

From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 29 November 2022

Subject: Adolescent Response Team

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 7 May 2019, 15 November 2019. 11 March 2020

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: N/A

Summary:

This report provides an update to the Cabinet Committee about the progress of the new Adolescent Response Team. It explains the rationale for the pilot timescales to be extended, within the original budget envelope, to maximise the allocated resource.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2020, CYPE Cabinet endorsed the plan to utilise s.106 district property development contributions over two years. This was to implement and resource a flexible workforce to deliver services to children on evenings and weekends to support KCC's approach to contextual safeguarding.
- 1.2 In May and November 2019 CYPE Cabinet Committee received reports on Kent's newly formed Adolescent Service and our pending Contextual Safeguarding developments.
- 1.3 In March and April 2021, Change for Kent Children and DMT respectively agreed the Adolescent Response Team (ART) model of delivery within the two-year s.106 budget.
- 1.4 The model was developed and implemented in recognition of the links between contextual harm and family breakdown, learning from other high performing local authorities and learning from our partnerships with the University of Bedfordshire and the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
- 1.5 The ART approach:

- provides evening and weekend non-case holding support at times of crisis for adolescents and their families, where contextual risks threaten family or placement breakdown
- works in an integrated way with wider adolescent services (Youth Work, Social Work, Early Help and Youth Justice) and multi-agency partners, through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings, to assess and respond to identified locations and spaces of contextual concern

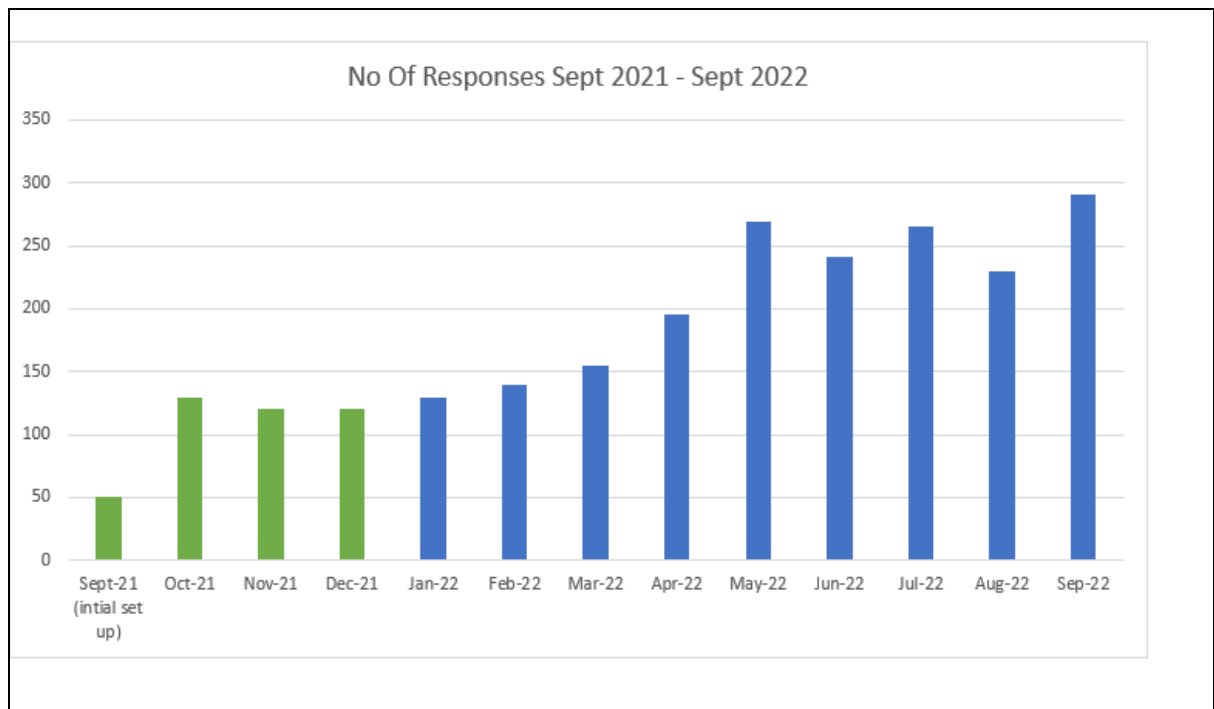
- 1.6 Recruitment to the ART Team Manager post started immediately, with Practice Supervisor and Response practitioner recruitment following. Following staff induction and training, the service was launched in September 2021, albeit with some vacancies left to fill.
- 1.7 Due to both additional funding levered in, and staff vacancies, there is an underspend in the project budget. This proposal seeks to fully maximise the resource by extending the timescales of the pilot.

2. Purpose and Approach

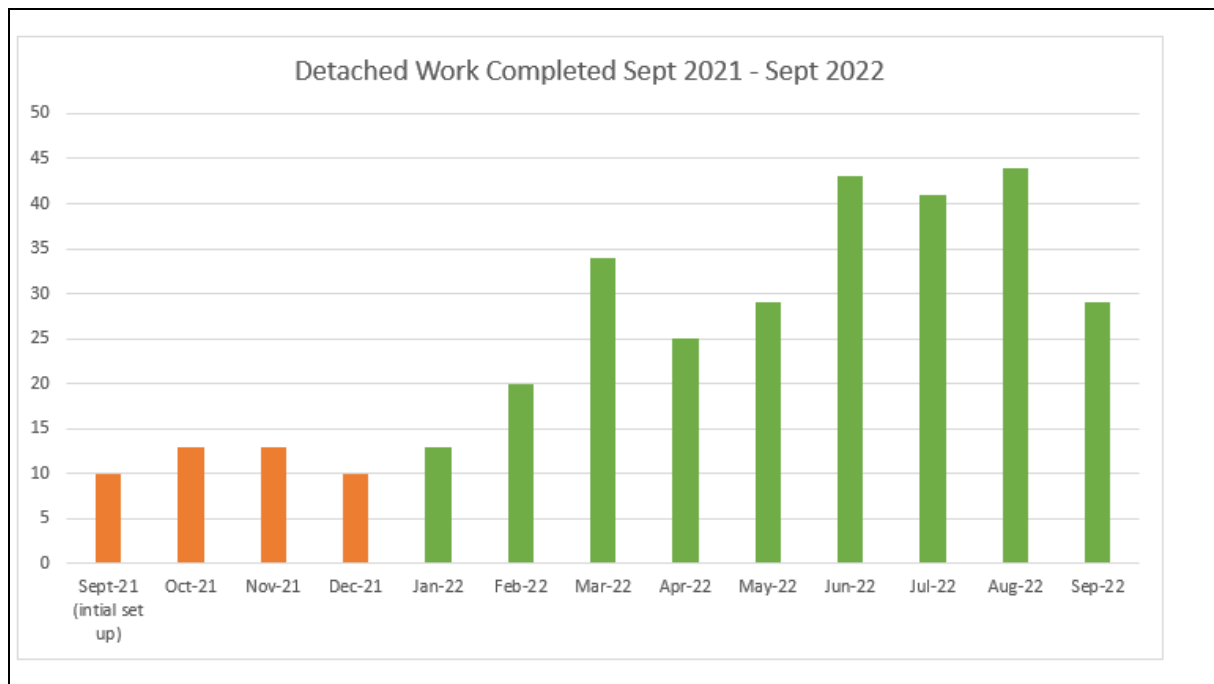
- 2.1 Recruitment and inductions have continued throughout 2022 resulting in a current workforce of 2 fulltime Supervisors, 10 fulltime Responders, 5 part time Responders and a bank of 10 sessional Responders countywide.
- 2.2 The Adolescent Response Team is uniquely creative and solutions-focussed in enabling a swift, flexible, and intensive response to meet the needs of children. The referral inbox is monitored from 9am – 5pm. The referring case holder is responded to within 1 hour with details of allocation to an Adolescent Response Practitioner (“Responders”) or to discuss further. Responders can visit children and families 7 days a week (including holidays) up to 8pm.
- 2.3 Responders adopt a model of support which is relevant to the child, approaching each child/family as an independent source and offer support ‘in the moment’ to prevent, de-escalate and stabilise the situation. This approach builds familial resilience and prevents children coming into care.
- 2.4 Responders are trauma informed and DBT trained. They appreciate and understand the complexity of adolescents and the impact this can have on a family in crisis. Senior staff are available to support and guide responders in addition to the support of lone working and staff supervision practices and development opportunities.
- 2.5 The Adolescent Response Team are fully cognisant of the growing evidence of child criminal exploitation in Kent and work closely with the Gangs & County Lines Police Team and Violence Reduction Unit. This collaboration aims to identify children who are being exploited, to disrupt exploitation activity, and support children to identify and actively withdraw from those causing them harm. It is evident that increasing the intensity of support to these individuals is crucial in disrupting grooming activity, alongside offering, promoting, and often joining children to engage in alternative pro-social activities.

3. Referral & Response statistics to date.

- 3.1 There has been a steady increase in referrals since the launch of the service in September 2021 with a start of 7 in the first month; 30 in November 2021 then a steady increase to 66 in September 2022.
- 3.2 The Adolescent Response Team are responding to children in crisis, so it is inevitable that some children and families require repeat responses. The total number of responses to children per month has grown from 120 in November 2021 to 291 in September 2022.



- 3.3 In the twelve months since launch (September 2021 to September 2022) ART have carried out 2334 individual visits to children and families in crisis.
- 3.4 ART have co-delivered, with Youth Work and other partners, over 280 detached projects across the county in response to locations and spaces identified by the District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSM) as posing a potential risk of harm to children. These include 'hotspot' rural areas and urban locations, parks, abandoned premises, private businesses, and housing estates.
- 3.5 Detail of district activity is reported via DCSMs into the quarterly Kent & Medway multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding report. It can also be made available to LCPGs and other professionals.



3.6 The DCSM partnership includes Police, District Councils, Community Safety, Missing Child Exploitation Team, Open Access Youth Provision, Youth Justice, Health, British Transport Police, drug support agencies, Children’s Services, schools, ART & non-traditional partners.

3.7 ART support the community multi-agency team to undertake location assessments to understand the context of the harm. This informs the creation of a multi-agency plan to support positive change for not only the children in those spaces but also the local community.

4. Additionality

4.1 Adolescent services and ART work closely with partners including the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), through which an additional £269k has been levered in for various projects.

4.2 ART have been piloting a Reachable Moments Project within Accident and Emergency at the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital in Thanet. ART work closely with the Safeguarding Lead and Streaming Nurse to identify and intervene with children presenting with injuries including knife wounds, that may be a result of extra-familial harm.

4.3 The Reachable Moments aim is to engage with the child and explore if they have been a victim of exploitation or violence.

Children are often too scared to tell Police or authorities why they have sought medical attention but at that moment of vulnerability, within an A&E setting, children can feel helpless, recognise the enormity of their situation, and are more likely to respond in that ‘reachable moment.’ It is hoped that intervention

at this time will lead to improved engagement and outcomes for our most vulnerable children facing extra-familial harm in the community.

- 4.4 The Adolescent Response Team are also supporting an ‘intense response’ project focussing on identified Young Street Groups within Kent to establish multi-agency “3P planning”: Prepare, Prevent, Protect. Additional funding of £140,000 has been secured from VRU to support responses to extra-familial harm and exploitation countywide from April 2021 – April 2023. This provides an intensive, proactive response to children being criminally exploited.

5. Future planning

- 5.1 The Adolescent Response Team work seamlessly with partners and is continually sourcing opportunities for meaningful collaboration to maximise value and outcomes for children.
- 5.2 As a result of securing additional partnership funding, the Adolescent Response Team did not utilise the full allocation of s.106 budget in the first year. In following years, additional funding is adding extra resource and capacity, and enables a broader reach and remit as described.
- 5.3 Following consideration of the options, the proof-of-concept trial will be extended by 12 months, within the initially agreed budget envelope.

Options Appraisal

<p>Option A: Continue according to initial project plan, with pilot ending August 2023, realising a s.106 underspend over the two years.</p>	
Factors in favour	Factors against
<p>In line with proposed pilot scheduling.</p> <p>Able to meet outcomes analysis timescale of initial pilot.</p>	<p>Staff retention would be adversely impacted– predicted loss of staff from January 2023 onward due to contracts ending August 2023.</p> <p>Disbanding of funded, successful, and established support resource for children and families at times of crisis.</p> <p>Budget underspend would need to be considered for re-allocation.</p> <p>Reduction in numbers of children and families receiving intensive support to prevent family breakdown and children entering the care system.</p>
<p>Option B: Increase spend in year 2 within the whole project budget, by recruiting additional staff. Project would still end in August 2023, but with minimal, or no, underspend.</p>	
Factors in favour	Factors against

<p>In line with proposed pilot scheduling.</p> <p>Able to meet outcomes analysis timescale of initial pilot.</p> <p>Increase in resource would realise more children and families receiving a service for a short term.</p>	<p>Disbanding of funded, successful, and established support resource for children and families at times of crisis.</p> <p>Staff retention adversely impacted – predicted loss of staff from January 2023 onward due to project end in August 2023.</p> <p>Recruitment challenges – short, fixed term contracts are difficult to attract the right calibre of candidate.</p> <p>Effectiveness timescale – following recruitment and training, staff would not be operational for long before their contracts end in August 2023.</p> <p>Reduction in numbers of children and families receiving intensive support to prevent family breakdown and children entering the care system.</p> <p>Reduced capacity to enhance contextual safeguarding to address extra-familial harm and exploitation.</p> <p>Reduced capacity to support detached youth work and identify/facilitate safe spaces in the community.</p>
---	---

Option C:
Extend the project delivery into a third year, utilising the currently agreed resource underspend.

Factors in favour	Factors against
<p>Maintenance of trained, skilled, mature workforce. Consistent relationships and a stable team. Outcomes for children and families would be good.</p> <p>Financially efficient, using existing budget to extend pilot lifespan resulting in wider and more sustained impact.</p> <p>Ongoing support to children & families at times of crisis in line with intended outcomes of the project.</p> <p>Increased numbers of children and families receiving intensive support to prevent family breakdown and</p>	<p>KCC would have liability to those staff employed for over 2 years, in respect to redundancy, or redeployment, if the project then ends (this is minimal as the most senior staff, and some Responders, are seconded within KCC).</p>

<p>reduce children entering the care system.</p> <p>Provides more time for evaluation of resource, outcomes & effectiveness to inform decisions for future strategies.</p> <p>More time provides more opportunities to lever in further additional funding.</p> <p>Extended capacity to enhance contextual safeguarding to reduce extra-familial harm and exploitation.</p> <p>Extended capacity to support detached youth work and identify/facilitate safe spaces in the community.</p>	
---	--

6. Service Impact and Evaluation

- 6.1 Initial indications are that providing an intensive response service is having a positive impact upon children & families experiencing extra -familial harm, and at times of crisis.
- 6.2 Feedback from children, families, practitioners, and partners to date has been 'outstanding:' evidencing improved outcomes for children in, and on the edge of care, experiencing extra-familial harm.
- 6.3 Parent / carer & professional feedback is consistently overwhelmingly positive:

'We are thankful for the support as we did not have this with our previous foster child, and we can feel the difference.'

'He's buzzing off today, he has told me about all the people he met, I think you may have done it around work stuff and getting him motivated, he will love working. Well done to you and the lot that were there! I can't believe it, it really works!'

*'I just wanted to feedback that *** has really enjoyed the visits so far and has spoken really positively about this time – giving her something to look forward to, to be out of the house, and a positive outlet rather than things escalating to a crisis.'*

*'I want to express my thanks that having a Responder visit a couple of times last week has had on ****. During a day out together, he spoke to me about his feelings and wishes and would often refer to the advice he had received'*

*'Responder has done an amazing job with *** this evening and made her realise that even in the hardest of times she is cared about which is so important for our young people that are feeling lost. Thank you for everything you and your team do.'*

6.4 Partners recognise that the additional ART resource has bolstered and expanded Kent's ability to identify the context of harm in our communities, including extra-familial harm and exploitation. It has added expertise and capacity to robust, child & community focussed initiatives to create safer spaces for communities throughout Kent.

6.5 The original budget and additional secured funding offers the opportunity to extend the pilot duration to understand and analyse the findings more fully and identify the lasting impact and positive change for children & families within Kent.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The agreed s.106 budget can be drawn down in 2023/24 to extend the project for the additional 12 months. It may be possible to draw down further s.106 funding to support the continuation of the project if deemed appropriate.

8. Legal implications

8.1 The s.106 budget can be drawn down in 2023/24 without legal implication.

9. Equalities implications

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not necessary.

10. Recommendation(s):

10.1 Cabinet Committee -

The CYPE Cabinet Committee is informed of the development of the Adolescent Response Team; appraised of the options and advised of the intention to extend, utilising the agreed s.106 budget, for a further 12 months.

Background Documents:

- [Meeting of the CYPE CC, Tuesday 7th May 2019 - Item 105 - Adolescent Risk Management in Kent report - Adolescent Risk Management in Kent](#)

- [Meeting of the CYPE CC, Friday 15th November 2019 - item 140 - Change for Kent Children Phase 2 Workstream: Fully Integrated Adolescent Risk Service](#)
[report - Change for Kent Children Phase 2 Workstream: Fully Integrated Adolescent Risk Service](#)
- 20/00016 - Section 106 Funding - [Executive Decision Report \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)
- Section 106 Funding Committee Report - [Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 11th March, 2020, 10.00 am \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

11. Contact details

Report Author:

Dan Bride, Assistant Director

03000 410519

Dan.bride@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Stuart Collins, Director of ICS

03000 411732

Stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk