

**21 May 2018****Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES  
AND SOCIAL WORK****UPDATE REGARDING THE INCREASE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
PERSONAL ADVISOR POSTS****Purpose of the Report**

1. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Children and Young People's Committee approved the establishment of an additional 3 FTE (full-time equivalent) temporary Personal Advisor posts (Grade 5) within the Leaving Care Service to support the planned migration for young people from residential care into semi supported accommodation before the age of 18 years. As a result, the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot was implemented in September 2017.
2. This report provides a progress update and requests approval for the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot to be implemented on a permanent basis, including the establishment of the 3 FTE (full-time equivalent) Personal Advisor posts (Grade 5) as permanent posts.
3. The report also proposes that an update report on progress be brought to the Committee in six months.

**Information****Background information**

4. As of March 2018, there are 798 young people who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority. Of these, there are 37 young people aged 16 and 17 years in residential placements in Nottinghamshire. There are also an additional 68 young people under the age of 16 years in residential establishments, of which there are 23 young people aged 15 years.
5. Some young people in residential care remain in high cost residential placements until they reach 18 years (average cost of £3,241 per week), with some being placed away from their families, communities and support networks. This can lead to young people feeling isolated and therefore requiring a great deal of support to develop their independent living skills. Anecdotally, outcomes for these young people are poor in terms of education, employment and training, mental health, and sustaining tenancies.

6. Through the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot, young people are supported to transition from residential care. Generally the transition is from residential care to semi-supported accommodation (average cost of £1,750 per week).

### **Set up of the pilot**

7. As part of the set up of the pilot, 3 FTE temporary Personal Advisor (Grade 5) posts were established to work on an intensive basis with a small cohort of young people aged 16 and 17 years to support them at an earlier age in their transition to adulthood and independent living; these posts are referred to in this report as Transitional Personal Advisors. 3 FTE existing, experienced Personal Advisors were identified to undertake these roles. Subsequently, 3 FTE temporary Personal Advisors were employed to provide back-fill to these posts.
8. The 3 FTE Transitional Personal Advisors support young people to develop their independence skills and prepare for success in adulthood in areas such as:
  - developing resilience within young people in order to develop problem solving skills, manage their day-to-day lives and avoid crisis
  - ensuring young people are able to manage their relationships with their families which have inevitably been difficult in the past and understand their complex histories
  - developing a community based support network
  - decision-making and responsibility
  - understanding the consequences of risk-taking behaviour and empowering young people to make positive choices
  - developing ownership of the young person's pathway plan.
9. Cases are selected for the pilot by a small panel of managers responsible for the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Teams and a representative from the Placements Team, based on nominations using a request form completed by professionals, for example, Social Workers, Residential Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. The panel is chaired by the Group Manager responsible for the Leaving Care Service and Looked After Children Team. The panel meets on a monthly basis.
10. There is a working group in place to ensure effective monitoring and direction of the pilot. This is attended by managers from the following teams: Looked After Children, Leaving Care, Children's Disability Service, Residential Care, the Independent Chair Service, Placements, Supported Accommodation Providers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Virtual School. This is chaired by the Group Manager responsible for the Leaving Care Service and Looked After Children Team.
11. There is ongoing monitoring throughout the pilot to assess its effectiveness. This includes:
  - six-weekly outcome tracking completed by young people that are part of the pilot with support from their Transitional Personal Advisor
  - face to face feedback of young people that are part of the pilot
  - face to face feedback of young people that are not part of the pilot but have had a similar journey to the young people that are part of the pilot to compare their experiences

- surveys of parents of young people that are part of the pilot
- surveys of professionals
- feedback sessions with Independent Reviewing Officers
- quarterly audits of cases open to the Leaving Care Service.

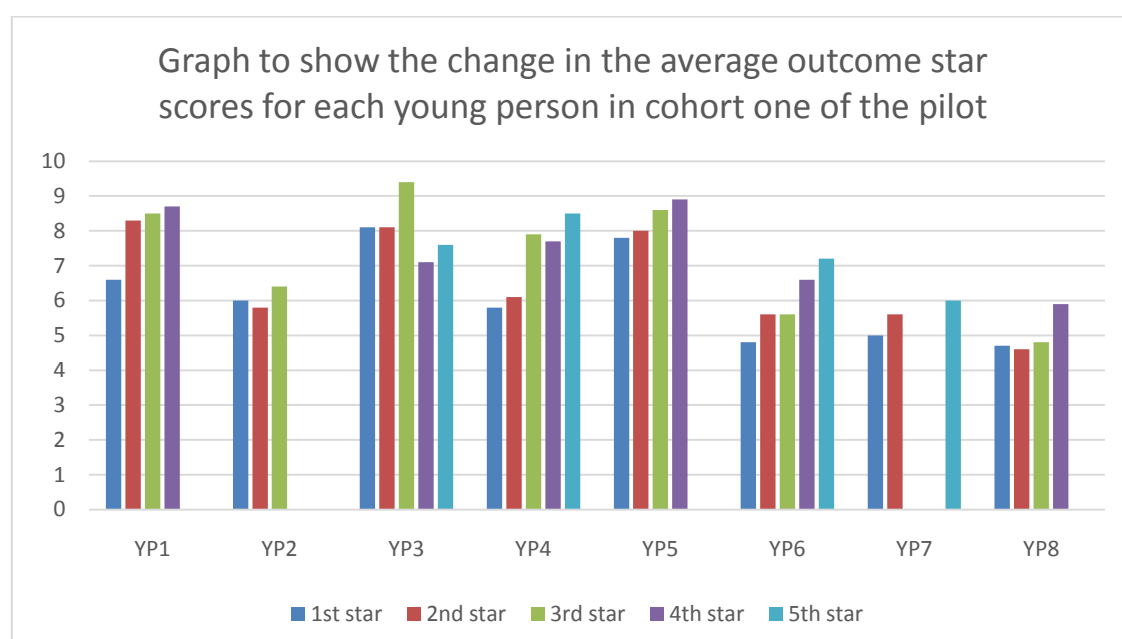
## Young people involved in the pilot

- There are currently 22 young people who are part of the pilot. Young people have been accepted onto the pilot in cohorts, following case selection meetings. Initially, there were eight young people on the pilot, however, it was identified that Transitional Personal Advisors had capacity to work with more young people, therefore, nominations to the pilot were requested. Caseloads are carefully monitored to ensure that Transitional Personal Advisors are working with the right number of cases to allow them to undertake the intensive work required.
- Of the 22 young people who are part of the pilot, 10 have transitioned from higher cost provision including residential placements. Plans are currently in place for a further two young people to transition.

## Evaluation

### Outcomes stars

- Young people who are part of the pilot are asked to score their progress in different areas of their life such as life skills, being healthy and building personal and social support networks using a visual tool named an outcome star. Outcome star scoring is completed on a six weekly basis with support from the Transitional Personal Advisor.
- Below is a graph to show the change in the average outcome stars score for each young person who was part of the first cohort of the pilot. Young people who were part of subsequent cohorts have not been included in this graph as they have only been part of the pilot long enough to complete one outcome star scoring exercise.



16. Overall, there has been good engagement with the outcome star scoring method and there have been positive outcomes for the young people who are part of the first cohort of the pilot. It is noted that one young person has had a slight deterioration in their outcome stars score over the period, however, this is reflective of the young person's journey and fluctuations are to be expected.

#### *Service user feedback*

17. Face to face feedback sessions are offered to each young person who is part of the pilot. The sessions are run by a member of the Quality and Improvement Team and a Senior Practitioner who are independent to the pilot and have experience of gathering feedback from service users. Sessions are offered at different points of the young person's involvement in the pilot and include: the young person's experiences of the support provided, their readiness to live independently, and suggestions of what else would have been helpful. Feedback highlighted the regular visits from the Transitional Personal Advisor, the support provided, and positive outcomes in terms of accommodation, employment and independence skills. Below are direct quotes from the sessions:

*"I was told I would get a lot more visits and that my Transitional Personal Advisor would be flexible and answer calls - this is true"*

*"I feel like everyone would benefit from help like my Transitional Personal Advisor gives because she helps you make the right decision"*

*"I've been involved in everything, I want to be involved, and this happens"*

*"I was buzzing when I heard about the plan to move into semi-supported accommodation"*

*"I love it here, it's nice to have space on my own, this feels more like my own place"*

*"Speeding up to get independence has been brilliant"*

*"I never felt like it wasn't my choice when something has happened"*

*"I have made better progress than I would have done without the additional support".*

18. In order to compare experiences of young people who are part of the pilot and young people who have had a similar journey to the young people that are part of the pilot, a control group has been identified. A face to face feedback session is also offered to these young people which covers similar questions to the sessions held with young people who are part of the pilot. Engagement by the control group has been low, however, one young person agreed to share their views. Below are direct quotes from the session:

*"I didn't feel ready to move on from residential care to supported accommodation"*

*"I feel that I would have benefited from some work around independence and what to fully expect when moving in to supported accommodation in particular around rules/ tenancy agreements and the difference between a care home setting and supported accommodation".*

19. The feedback outlined above indicates that young people who are part of the pilot have had positive experiences as a result of the additional support received and the young person who was part of the control group would have also found this support beneficial.

### *Case study*

20. The contrasting experiences of young people who are part of the pilot and who are not part of the pilot has been echoed by a case study provided by the Leaving Care Service and a residential care home, which are summarised below.
21. 'A' was placed in residential care and was accepted for the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot. There were concerns around: substance misuse; negative peer relationships; not being in education, employment or training; and some disengagement with residential care staff. 'A' was also open to the Youth Offending Team. Since being part of the pilot, 'A' has engaged with their Transitional Personal Advisor, explored different education, employment and training providers, and completed their Youth Offending Team order. The Transitional Personal Advisor engaged other agencies throughout, alongside developing a positive and trusting relationship with 'A'. With this support, 'A' was able to transition to semi-supported accommodation. The move is described by the Residential Care Manager within the case study:

*"I met 'A' and the Transitional Personal Advisor at the supported accommodation provider... 'A' made all of their visitors a cup of tea and 'A' was beaming and so proud at having their own place - that for me was the confirmation that the pilot scheme has worked - and it will continue to support 'A' through the transition into adulthood with a positive relationship already formed"*

22. 'B' was placed in the same residential care placement as 'A', however, was not part of the pilot. Prior to 'B's move to semi-supported accommodation, residential care staff had to work hard to secure the placement and support 'B' through the move and subsequent weeks. Support was provided from the supported accommodation provider and the Personal Advisor within the Leaving Care Service, however, the relationships 'B' had were not as developed and the support provided was less intensive. 'B' struggled with the transition and said they felt very isolated after the move. The residential care provider was required to undertake additional visits to provide support. 'B' is currently in council homeless accommodation pending a move to an alternative provider. 'B' is aware of the pilot scheme and has told carers that they wished they had been given the same opportunity. Supported accommodation providers have also identified that 'B' would have benefited from being allocated a Transitional Personal Advisor.

### *Parent's feedback*

23. A survey was undertaken to gather feedback from parents of young people who are part of the pilot. The survey was circulated by Social Workers to the parents they are working with and there was an option to complete the survey online or using a paper form. The survey included questions around the awareness of the support provided to their child, opportunities to provide their views about the current plan and feedback about the support provided.

24. One parent responded to the survey. Feedback provided was that: the pilot has been very effective; the young person has a positive relationship with their Transitional Personal Advisor; as a parent they have been updated about their child's plan; and they have been able to have more contact with their child.

#### *Professionals' feedback*

25. Surveys have also been undertaken to gather feedback from professionals. Two online surveys have been undertaken, one when the pilot was launched and one after six months of implementation. The survey included questions about expectations of the pilot, engagement of young people and the impact of the pilot.
26. 94% of respondents feel that the pilot is very effective or extremely effective. The majority of respondents felt that the young people who are part of the pilot have been effectively engaged to progress their plan through intensive work with their Transitional Personal Advisor. As a result, positive outcomes are being achieved such as successful planned moves from residential care and improved independence skills. A selection of quotes from the survey are listed below:

*"Transitional Personal Advisor had lots of time to iron out issues that the Social Worker would not have had time to do. This made the young person's transition significantly smoother and more successful"*

*"Transitional Personal Advisor has helped to build the young person's confidence to do things. He needs someone as available as his Transitional Personal Advisor to do this"*

*"We have been able to develop and sustain cases that historically we may of declined to accommodate or see negative outcomes for"*

*"True sense of shared ownership for complex young people"*

*"Transitional Personal Advisor has helped the young person build their relationship back up with their family"*

*"Young people are feeling more supported and listened to".*

27. A key group of stakeholders who have identified young people for the pilot have been the Independent Reviewing Officers who are responsible for holding reviews of all Looked After Children on a regular basis. Independent Reviewing Officers are extremely positive about the pilot and feel that the young people have benefitted from support at an earlier age from a professional who has time to help them to develop their independence skills, in a similar way that a young person who was growing up within a family setting would receive.
28. There is also close liaison with the Education, Employment and Training project which is currently supporting 21 young people to access coaching and bespoke work experience, four of whom are also part of the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot. The project has noted the excellent partnership work with the Transitional Personal Advisors and the support provided to young people to attend and engage with the project.

29. A number of emails have also been received from professionals working directly with young people who are part of the pilot. They note the benefits of the time Transitional Personal Advisors spend with young people regarding the development of practical skills and solving issues, helping to alleviate crisis which then relieves the pressure on other front line workers and enables more young people to be accepted into supported accommodation and sustain their tenancies.

#### *Audit outcomes*

30. As part of the Department's quality assurance processes, audits of the Leaving Care Service are undertaken on a quarterly basis. In quarter 4 of 2017/18, 14 Leaving Care audits were completed; of these 64% were part of the pilot. Of the cases which were part of the pilot, 88% of cases were rated as good or outstanding. Of the non-pilot cases, 40% were rated as good. Of the cases rated as requires improvement or inadequate, further work was required in the engagement of the young person, pathway planning and independence skills. These were noted as strengths in the cases which were part of the pilot.

#### *Feedback from Ofsted*

31. As part of the feedback from Ofsted following their focused visit in January 2018 regarding the Local Authority's arrangements for care leavers, including the preparation of relevant children in care for the transition to adulthood, the pilot was referenced positively:

*"Young people making the transition from residential care to independence are already showing improved outcomes through the intensive, flexible and creative support available to them through the recent 'Transitional Personal Adviser' pilot project. Early successes are highlighting the future potential of this model to improve the readiness of young people for independent living, and young people themselves are hugely positive about their experience of the support"*

#### **Future of the pilot**

32. It is proposed that the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot is implemented on a permanent basis, including the establishment of the 3 FTE (full-time equivalent) Personal Advisor posts (Grade 5) as permanent posts. The reasons for this are as follows:
- evidence of improved outcomes, independence skills and readiness for adulthood of young people who are part of the pilot
  - positive feedback has been received about the pilot by all stakeholders including young people who are part of the pilot, professionals across multiple agencies and Ofsted
  - the support provided enables young people to move to appropriate accommodation, which is at a lower cost to the Local Authority
  - the current number and complexity of young people in residential care indicates there will continue to be cohorts of young people who will benefit from this type of support and this number is not forecast to decrease

- the pilot has exceeded the savings forecast and is forecast to generate further savings for the department.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

33. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Data Protection and Information Governance**

34. Information regarding young people who are nominated to and/ or are part of the pilot is stored in accordance with data protection regulations and information governance procedures.

## **Financial Implications**

35. In September 2017, it was forecast that six young people would be able to transition from residential care over a one year period as a result of investment in an additional 3 FTE temporary Personal Advisor posts. This was anticipated to generate a net saving of £140,031 over the course of the 12 month pilot period.
36. At the six month point of the pilot, 10 young people have transitioned from residential care, exceeding the original forecast. This has generated a net saving of £140,769 in 2017/18. In 2018/19, it is forecast that there will be a net projected saving of £301,414 should the young people continue to stay in the placement which they have transitioned to.
37. The cost of implementing the pilot on a permanent basis is £100,482 per annum. This consists of 3 permanent FTE Personal Advisor (Grade 5) posts at a cost of £94,482 (£31,494 each including on-costs) plus £6,000 staffing expenses (£2,000 each). This cost has been accounted for in the savings identified above.
38. The implementation of this pilot on a permanent basis will enable the service to achieve its savings target of £140,031 included in the 2018-19 budget.

## **Human Resources Implications**

39. Posts will be recruited to in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's employment procedures. The role has been evaluated through the Job Evaluation Scheme as Grade 5.

## **Implications for Service Users**

40. The proposal would mean that affected service users are introduced to another professional, which may require a period of adjustment for that young person. However,



evidence from the pilot demonstrates that there are clear long-term benefits to the young person as they will be given support to equip them to move into adulthood and develop their independent living skills.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That:

- 1) Committee approves the implementation of the Transitional Personal Advisor pilot on a permanent basis, including the establishment of the 3 FTE (full-time equivalent) Personal Advisor posts (Grade 5) as permanent posts.
- 2) an update on progress be reported to the Committee in six months.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Amanda Collinson  
Group Manager, Fieldwork Services  
T: 0115 8040792  
E: [amanda.collinson@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.collinson@nottsc.gov.uk)

### **Constitutional Comments (LM 20/04/18)**

41. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report.

### **Financial Comments (SAS 24/04/18)**

42. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 35 to 38 above.

### **HR Comments (EM 10/04/18)**

43. The HR implications are contained within the body of the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Increase in the establishment of Personal Advisor posts – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 September 2017.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C1115