (staff member) was telling us a story. S (Son) came over and sat on my lap and put his arm around me and hugged me. Priceless.**

**Overall the weekend adventure was very affirming and therapeutic. We were all exhausted and filthy but it was more than worth it."**

Currently the programme includes regular kayaking, climbing, film, gym and multi-sports sessions for families. Each activity brings it's own particular element of experience and challenge for the participating families.

The summer of 2013 saw the birth of the Family Film Project in tandem with SeeChange Film. Families learnt all aspects of film making from equipment to interview techniques to shot composure to editing and sound. Working together as a crew really focused participants and the new and exciting skills the families learnt together kept them coming back for more. The families created a documentary that followed the lives and experiences of other families in the Borough that worked with Families Forward and took part in Family Activities.

The film was called Family Time and explored people's lives and stories and the pressures of living as a family today. The film was premiered in a local cinema and is to be entered into several Film Festivals in 2014. The success of this piece of work has led to the commissioning of an exciting new program of creative arts where a new Family Film Project will be supported by two groups of young care leavers undertaking a music composition and sound course and a photography course. The three strings will combine to produce films with music and incorporation of still photography recording the process and used in the films.

Two years ago a successful joint bid for funding with a local Green Community created a programme where families worked together to restore and revitalise a local park. The results and feedback from families were great. One mother, with two sons, who as a family experience issues around; housing, mental health, schooling and domestic violence said:

**"Nice experience for my boys and myself. It's taken to my heart doing this with my children."**

A young person when asked what he had gained from the park regeneration experience said:

**"It represents me every time I go past. I really enjoy it, the best thing is helping with the adults altogether."**

Professionals from across the board engaged with families have noticed the benefits of their families engaging in the activities. We have received praise from social workers, family therapists, family intervention practitioners and school nurses who have all seen the changes that have occurred. Demand for places rises each year. A manager recently commented that the latest Film Project was **"the most powerful piece of direct work I have ever seen"**.

Families have said:

**"Worked together as a team and a really good challenge for us."**

**"Gave us time and helped our relationship."**

**"It's so rewarding."**



**“Getting outside and doing something I never would normally have done”**

**“I’m happy and excited.”**

**“We went home talking about it. We felt really good about ourselves.”**

**“Working with everybody and meeting all different people has been excellent.”**

So the future of the programme looks bright. Families Forward are always thinking about developing the activities and exploring ways of bringing in more ideas of therapeutic practice into the experience. Current thoughts include; multi-family therapy practice, ideas of activity based counseling and solution focused therapy. The team is positive that there is room for all this and more in this positive and active engagement of families.

## North Yorkshire County Council Innovation at the Edge of Care

### Strategic vision – why change?

North Yorkshire was risk averse with:

- > Most complex young people in crisis intervention placements and custody – system led to handoffs and a lack of continuity
- > Young people entering care in crisis - often out of hours
- > Placement Drift and Readmissions common: Relationships not being repaired
- > Focus on young people's behaviours and not systemic relationships to

There was a need to:

- > Ensure where possible young people are supported in their family and community
- > Ensure cost effective/efficient services
- > Safely reduce the numbers of LAC
- > Improve outcomes for young people

### What do professionals and research tell us?

- > We need to build resilience
- > We need to focus on providing consistent, trusting and meaningful relationships with professionals
- > We need proactive support around placement disruption
- > Increase the variety of placement options
- > Improve transition arrangements to adult services
- > We need to learn and embed lessons from Troubled Families

**The existing residential service offers:**

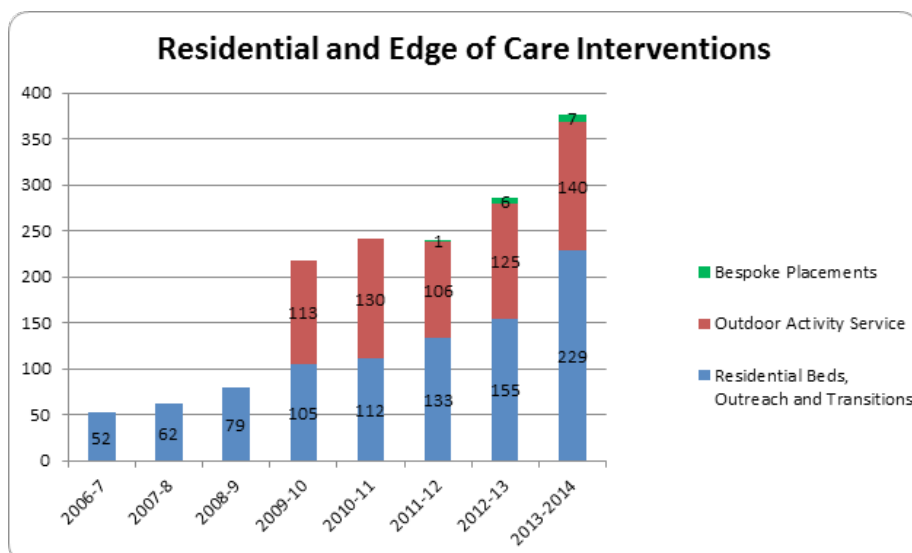
- > Flexible, solution focused, resilient & persistent team of staff!
- > An established skills base underpinned by evidence based models (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Restorative Practice)
- > Inclusive approaches giving opportunities to develop
- > Strong belief in the use of relationships to effect change
- > Work with and alongside the most complex young people and families
- > Substantial experience in managing risk to improve outcomes for young people.

**Developing a broader remit required:**

- > Skilling up staff in activity and task centred interventions
- > Creating a shared solution focused organisational and interagency vision
- > Challenge established practice to create space for emotional intelligence and innovation
- > Empower staff to utilise their eclectic range of skills and responses.

**Organic development of provision**

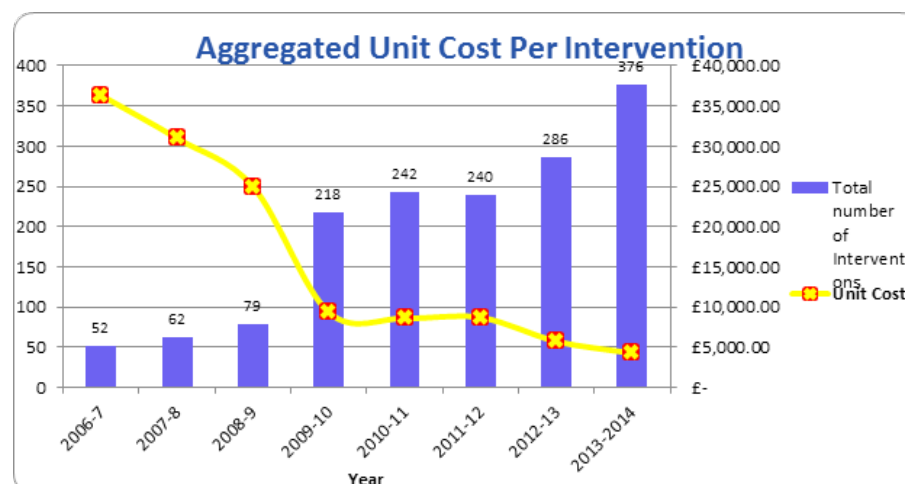
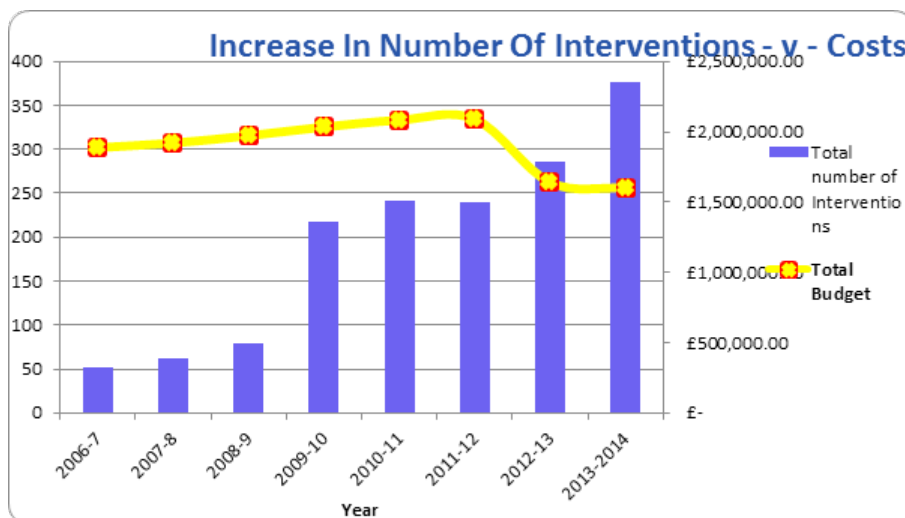
- > Residential beds
- > Bespoke Placements
- > Outdoor Adventure Activities
- > OUTREACH
- > Strengths Based Direct Work
- > Thematic Breaks High Risk Behaviours
- > 28 Day Emergency Beds
- > Rapid Response 24/7 Crisis and Missing Support

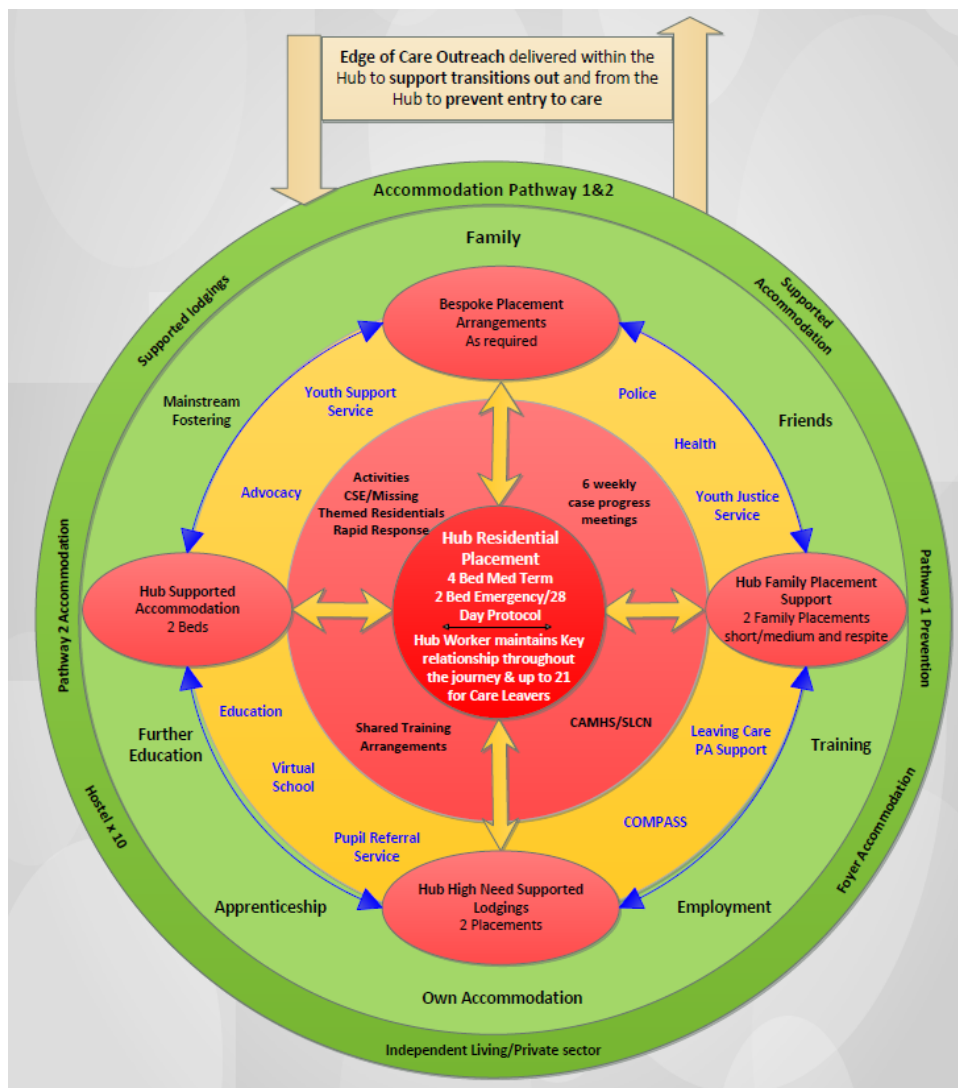


## Outcomes and cost benefits

### 161 Edge of Care interventions in 12 months

- > 138 (86%) Remained at home
- > 13 (8%) Returned home from care
- > 2 (1.2%) Remained in LAC Placement
- > 8 (4.9%) Entered care
- > Bucking the trend in LAC numbers 494 to 463 (within 9 months)
- > 568 National Governing Body Awards achieved by young people since 2010
- > Interventions increased by 623% over 7 years enabling earlier support to families
- > Significant reduction in out of hours crisis placements
- > Evidenced increased safety planning with families = increased long term resilience
- > Positive experiences sow aspirational seeds and contribute to improved long term outcomes





**Core Offer**

**Reduce high risk behaviour**

- > Portfolio Lead Worker
- > Shared Risk Assessments and Intervention
- > 6 Weekly Case discussion

**Empower young people to build and restore relationships**

- > Family Circles Worker – Trained FGC/RP/TCI
- > Portfolio Lead

**Maximise opportunity for planned transitions**

- > Placement Support Worker
- > Portfolio Lead
- > Accommodation pathway support worker

## Support achievement

- > Transitions ETE Worker
- > Education Portfolio Lead

## Develop self-esteem, self-worth and resilience

- > Communication Support Worker (SLCN)
- > Activities Portfolio Lead

## Ensure young people in crisis receive well organised and appropriate emotional support

- > Life Coach Worker – Psychologist
- > Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Lead

## Workforce Bulletin

### Young People's Housing Solutions @ The Hub

### North Yorkshire Prevention Partnership

### Spring/Summer 2014

A Partnership between: North Yorkshire County Council, Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Selby District Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Foundation, SASH, Barnardos, Craven YMCA, Broadacres, Leeds Federated Housing, Ripon YMCA, Richmond YMCA, Ryedale YMCA.

Welcome to the first edition of the Workforce Bulletin for those involved with the North Yorkshire Young Peoples Pathway, Housing Solutions @ The Hub. The Bulletin will come out twice a year and include news on district Hubs, developments in Pathways 1 and 2, feedback from young people and key outcomes from data collected about the Pathway.

### New and Improved Supported Accommodation in Pathway 2

**Belmont Road** in Harrogate is new accommodation for Pathway 2 offering five high quality self-contained flats. The service was opened by County Councillor Tony Hall Executive Member for Children and Young People's Service and Abdul Ravat from the Homes and Community Agency who said: "These 5 homes shows what can be achieved by working in partnership – our investment of £103,000 has made a real difference but together with investment of £252,000 from NYCC Children and Young People's Service and strategic support from Harrogate Borough Council we have been able to make a real difference in providing supported accommodation for young people."

For more information on Belmont Road contact: [rehan.shah@foundationuk.org](mailto:rehan.shah@foundationuk.org)

**Cygnnet House** opened its doors to partner agencies and stakeholders in Selby District to celebrate the completion of a programme of extensive refurbishment, courtesy of the landlord, Chevin Housing. Nicki Watkinson, Foundation Project Manager commented, “The day was a great success, with many partners visiting for the first time in many years, and literally being blown away by the improvements made”. Students on placement with Children’s Social Care commented “This is the best Young People’s hostel I have been in” and staff from Selby District Council commented that they felt much more confident recommending Cygnnet House to young people. Staff and customers at Cygnnet House would like to thank all those who attended.

**For more information on Cygnnet House contact: [Nicki.watkinson@foundationuk.org](mailto:Nicki.watkinson@foundationuk.org)**

### **Development Day Hailed a Success**

The Development Day held on 17th March 2014 brought together managers of Children’s Social Care and Children’s and Young Peoples Services (Youth Support Services, Assessment & Impact, Residential, Leaving Care, Youth Justice), representatives from each of the 7 District and Borough Councils, the Commissioning Body, Supporting People and Foundation as the Lead Provider.

The event was facilitated by Anna Whalen, former national advisor on Youth Homelessness, who said, “Nationally it’s been a real challenge for two tier authorities to work together on both dealing with 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness and also in developing the ‘Positive Pathway’ model of youth homelessness prevention and support. So it’s very encouraging to see North Yorkshire - both the County and the District Housing Authorities – continue with their commitment to work together to prevent youth homelessness and get better outcomes for young people who have little choice but to leave home or enter local authority care at a young age. Your work on joint planning, strategy, commissioning, investment in preventative services and ability to work through what can be difficult issues on the ground are all having a positive impact; at a time when there are significant budget pressures and increased demand, partnership working can come under some strain, but without partnership at every level, it is not possible to move forward on dealing with youth homelessness. Across Children’s Services and the Supporting People Commissioning team, as well as all the Housing Authorities and many provider organisations.

### **Pathway Manager Update**

My first 6 months in post have flown by as I have been welcomed by all the Hubs on my visits and have enjoyed seeing the accommodation provided by Provider Partners. I attended manager’s team meetings in Children’s Social Care and participated in key meetings that steer the Pathway strategically and operationally. I am getting to all the Practitioner Meetings and am happy to attend these as needed.

If you have any queries I can help with you can reach me on:

[jill.boak@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:jill.boak@northyorks.gov.uk) or 01609798438 / 07854170088

## How well are we doing?

Overall Prevention work is seeing a success rate of 88% at the current time which is above the target of 80% so there is some excellent work happening reflected in thanks and praise received from families for whom intervention has been beneficial.

## Presentations

Q3 Oct-Dec 2013

Age 16-17 18-25 16-17 18-25

Craven 6 29

Hambleton 5 3

Harrogate 22 57

Richmondshire 13 16

Ryedale 6 42

Scarborough 32 129

Selby 11 24

**Total 95 300**

Q4 Jan-March 2014

Age 16-17 18-25 16-17 18-25

Craven 7 18

Hambleton 8 23

Harrogate 13 77

Richmondshire 12 10

Ryedale 10 35

Scarborough 47 167

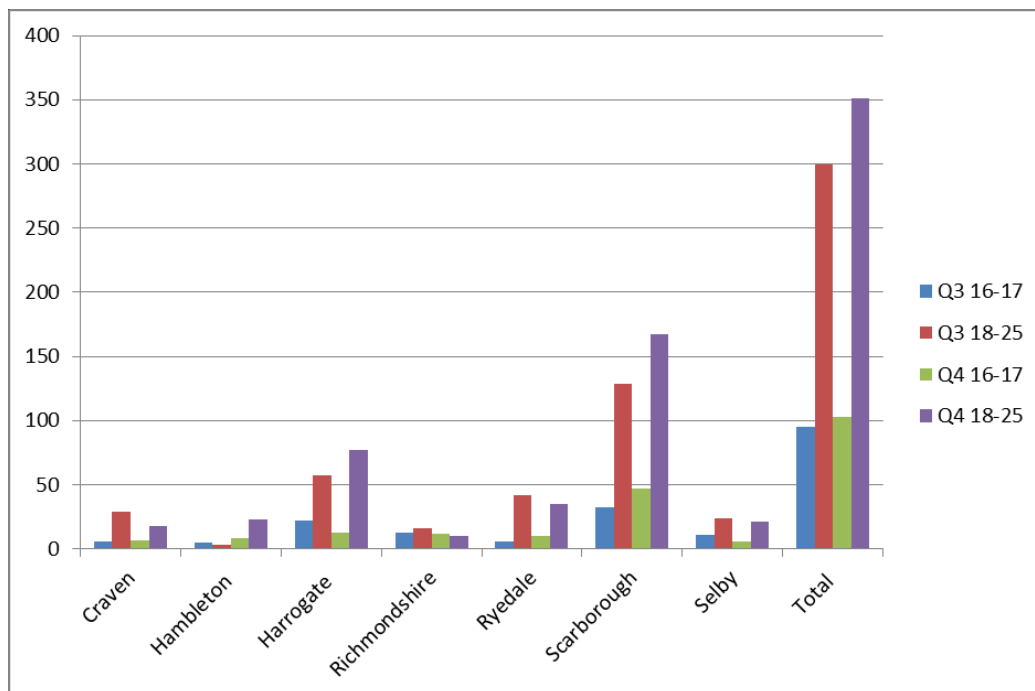
Selby 6 21

**Total 103 351**

**Grand Total 395 454**



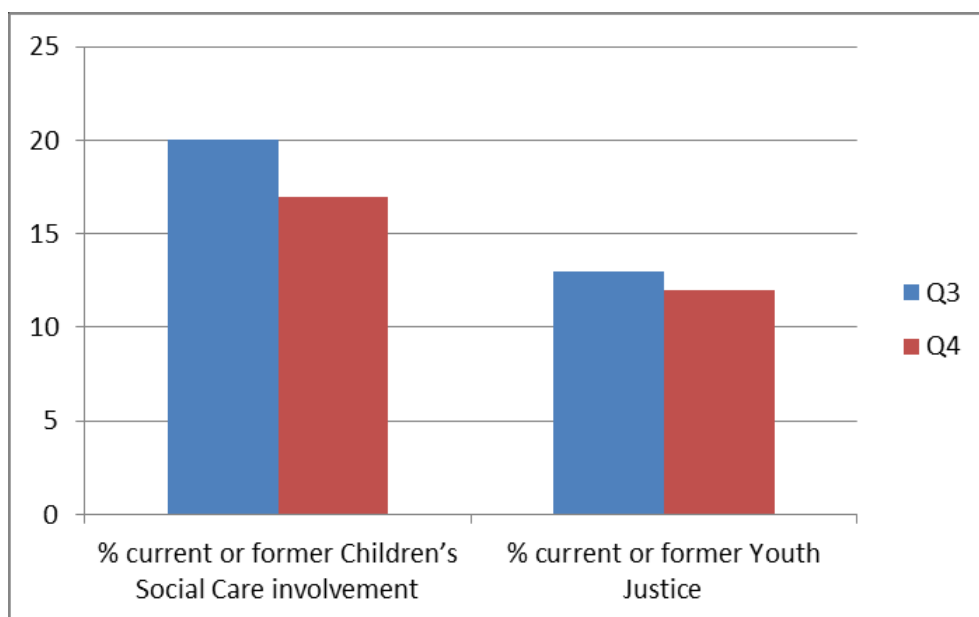
**Interpreted in chart form:**



We are looking closely at the re-representation figures and have introduced a new element to Pathway 1 which gives the family a plan to help them identify triggers and signs of family breakdown before it occurs and seek help early preventing crisis.

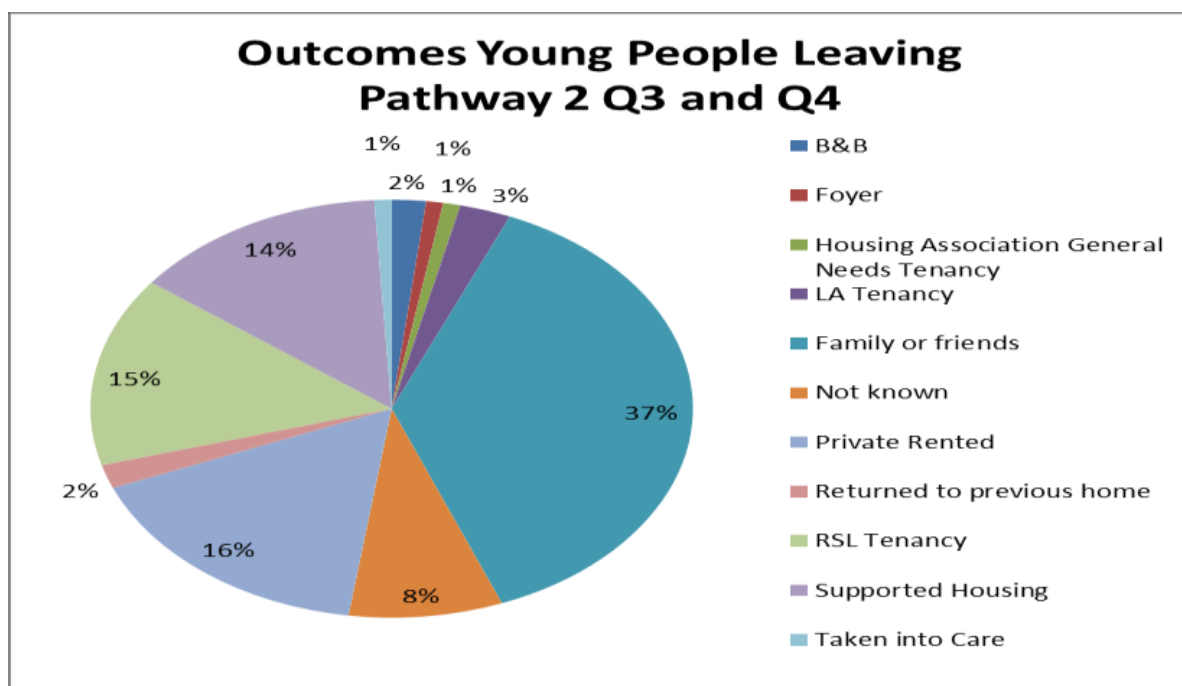
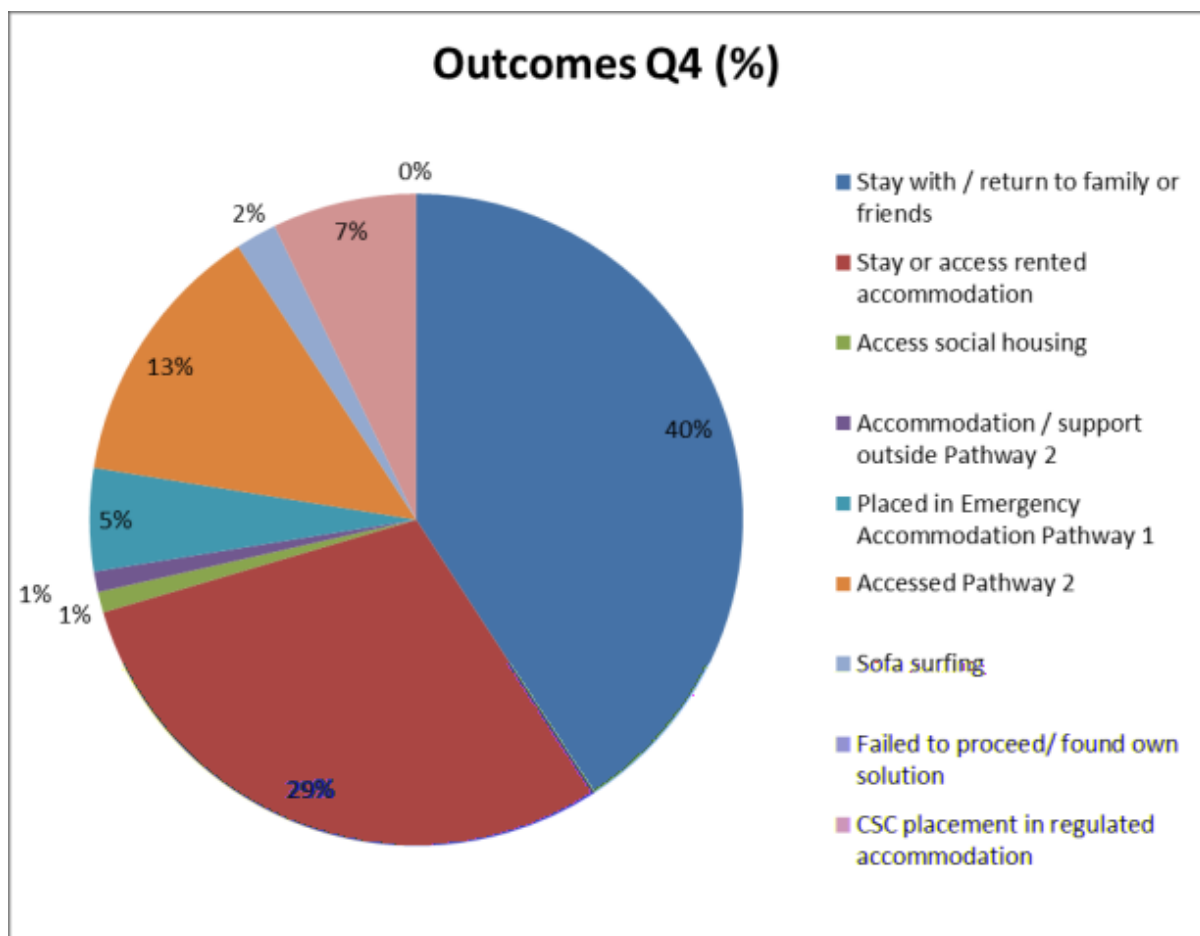
**Children’s Social Care and Youth Justice**

In Quarter 3 those with current or past involvement from Children’s Social Care accounted for 19 % and 17% in Quarter 4. In Quarter 3 current or former Youth Justice cases account for 13% of cases with two thirds of these being open cases and in Quarter 4, 12 % were known to Youth Justice with half being open cases.



### Outcomes from Pathway 1 and Leaving Pathway 2

The average length of stay in Pathway 2 is 12 months.



Feedback from Liz Hamm (Leaving Care Team):

“The Pathway is a great success. I used to have to make up to a dozen phone calls when looking for accommodation for a care leaver, now it just takes one call to the Hub”.

## Case Study

**Background:** Female, 17 accommodated by Children's Social Care when she was younger after family breakdown. Was not able to maintain boundaries, has an offending history, substance misuse issues and other health issues.

**Pathway 2 Support:** Spent 3 months in Pathway 2 Supported Accommodation giving her some stability to access support. It also gave her the opportunity to manage boundaries and learn the skills to live independently. Initially, her behaviour was chaotic and her substance use was high and at times was abusive to workers. Over time she accessed support from her support worker, and built a good working relationship. A lot of time was spent focusing on her positive traits, in an attempt to build her confidence and step out of her comfort zone. She also received support from her leaving care PA, YJS and her social care Outreach workers. She was able to access support 24/7. She became pregnant and decided that it was time to address her substance misuse issues, and spent a lot of time at her Mums. She also required a lot of support with accessing health services. Her stay at the Supported Accommodation was beneficial as she matured significantly and gained respect for others, which had a positive impact on her behaviour.

**Move on outcome and sustainability:** Moved home with Mum and this is currently settled with both being able to talk issues through. She is no longer using substances and is very committed to moving forward with her life.

## Young People’s Homelessness Hubs Quarterly Data

### Full Year: October 2012 – September 2013

#### Cost Benefit Analysis

##### *Pathway Savings*

It is possible that savings may have been made through assisting these young people through pathway 1, signposting and other support, as these young people did not go on to become homeless and require further support from pathway 2. Pathway 2 was recorded as an outcome in only 204 cases, meaning that had these 897 young people not received appropriate support, the potential burden on pathway 2 could have been approximately 4 times greater. Note that this exercise considers only the 897 cases above where a positive outcome is recorded, although if we assume that other cases also had a positive outcome, the figure for successful preventions becomes even higher, making this a conservative estimate.

It is not possible to speculate how many exactly of these 897 young people would otherwise have gone on to require pathway 2 support, as some of them may have merely required signposting and advice and not have been at high risk of homelessness. However, had even half of these young people entered pathway 2, the additional cost burden would have been significant.

The model below shows estimated costings if all these young people had entered longer-term accommodation for 12 months.

This needs to be offset against the total estimated maximum spend on Pathway 1. This has been calculated by factoring in the estimated unit costs of Nightstop (short-term emergency accommodation and support) of £116.29 per night. For a young person to spend 14 nights in Nightstop would cost £1628.06. This covers the costs of recruiting and training hosts, ensuring hosts are available at all times throughout the districts and paying hosts for the service they provide (£259 for 14 nights). 105 cases are listed as having involved short-term emergency accommodation through pathway 1 (suggesting £170,946.30 could have been spent on accommodation if all of these young people used Nightstop for the 14 night period).

The unit costs of high and medium need accommodation vary, and snapshot data from April-May 2013 suggests that around 80% of young people presenting to the Hubs have low or medium needs and 20% high needs. However, it makes sense to assume that many of those with higher needs have entered the pathway anyway, so the majority of successful preventions may have been achieved with those young people who did not have the most complex needs. The cost of accommodating and supporting a young person with medium needs per year is £6312. If we assume that even half of these young people (448) may have entered pathway 2 without support and intervention, this results in an additional annual cost of £2,827,776.

Total saving through not accommodating an additional 448 young people in medium needs accommodation	2,827,776
Minus costs of pathway 1 interventions	170,946.30
<b>Total estimated annual savings achieved through avoiding use of pathway 2</b>	<b>£2,656,829.70</b>

This is only an estimated figure as it is not possible to know what the outcome for these young people would have been had pathway 1 support not been available. It is possible that less than half may have come into pathway 2 anyway, but it is also possible that more than half may have done.

It can be estimated however that for every young person who receives 14 nights of support from Nightstop (£1628.06) rather than requiring pathway 2 support (£6312), the saving for that individual is £4683.94 per year.

Savings through use of the Pathway become even more considerable when more expensive options such as Local Authority Care Homes are avoided. The cost per resident for Care Home accommodation is estimated at £2,767 per week (PSSRU, 2011), which would equate to £143,884 per year.

### *Section 20 Savings*

Figures for North Yorkshire from the ICS system indicate that under the previous system, 28 young people entered care in 2010 under section 20 (excluding those with severe disabilities who would not be accommodated within the pathway anyway).

Under the remodelled provision, ICS records show that for the first six months of 2013, 7 young people aged 16-17 came into care under section 20. This can be extrapolated to 14 per year.

This represents an estimated reduction of 14 young people coming into care.

Potential savings can be modelled as follows:

	Young people supported under Section 20	Minimum estimated cost per year	Maximum estimated cost per year	Average estimated annual cost
2010	28	644,000	1,568,000	1,106,000
2012/2013	14	322,000	784,000	553,000
<b>Anticipated annual saving</b>				<b>553,000</b>

### *Total Potential Savings*

Savings through avoidance of use of Service Pathway 2	<b>2,667,785.70</b>
Savings through decreased use of Section 20	<b>553,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,220,785.70</b>

**This represents a total estimated annual saving of £3,220,785.70 per year.**

### *Other Potential Savings*

Research has demonstrated clear links between homelessness and other complex and chaotic life experiences such as substance misuse, mental health problems, experience of care and prison and engagement in street activities such as sex work, shoplifting and begging (McDonagh, 2011). Pulling together other research, it is possible to estimate the potential cost savings that may have been achieved through each homelessness prevention. These may not be direct or immediate savings to the authority but may be longer-term or lifetime savings to other agencies, partners and broader society:

#### Cost of NEET

Coles et al (2010) estimate the lifetime costs of 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and outline a range of costed case study models. The authors acknowledge that homelessness or even placement in temporary accommodation is a considerable risk factor for NEET status, with the report also citing that 57% of 16-17 year olds who become homeless are NEET. The authors estimate the following average individual costs of being NEET between aged 16-18:

Average cost of NEET (benefits, lost tax and NI) aged 16-18	£56,300
Average resource cost of NEET (losses to economy, individuals and families) aged 16-18	£104,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£160,600</b>

#### Mental Health

Evidence suggests that around 60% of those who become homeless suffer from diagnosable personality disorders (Communities and Local Government, 2012). A report by Demos estimates that treatment for an individual with general poor mental health aged 16-30 costs approximately £1354.83 per person per year (Hannon et al, 2010).

#### Substance Misuse

A report by Joseph Rowntree suggests that of those who experience homelessness, 70% also experience substance misuse (McDonagh, 2011). Curtis (2011) estimates that the average unit cost of a treatment in an inpatient setting for substance misuse is £147 per patient day or £1,029 per patient week.

#### Criminal Behaviour

Coles et al (2010) estimate that the lifetime cost of a drift into persistent and serious offending (including long custody sentences) is approximately £2,371,000. They compare this to the estimated cost of £7,050 for early-intervention strategies such as the involvement of a Youth Offending Team, a Connexions Personal Advisor and a mentoring scheme.

Teenage Pregnancy

Coles et al (2010) estimate that the lifetime cost of supporting a teenage mother is £97,135 (this consists mostly of child benefits, but also includes £4000 of support from a Connexions Personal Advisor and a number of small scale projects in early parenthood). In contrast, the cost of failing to support a teenage mother who then gets sucked into a destructive lifestyle and has another child (both of whom are later taken into Care) escalates to £858,362.

**Summary of Potential Additional Savings per Individual Homelessness Prevention**

Potential Additional Savings to NYCC, partner agencies and societal savings		Average Cost of intervention	Average Cost of failure to intervene	Saving
	Avoidance of NEET	-	160,600 (for age 16-18)	<b>160,600</b>
	Avoidance of Care	-	23,000 (annual)	<b>23,000 per year</b>
	Avoidance of mental health issues	-	1354.83 (annual)	<b>1354.83 per year</b>
	Avoidance of substance misuse		1,029 (weekly)	<b>1,029 per week</b>
	Minimalisation of criminal behaviour	7,050	2,371,000 (lifetime)	<b>2,363,950</b>
	Avoidance of destructive lifestyle for teenage mother	4,000 (plus £97,135 of lifetime support and benefits)	858,362 (lifetime)	<b>757,227</b>

A 2013 report by Porchlight (a UK-based youth homelessness charity) suggests that for every £1 invested in young people, there is a return of £6 in social value, using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model. SROI models place value on longer-term outcomes, changes and impacts which may not have market values. The report also estimates that £12,300 of social value will accrue to each service user.

The report focuses on a range of short, medium and longer-term outcomes, predicting that for young homeless people who are at risk of homelessness and access short, medium or longer-term accommodation services, it is possible to estimate the percentage of young service users who will experience a certain outcome. The report estimates that:

- > 48% will make new friends and improve family relationships
- > 72% will gain independent living skills including managing a budget
- > 68% will experience improved mental and physical health
- > 64% will experience increased confidence and maturity

- > 60% will develop increased resilience and be more likely to go on to live unsupported
- > 36% will reduce offending behaviour and contact with police
- > 34% will engage in meaningful use of their time (through work, training or education)
- > 18% will in future see a marked increase in their likelihood of gaining employment
- > 14% will in future reduce their risk of becoming long-term homeless in adulthood

Two negative outcomes were also noted:

- > 32% will experience disruption to existing friendships and work when moving into accommodation
- > 20% will be unable to abide by the rules and will be evicted from the accommodation services

The report also examines additional longer-term benefits for other agencies including:

- > Increased revenue for colleges as young people stay in education longer
- > Increased tax revenue for HMRC as young people are more likely to secure employment
- > Reduced burden on statutory and other public services including social housing, police and the justice system, the NHS and DWP (allowing reallocation of public resources away from homeless youth and adults to other groups in need)
- > Reduced burden on Social Services (with savings to Children's Social Care of £74 per hour for every hour of client support provided by homelessness services rather than a social worker).



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Porchlight (2013) *Porchlight Young Persons' Service Canterbury Forecast SROI April 2013 – March 2014*

## Stockton – Spark of Genius North East

### Contact:

Paul Moffat – [paul.moffat@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:paul.moffat@stockton.gov.uk)

Stockton recognises that the current ad-hoc approach to commissioning residential education placements is financially unsustainable and doesn't always lead to the best outcome for children and young people.

In May 2012 Stockton Borough Council embarked on a tendering exercise to find a strategic partner to develop non-maintained education provision and residential provision for children and young people with Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties. In December 2012, through a competitive tender process Spark of Genius was appointed as the strategic partner and a joint venture established to deliver the outcome of the review.

The joint venture has been set up as a 50/50 Limited Liability Partnership. The terms of the partnership are such that the Council retain ownership of the residential properties operating units but Spark of Genius will provide the care and education services by managing and offering the home and the school. The joint venture will employ the staff and contract with Spark of Genius to manage the staff.

Historically, children with complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were placed out of authority because there was little provision available locally. A number of children and young people with complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are looked after and of those in mainstream education provision in Stockton either live in residential children's homes or foster placements in the local area.

### How this works:

A joint venture partnership with Spark of Genius to deliver care and education to children and young people with complex needs. The partnership is named Spark of Genius North East. The Board consist of three members of Spark of Genius and three members from the Council's Senior Management Team. This brings together a range of people from education, social care and finance backgrounds. A local school has been developed into a specialist educational facility and can accommodate up to 50 pupils. Although the school is registered for 50 places we will only be admitting a maximum of 35.

This is not a traditional model of service delivery. There are small homes based in semi-rural areas with high levels of staff who will provide the very best support and care and creating a fantastic environment for children and young people to do well. There will be wrap around support and close working relationships between the school and social care staff.

The innovative partnership will help some of the most challenging behaviour within our community and enable them to fulfil their educational aspirations.

Stockton may bid to the Innovation Fund for funding to evaluate this project if feasible. Would accommodate a visit to the school and residential premises if that was required.

## Innovation Fund

Stockton like many authorities is facing an unprecedented number of children and young people requiring specialist residential support for some of our most challenging young people. It's Corporate Parenting Strategy clearly states...

"Every good parent knows that children require a safe environment in which to thrive. We protect and support our children against the perils and risks of life. We are ambitious for them, we want them to reach their potential. We celebrate and share in their achievements. A child who is cared for by the Local Authority has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that would be expected from a good parent."

Following extensive reviews of its service and it's ambition to realign its services which are tailored to the needs of children and young people with additional needs it has undertaken a commitment to develop a new innovative way of providing accommodation and educational support to children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Stockton recognises that the current adhoc approach to commissioning residential education placements is financially unsustainable and doesn't always lead to the best outcome for children and young people.

In May 2012 Stockton Borough Council embarked on a tendering exercise to find a strategic partner to develop non-maintained education provision and residential provision for children and young people with Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties. In December 2012, through a competitive tender process Spark of Genius was appointed as the strategic partner and a joint venture established to deliver the outcome of the review.

Spark of Genius provides education, residential care, autism services, community support and post 16 programmes to support children and young people throughout the UK. The company has considerable experience and expertise in caring for looked after children and takes pride in being a good neighbour. It has well trained staff who will look after the young people on a 24 hour basis so they are cared for, appropriately supervised and attend school.

The joint venture has been set up as a 50/50 Limited Liability Partnership. The terms of the partnership are such that the Council retain ownership of the residential properties operating units but Spark of Genius will provide the care and education services by managing and offering the home and the school. The joint venture will employ the staff and contract with Spark of Genius to manage the staff.

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**Innovative**

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**Department For Education**

The recently announced children's services innovation programme seeks to support the development, testing and spreading of more effective ways of supporting children who need help from Children's Social Care Services. There is a general acceptance that we need to rethink how we respond to the complex needs of adolescents. We know children in residential care have high levels of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

We do know that according to recent research that 38% of children living in children's homes had a statement of special educational needs; 62% had clinically significant mental health difficulties and nearly 74% had been violent or aggressive in the last 6 months. We also know children who live in children's homes achieve lower attainment levels in key stage examinations than other children.

## **Blackburn with Darwen Council - Adolescent Support Unit**

**The following article was written by Ruth Hardy and published in The Guardian newspaper on Wednesday 29 October 2014**

### **A council's innovative response to the challenge of residential care**

#### **Adolescent support unit run by Blackburn with Darwen council helps young people stay at home**

Becky, a bright 21-year-old, has just begun the second year of a science degree. She did so once before, but took time out to have her baby daughter, now seven months old. It's hard returning to studying, Becky admits, but "when it's done it'll be worth it". Although she's not sure what she wants to do afterwards, it is, she says, "a starting point".

Having a starting point is important to Becky because three years ago she was in a very different position – as a young person being helped at an adolescent support unit run by Blackburn with Darwen council.

The unit is part of the council's innovative response to the challenge of meeting the residential care needs of young people; challenging because it is expensive and because going into care, including foster placement, is often not the best outcome. A statistic from a report by National Children and Adults Services bears this out: care leavers aged 19 are almost twice as likely as the general population to be designated "Neet" (not in education, employment or training).

The council, working from the principle that it is usually better for a young person to stay with their family if possible, decided to develop short breaks for those experiencing difficulties. To do so, it closed a residential home to free resources to fund the support unit. Karen Barrick, head of permanence at the council's children's services department, says that "one of the drivers was believing that a different way of working with families might lead to fewer people coming into care", but nothing similar had been tried before and it was a step into the unknown. It has been a slow burn: the change was made in 2006, but the positive results from the project are only now beginning to attract more widespread interest.

"In the past 12 months we've had a lot of different councils coming to look around," says Mel Coglan, short breaks manager at the support unit, which has consistently been rated "outstanding" by the Ofsted inspectorate. Barrick is giving a presentation at this week's National Children and Adult Services conference and a similar, though smaller, unit has already been established in Bolton.

The Blackburn unit looks like an ordinary house, formed by knocking together two semi-detached properties. Inside, it is bright and airy, with pictures of young people doing various activities (canoeing, walking, cooking) lining the walls. Upstairs are four brightly coloured bedrooms for young people, as well as two for staff.

The project works as an in-between house for young people aged 11 or over who are having difficulties at home and risk being taken into care. They are referred to the unit through local children's services to have their issues addressed. Its aim is to return the young people home and keep them there.

Short weekend breaks at the unit provide a respite for both the young person and their family. The unit operates on a "pro-social" model, where the focus is on listening and having respect for others. In the evening, young people and staff sit around a big wooden dining table for a communal supper. Staff say that making conversation over a shared meal is incredibly beneficial to young people at the unit, especially those who have never experienced such interaction.

The service offers a wide range of activities such as crafts, fishing and healthy eating, "anything that can boost their self-esteem", says Stephen Hartley, principal adolescent support team worker. "It also concentrates on the more nitty-gritty bits that help them focus on issues relevant to them, whether it's problems at home, conflict with parents, domestic violence or anger at what they've experienced."

When the young person is back at the family home, staff at the unit are always available at the end of a phone to offer practical support or to drive to the home and help in person.

In addition, the unit has a "strengthening families" programme, which offers training for a young person and their family. "These sessions provide strategies for managing young people's behaviour and identifying 'positives' within families," explains Coglan. "Families work to develop and strengthen these positive areas."

The young person's progress is reviewed every 12 weeks, with new goals for improvement – such as school attendance – set each time, until the young person, support worker and family agree that it is time to leave. The unit can support up to 50 young people, with a staff of 11, plus one domestic worker.

"It's a home from home," says 14-year-old Matt, who used the service for about 18 months until he moved on earlier this year. "I used to get stressed out because my mum had bipolar and sometimes we'd need a break. And I couldn't go to [my] family, so I used to come here every fortnight on a Friday."

Gemma has had two sons who have progressed through the service. "I think it's fantastic, for the kids and especially for the parents", she says. The place is like home, she agrees, and importantly it's not all fun and games for the children: they have to wash up; there are rules.

One of Gemma's sons has schizophrenia, and was on the verge of going into care. "If it wasn't for [the service] I was going to have a breakdown; they were fantastic," she says. Now her son is doing "really well" and is back in school.

The unit costs some £380,000 a year to run. The council, which still runs two children's homes of its own and pays between £2,000 and £4,000 a week for each residential placement, depending on individual needs, says that if only four young people a year are diverted from residential care, then it more than pays for itself.

In 2007, 48 young people aged 11-plus were brought into care by Blackburn with Darwen council; by 2013, this number had dropped to 18. Last year, only two young people who used the service went into care afterwards. Not only is this a big saving for the council, but a better outcome for children and their families.

Despite an increasingly limited council budget, the future of the unit seems secure. Barrick asserts that it “will be part of our strategy going forward”.

There is even talk of expanding, perhaps at the same location or on another site, to start working with younger children and reaping the benefits of early intervention. A bid has been put in for funding to develop the idea.

For the children and parents who use the support unit, it offers a precious respite – somewhere to get away from the problems of family life. “It was just the space,” reflects Becky. “When people were doing your head in, you thought, ‘oh, I’ll come here.’”

Matt agrees: “Coming here is different; you might be stressed out at home, but when you come here all the stress is taken away.”

*Becky, Matt and Gemma are pseudonyms*

**The above Guardian article is also available online:** [www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2014/oct/29/blackburn-innovative-support-unit-residential-care](http://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2014/oct/29/blackburn-innovative-support-unit-residential-care)

## Surrey – integrated transition service

**Contact:**

Christine May – [Christine.May@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.May@surreycc.gov.uk)

Has a transition service for 14-25 working across education, children's and adult services.  
Interested in any literature or work being done in this area.



## Derby – Housing Framework for 16 and 17 year olds

**Contact:**

Catherine Hadfield - [Catherine.hadfield@derby.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.hadfield@derby.gov.uk)

This framework focuses on support and accommodation for both CIC, care leavers and also 16 and 17 year olds who present as at risk of being homeless and who become children in need.