

Report



meeting	SOCIAL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE	
date	20 th February 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

PROGRESS REPORT TO DATE – RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 A study group report regarding developments in the residential child care services was agreed by Select Committee on 28th September 2004. This was subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 13th October 2004. This report provides a further progress report on the developments that were agreed.

2. Information and Advice

- 2.1 The Select Committee Study Group was formed to consider the proposed development of Woodland View to provide a specialist service that had different features from that provided at other units. As a result of the work undertaken it was recommended all residential homes should integrate other key services into the provision available to young people. The key recommendations were:-

- The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to be integrated into the residential service
- residential care workers to take a role in supporting Education
- youth work staff to be further integrated into service provision
- Performance Management Structure to be agreed and implemented
- Post Incident Support Strategy to be implemented – this is protocol for staff to ensure that young people were not criminalised for minor physical or verbal abuse
- Increased involvement of young people in decisions about the management of units and the service.

- 2.2 There is a well established Residential Steering Group which oversees the implementation of the Select Committee recommendations. This is attended by key staff from Social Services, Local Education Authority, Culture and Community and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. It is also has links with the named nurse for children looked after and the children's

participation officer. This group has had an action plan which covers the issues outlined by the Study Group:

2.1.1 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Following a successful bid for funding from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) grant, a full-time worker commenced with the residential services in January, 2005. Each week, the worker is available to visit each residential unit and offer consultation to staff and provide some individual work to children and young people. In addition, the worker is involved in planning meetings which inform the care plans and risk assessments for each child. There is also a training programme which is being offered to residential staff on issues relating to emotional well-being of young people.

A service level agreement has been put in place with the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust which sets out the management and supervision framework for this post.

The worker also gave two presentations to all child care staff (fieldwork and residential) about understanding children who harm themselves. These were extremely well received and have contributed to increasing confidence in the management of children and young people who may harm themselves. Although it is not currently planned to convene further such presentations the worker has made it clear that she is available to fieldwork and residential staff to consult on individual young people and also to provide further briefings to teams or units.

2.1.2 Education

Negotiations with Education had resulted in an agreement which allowed residential care workers to support the education of children in residential care. This involved agreement on a revised person specification for the post and agreement about the management arrangements for the posts.

Residential care workers (RCW's) are employed by Social Services and are part of the residential service. There are now 3 RCW's in post who each provide 21 hours per week on average to support educational outcomes for children and young people. The precise number of hours does fluctuate depending on the needs of resident children at any one time. There is a clear agreement with the Children in Public Care Education Team and head of this team works closely with a residential manager to lead this work. Tasks undertaken by RCW's include giving additional support on educational tasks, engaging in activities which promote an improved attitude to learning or supporting a gradual programme of re-integration into school.

2.1.3 Culture and Community

The attachment of youth workers to each residential unit continues to be effective in terms of assisting young people to access leisure activities in the

community. Regular meetings of key staff are held to ensure this arrangement is effective. The implementation of the C Card scheme is also planned in the near future. This scheme provides training and support to named staff which enables them to provide contraceptive advice to young people. This development is directly linked to the corporate teenage pregnancy strategy.

2.1.4 Post Incident Support

The initiative to provide immediate support to staff that have experienced any form of violence from children and young people is now agreed with the Trade Unions. It is now being used within the residential service and staff and managers are indicating that they find the process supportive.

2.1.5 Performance Management

A number of performance indicators have been established to enable the progress of the measures put in place in terms of outcomes for young people. All the measures are part of the bigger framework of indicators that the department is measured against and because of the small number of children within residential care the task of collating the management information will not be onerous. A copy of the performance indicators and available information regarding performance to date is attached as **Appendix 1**.

2.1.6 Involvement of Young People

The Steering Group has commissioned the commissioning officer with lead responsibility to ensure the involvement and participation of children and young people to gain the views and observations of those children and young people who are placed in a residential home. The Steering Group receives feedback on a six monthly basis regarding the issues that have been raised. By using this information together with that collected by residential staff we will ensure that the service clearly responds to the views of young people.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The original recommendations of the Study Group, as outlined in paragraph 2.1, have all been implemented and are already proving beneficial to young people who live in residential units. Significant progress has been achieved in by working effectively with other departments and agencies to improve life chances for young people.

3.2 An Information session for key staff across the county is to be held on 1st March 2006. The aim of this session is to ensure stakeholders (social workers, teachers, youth workers, healthworkers) are aware of the significant improvements in the departmental residential child care service over the last two years. This is later than originally intended and the delay is because the Steering Group decided that a video should be made of some of the current resident young people talking about what is important to them about the service they receive when in residential care. It is anticipated that by having

the voice of young people central to the launch the key message about the importance of integrated working by differing professions will be more clearly heard by staff.

- 3.3 During 2005 the closure of Lawn Place was necessary as a result of budget pressures. This closure was achieved by moving all young people to appropriate alternative placements and the staff were redeployed into vacancies in other residential units. It is planned that Springteen will close by October 2006 to achieved further savings. A similar process is to be followed to ensure that young people and staff experience only minimum disruption.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended to remove Residential Child Care Services from the programme of work as all the recommendations of the Study Group have now been implemented.

5. Background Papers Available for Inspection

- 7.1 None.

8. Electoral Division(s) Affected

- 8.1 Nottinghamshire.

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