



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH MAY 2013

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF 16 PLUS SERVICES

REPORT BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with information about the 16 + Service.
- 1.2 The report will outline the plans to develop the structure of the existing Leaving Care Team. It is proposed that the Leaving Care Team becomes a 16 plus service. This will require reconfiguration of resources to develop the necessary structure of the team.
- 1.3 This report will outline how the changes will be established and where the resources will be found.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The services offered to Care Leavers across Gwent varies due to the different set-ups in each area.
- 2.2 As part of the plans for amalgamation with the Social Services Department in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council there has been the opportunity to observe how other Leaving Care Services have configured. Also opportunities have arisen for information to be received about other local Leaving Care Services.
- 2.3 In considering the information about these other services, evaluation has been completed on the existing services and it is felt this can be improved on. Improving outcomes for care leavers is a key Government priority. It is believed that too many care leavers leave care with poor educational attainment, health issues and end up long-term unemployed. The Leaving Care Team work alongside Children Services Social Workers to improve outcomes with regards to health, education and employment. The 16 plus service will improve the robustness of care planning and reduce duplication.
- 2.4 It is felt that developing a 16 + Service will have the potential to achieve a high quality consistent service for care leavers. There will be no blurring of roles with the Social Worker within the Children Services long-term teams and a continuum of care will help support a drive to improve good outcomes for Young People. There would be extensive knowledge and skill base with management and staff group.
- 2.5 Currently the Leaving Care Team provide services to Looked After children who are 16+, Care Leavers and relevant Young People across the County Borough. If a Child remains in foster care or is subject to a Care Order then the Leaving Care Team co work this case until they are 18 years old. The Long Term Children Services' Team is responsible for the care

planning until that time.

2.6 The Leaving Care team have seen an increase in demand for their services of late. This puts pressure on the existing team and demonstrates that extra resources would benefit the team and the service as a whole.

- Following the Southwark Judgement there has been an increase in the number of homeless young people who have qualified for services under the Leaving Care legislation.
- Under the Legal Aid Sentencing and punishment of Offenders Act 2012 if young people are remanded to custody from 3rd December 2012 then they will be considered Looked After and therefore if remain on remand for 13 or more weeks then they will qualify for Leaving Care Services.
- In October 2012 additional statutory guidance was issued by Welsh Government, which set out Local Authority responsibilities in Wales towards former relevant children to reconnect with care services from age 21 up to their 25th birthday. The guidance places a range of duties on the Local authority in respect of reinstating the Pathway Plan, the services of a personal advisor and providing financial support in respect of education and training.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 Children Act 1989 and 2004.

3.2 The Children and Young People's Plan.

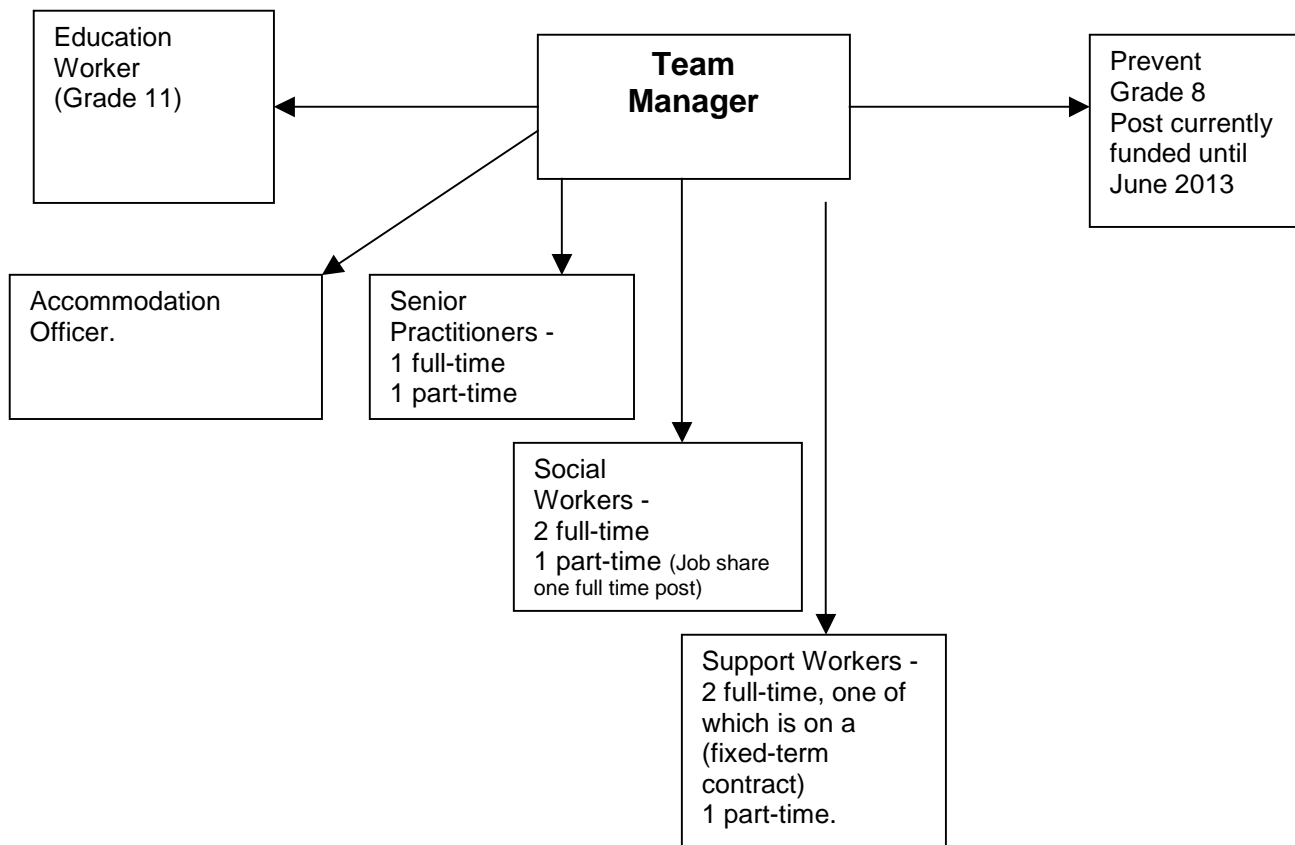
3.3 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

3.3 Corporate Parenting Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Leaving Care team are based at Ty Pontygwindy in the Caerphilly South area. They provide services to Looked After children who are 16+, Care Leavers and relevant Young People across the County Borough. They work closely with the Assessment and Locality Teams across the Borough to ensure young people maintain a good service.

4.2 The current structure (see Appendix 1) within the Leaving Care Team is as follows:



4.3 The Leaving Care Team is a relatively small team but has a high demand for its services. The proposal for the team is that in the future it will deal with all young people 16 plus. They will take on case responsibility for these young people. This will have implications in the longer term for increased staffing in the team due to the increase in workload. As a prelude to this discussions have taken place about how we can increase capacity within the team without disrupting other teams at present.

4.4 The changes were accepted at Senior Management Team and it was proposed that Caerphilly's Leaving Care Team would become a 16 plus Service.

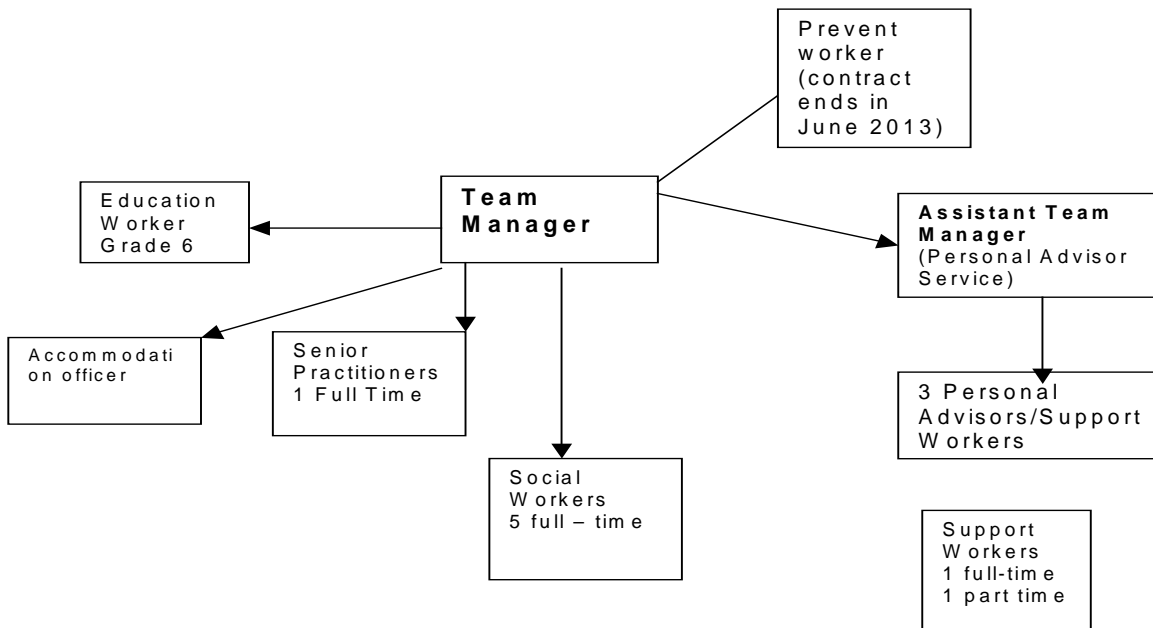
- From the 1st July 2013 they would be responsible for all young people 16 plus who are Looked After. (The dates proposed are dependent on successful recruitment to the staff vacancies within the team. Having considered recruitment timescales and at the earliest opportunity we could recruit at end of April. Therefore it is suggested a staggered transfer of cases from the Children services teams.)
- By the 1st August 2013 they will be responsible for all 16 year olds who are homeless within the authority and are referred to the Social Services. (The team already offer advice and support in relation to such cases.)
- By 1st October 2013 the 16 plus service will be responsible for all young people who are receiving a service post 16. This may include Children in Need and Children on the Child protection register. If there are young people on the Child protection register post 16 and they have younger siblings, then the siblings will remain open cases to the longer-term children services teams. The 16+ team will offer advise and support, but will not have the capacity to take on the whole sibling group, and rather than have cases split between teams then it is felt appropriate for these cases to remain within the longer term teams.

4.5 For the Team to take on the extra tasks expected of them then there as outlined above there will need to be extra resources attached to the team. Above at 4.2 is the current structure of the team, which helps to demonstrate the proposed changes being recommended. In February 2013 the Education Worker is retiring. It is proposed this post is reconfigured and

the duties and responsibilities of this post build upon the work undertaken by the Prevent worker.

- 4.6 The above change in duties will release funding to allow reconfiguration of other posts. From finance that is saved from the above change, it is proposed that this funding is used to upgrade a Support Worker post to create an additional Social Work post within the team. The Support Worker post is currently filled with a fixed term Support Worker appointment. This post to date has only been filled on a fixed term basis while awaiting the outcome of the potential changes regarding the 16 plus service provision. The current post holder would be interested in a personal advisor role and has sought advice from Human Resources with regards to this.
- 4.7 It is also proposed that we increase the complement within the team to assist with the increase in workload. There is currently a Social Work Vacancy within the Contact and Referral Team. The work undertaken by this person is now being fast tracked to the relevant assessment team and has had no major impact on the teams. It is proposed that this vacancy is transferred from Contact and Referral to the 16+ Service.
- 4.8 It is also proposed that funding previously allocated to fund a "LAC Health Visitor post" which is now funded by ABHB is utilised to establish an additional Social Work Post in the 16+ Service.
- 4.9 The proposal to upgrade the Support Worker post to a Social Work post, and create two further Social Worker Posts within the leaving care service will greatly underpin the proposal to develop a 16+ Service and enable it to meet the local Authority's statutory duties to Care Leavers.
- 4.10 The Team have a statutory obligation to offer personal advisors to young people. The Personal Advisor Service is currently provided by Barnardos, the Personal Advisors are currently working with 16/17 yr olds and the contract was due to end on 31st May 2013. Discussions have taken place with Barnardos in respect of not renewing this contract and bringing the service in house and extending the age range from 16 to 21yrs or 25yrs to cover new legislative changes that enables young care leavers who are post 21yrs and have left the service to "Reconnect to Care" for the purpose of completing a short education or training qualification that would enable the young person to gain employment. The discussions commenced some months ago with Barnardos. They were disappointed when the formal decision was made to bring the service in house. However following meetings with the Director and Personal Advisor Manager it was agreed that they would extend the current contract until the end of August with a view to giving the local authority time to recruit to the Personal Advisor vacancies. There will be TUPE implications for one member of staff within Barnardos and the Human Resources processes have commenced.
- 4.11 The plan is to bring the Personal Advisor service in house. Currently the budget for this service is about £80,000. It is proposed that the plan would be that the current Senior Practitioner Post is upgraded to an Assistant Team Manager post and that this person would then manage the Personal advisor service. This would meet the statutory guidance making this an independent service. The budget for this service would enable the 16 plus service to have three personal advisors based on a support worker salary. This would need to be reviewed over a period of time to ensure that this is the correct staffing ratio. There would also be one and a half Support workers in the team who could assist in this role. Currently Barnardos offer two Personal Advisors as part of the contract.

4.12 It is proposed that the new structure (see Appendix 2) for the 16 plus service.



4.13 The proposal is that the 16 plus service as outlined above will be implemented by the 1st July 2013 initially dealing with all young people who are looked after and 16 plus. This will allow time to consider the following:

- Training of staff.
- Job Descriptions for Personal Advisors and Assistant Team manager to be presented to Job evaluation. These have now been signed off by the Job Evaluation Team.
- The issue of admin to be considered.
- Recruitment to the vacancies (Social Work, Senior Practitioner, Assistant Team Manager and Personal Advisors.)
- Looking to end the contract with Barnardos at end of May and meeting with staff to consider TUPE implications for existing staff. Much of this work has already commenced and formal notice has been given to Barnardos.
- Protocols to be drawn up with regard the transfer of cases. (This has commenced)
- Launch of new service internally and externally.

4.12 While developing the 16 plus service Janine Edwards has endeavoured to strengthen links with external agencies to improve services to Young People. Citizens Advice Bureau, Youth Services, Housing, and Careers are all on board to offer advice and support to young people. In time we would hope to develop a surgery for young people to attend on a regular basis. It is acknowledged that the team would benefit from support with regards to Drug Counselling. Currently grant funding is being explored with regards this area of work. It is hoped that we can identify something in future.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equality Impact Assessment does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Finance Team and the proposals set out within this report have been discussed at length. The budget has been considered as outlined and the costs are accounted for. The financial situation is set out in Appendix 3.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Human Resources have been party to consultation on this subject and have offered advice throughout the process.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The views of those consulted have been incorporated into the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the content of the report be noted. The purpose of the report is to provide Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with information about the 16 + Service.
- 9.2 The development of such a service will provide a more robust and comprehensive support network to some of our most vulnerable and needy young people within our communities.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To appraise members of the Health, Social Care & Well-being committee of the services of the 16 + Service.
- 10.2 The 16 + service will give the leaving care team extra capacity to improve services for Care Leavers and Young People 16+. It will reduce duplication and provide a seamless service to improve outcomes for Care Leavers.
- 10.3 The vision is that this team will minimise and reduce the risks to those most vulnerable within in Caerphilly, whilst actively promoting positive opportunities for young people to thrive and succeed. Our aim will be to help young people realise their aspirations and dreams and reach their full potential.

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