

**From:** Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services  
Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 15 November 2019

**Subject:** **Change for Kent Children Phase 2 Workstream: Fully Integrated Adolescent Risk Service**

**Classification:** **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

The transformation within Integrated Children's Services in April 2019 established a new structure for Adolescent Services. Two key activities of this service are to:

1. develop a consistent multi-agency and county-wide adolescent risk management model
2. develop and embed a core targeted Open Access offer which meets the needs of high risk and vulnerable children, young people, and families.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the progress made to date in the development of the Adolescent Service.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. A new Integrated Adolescent and Open Access Service went live in April 2019 as a key feature of the Change for Kent Children Programme. The service brings together professionals from Adolescent (social work) Support Teams; Youth Justice; Inclusion and Attendance Services; Youth Hubs and Children's Centres and created new Adolescent Early Help Units which specialise in working with complex teenagers.
- 1.2. The Adolescent Workstream launched a bold change programme in May 2019, in response to a number of drivers:
  - a) Locally, Kent Children's Services Ofsted feedback (2017) confirmed the need to improve the consistency of strategic and operational adolescent risk management processes.

- b) Kent's Special Educational Needs (SEN) inspection (January 2019) identified that a multi-disciplinary response would be necessary to improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities.
  - c) The University of Bedfordshire started a development programme with Kent to expand KCC's understanding of, and response to Contextual Safeguarding; specifically, the impact of context, including peer groups, communities and locations, in respect to managing adolescent risk.
- 1.3. Additionally, at a national level, the Home Office commenced a consultation (July 2019) on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence.
- 1.4. Furthermore, in September, Kent and Medway Police announced their ambition to implement Violence Reduction Units, necessitating strategic and operational partnership collaboration.

## **2. Progress**

- 2.1. The Adolescent Workstream devised an ambitious project plan with a wide range of internal and external partners and has now completed the first phase of its initial objectives.
- 2.2. A clear criterion for referrals to the Adolescent Support Team and Adolescent Early Help Units that is achievable within the current resource has been agreed and implemented. System processes, such as the allocation of 'Return from Missing Interviews' from the Front Door and Out of Court Disposals, have been updated to reflect these.
- 2.3. Virtual Schools Kent (VSK), HeadStart Kent, Youth Services and Youth Justice have worked together to identify opportunities to meaningfully engage young people to hear their voice in respect to service design and delivery. The success of this particular strand of work has led to a Participation Strategy being developed which includes:
- Principles about young people's participation
  - A clear charter to define participation
  - A set of standards for participation
  - A 'community of practice' to support the development of staff skills
- 2.4. Processes, including management information, have been adapted to enable Adolescent Services to better monitor and utilise the effectiveness and timeliness of Education and Not in Employment Education of Training (NEET) activity and support services
- 2.5. To improve coordination and the adolescents experience of our services, an integrated adolescent plan is being developed to meet the needs of young people who straddle multiple services (e.g. Youth Justice and Children's Social Work Service), which will coordinate staff and services into individuated intervention plans.

- 2.6. Two key achievements of this workstream include: the development of a framework for **adolescent risk management**; and the review and **re-defining of the open access offer**.

### **3. Adolescent Risk Management**

- 3.1. Adolescent Services have led the development of a new strategic and operational framework to better manage current and emerging adolescent risk, including matters of extra-familial ('contextual') safeguarding and public protection. Contextual Safeguarding is a framework which assists professionals to understand and therefore, manage the push and pull factors for risks, such as Missing; Criminal Exploitation; Substance Misuse; Offending Behaviour; and Sexual Exploitation.
- 3.2. The governance and accountability of these processes is being codified with key partners in order to sustain multi-agency commitment; to drive action; and to maintain consistency and effectiveness. Impact on risk reduction will be monitored and reported on using qualitative and quantitative measures.
- 3.3. Contextual Safeguarding does not just apply to adolescents, nor is the framework exclusive to managing the highest levels of risk. Consequently, contextual approaches are being developed and embedded in processes with all children and young people across the spectrum of need, including a review of assessment and planning documentation.
- 3.4. The approach is aligned with the developing Police Violence Reduction Units and responding to the emerging legal duty for a multi-agency approach to be taken to preventing and tackling serious violence and its root causes.
- 3.5. The framework is essentially:
- 3.5.1. Operational
- i. Developing statutory strategy procedures to include 'contextual' considerations.
  - ii. Strengthening mechanisms of support staff with practice issues (such as non-engagement and lack of progress) which promote staff working creatively and outside of typical organisational boundaries to resolve challenges.
- 3.5.2. And a clearly defined set of relational strategic processes:
- i. District Community Risk Management forums: Supported by Youth Workers, valuable preventative work is enabled, considering contexts such as spaces, places and locations where risk can occur. This forum will identify and respond to service gaps and barriers, reporting both to and from Divisional Risk Management Meetings in respect to themes, trends and effectiveness of actions

agreed with partners.

- ii. Police Divisional Risk Management meetings: Considering contextual themes and trends across districts, this multi-agency group informs priorities for prevention and intervention activity to address emerging and known risks.
- iii. County Strategic Risk Management: Collating and sharing intelligence and good practice from across the county and neighbouring counties and boroughs. This high-level multi-agency forum would report both to and from divisional meetings.

### **3.6 Measurables**

Success of the new model will be evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative indicators of both inputs and outcomes. The framework for these measures is being developed with partners over the next 6 weeks. The effectiveness of prevention, as well as the success of targeted and intensive support, will likely include positive indicators (engagement, attendance) as well as the reduction in negative indicators (missing, offending).

The success of the adolescent workforce to collaborate with other disciplines in adopting trauma-informed, restorative and contextual approaches should also elicit positive feedback from young people, their families and other professionals. It's likely that some of these measures will be preceded by a reportable increase in adolescent workload including engagement with universal and targeted provision. In the longer term, it would be anticipated that success would realise a reduction in the number and complexity of adolescents escalating to Child In Need, Child Protection and Children in Care.

## **4. Redefining the Open Access Offer**

- 4.1. Universal services are generally open to participants to attend when they meet certain broad criteria such as the defined age range for an evening youth club or young parents' group. Key messages are often holistically relevant to whole populations such as 'equality and diversity' and issues relating to public health. These services are typically long term, and membership may continue over years through which positive adult role models can develop relationships which can latterly address more targeted and specific needs.
- 4.2. Targeted services deliver specific interventions with a focussed outcome, often overcoming barriers, adversity or driving change, such as risk-taking behaviour and healthy relationships. Delivery staff specialise in facilitating individual change. Identification of participants is by professionals and/or self-referral, and these services are often time limited but may be reviewed and repeated as needed.
- 4.3. Often delivered in group environments, both universal and targeted services are delivered by KCC's Youth teams, Children's Centres and by a huge range of uniformed community and voluntary sector, including commissioned, providers.

Together, these services make up the Open Access offer.

- 4.4. Universal and targeted services are typically voluntary and thereby rely on positive relationships between adults and young people. Breadth and reach of provision rely on working closely with the local community and voluntary sector.
- 4.5. This approach includes:
  - Promoting and delivering universal services across schools and other settings.
  - Coordinating and integrating delivery with key partners such as Health Visitors, Schools and voluntary and community services, to complement each other and reduce duplication.
  - Utilising the strengths and resilience of families and communities to help themselves and ensure continuity of support that they can access as and when they feel the need.
- 4.6. A new offer for Youth is being developed to deliver our ambition to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable young people. The offer will have 'core' elements which social workers will be able to access consistently for the families they work with. This core offer will have a greater emphasis on targeted group-work and evidenced-based programmes of intervention which support statutory plans for the most vulnerable families, to be delivered within centres, within the family home or in community settings.
- 4.7. Open Access teams will work closely with Local Children's Partnership Groups (LCPGs) recognising that local providers are a crucial part of the whole.
- 4.8. The core offer will be congruent with the Integrated Children's Service's practice framework, taking a strength-based, whole-family approach. It will be developed to foster resilience within families and communities while keeping the needs of the child at the centre of the approach.
- 4.9. Detached youth work will be embedded within the contextual safeguarding approaches. Detached youth workers can provide informal education by meeting young peoples' needs within their locations and peer groups. By meeting young people in their communities, detached workers can build an understanding of the issues that young people experience and the relationships they form, enabling intervention in harmful contexts. Through this, and by sharing intelligence with partners, Youth workers provide a key role in enhancing the safety of young people.

## **5. Current Focus and Future Goals**

- 5.1. The Adolescent Workstream continue to pursue a relentless work programme of change and development which enhance our services to adolescents and to drive improvement in outcomes for our most vulnerable adolescents. The current focus includes the following key activities:
  - 5.1.1. Senior Managers are currently considering the potential remit and reach of Adolescent Services, such as the extent to which they could integrate, further enabling the service to hold statutory social work case

responsibilities. This will inform the resourcing, structure and capacity of Adolescent Services, determining the degree to which they can be seamless and responsive to Children in Need, Child Protection, children and young people at risk of entering into care and Children in Care, at risk of placement breakdown.

- 5.1.2. Adolescent Services are developing an identity and culture for an “expert adolescent workforce”. This includes behaviours and values such as tenacity; flexibility to build trusted relationships; skills to adopt trauma-informed, strength-based, solution focused approaches, and to build positive relationships with adolescents.
- 5.1.3. A county-wide review has been undertaken of restorative approaches. The launch of a restorative approaches’ strategy is complemented by training which will drive a culture of working with challenging young people in a supportive, aspirational, future-thinking way which eradicates inappropriately punitive responses.
- 5.1.4. The county will utilise the learning as it emerges from the North Kent & Medway Serious Youth Violence project. Funding of £1,362,645 from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), will enable the 2-year project to add value and capacity to our current adolescent offer, enhancing the knowledge, skills and resources available to front-line staff. The project will build on the available evidence base and local knowledge and practice to devise tools (such as a Child Criminal Exploitation and a Gangs Toolkit) for professionals and parents which will supplement the new strategic and operational framework for adolescent risk management. The team have worked closely with the MHCLG to agree changes from the original bid to enhance the front-line resource and are proud of service design co-production activity with young people in Cookham Wood Young Offenders Institute (YOI).
- 5.1.5. The complex task of mapping SEN support services has commenced in order to identify gaps and to identify what can be developed and commissioned. This complements the definition and implementation of a core offer of universal and targeted support for parents and adolescents.

**Recommendation(s):**

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