



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2014

SUBJECT: 16 PLUS SERVICE UPDATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 As requested by the Scrutiny Committee previously this report will update Scrutiny Committee Members about the progress made since the Leaving Care Team became the 16 Plus Service in September 2013.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Leaving Care Team changed to the 16 Plus Service in September 2013. Teams are currently in the process of ensuring all Children over sixteen years are transferred to the 16 Plus Team.
- 2.2 The majority of the cases have transferred across the Borough, but there are still a handful of cases being worked by the Children's Services Teams due to particular issues and relationships with the existing workers. All cases will be transferred by the end of the financial year.
- 2.3 Many of these cases are currently being co-worked by the 16 Plus Service already as they have Pathway Plans in place, and have been allocated a Personal Advisor within the Team.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- 3.2 The Children and Young People's Plan.
- 3.3 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The 16 Plus Service was officially launched on the 6th September 2013. An Open Day was held at Ty Pontygwindy, which was very successful and was well attended. This gave the opportunity to launch the New Team and highlight the work they would be completing in the new structure. It also gave the opportunity for partners to promote the work completed with 16 Plus e.g. health and housing.
- 4.2 With the increase for demand in the 16 Plus Service it highlighted the need for further support required for the team. As part of the new structure there were two new Social Worker posts

created and the Personal Advisor Service was brought in house. These vacancies have been successfully recruited to.

- 4.3 The Personal Advisor Service had previously been delivered by Barnardos. There were two workers who were only offering a service to 16 and 17 year olds. The age range has been extended in the new team from 16 to 21yrs or 25yrs to cover new legislative changes that enable 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. There is a 'Reconnect to Care' Policy in place within the Authority although to date, no young person has accessed support via this route. It has been well advertised and young people have been written to informing them of the policy.
- 4.4. Currently there are three permanent Personal Advisors and one Temporary Personal Advisor until March 2014. They are carrying high caseloads and as a result of evaluation into the new service the Divisional Management team have managed to secure the fourth Personal Advisor post as permanent to meet the service demands. . There are currently 167 young people open to the service, 106 have an allocated personal advisor. The remainder have requested their social worker, carer or another person act as their Personal Advisor.
- 4.5 As the South area teams transferred 29 cases to the 16 Plus Service it was recommended that the monies from a support worker post was redirected to 16 Plus Service to enable them to increase the resources in the Personal Advisor Service.
- 4.6 Since the launch of the 16 Plus Service relationships between Housing and Children's Services have improved greatly. The 16 Plus Service are now responsible for assessing any young people who present as homeless. As a result of this it seemed to be the appropriate time to review the 'Homeless Protocol'. This was agreed and presented to Scrutiny at the end of last year.
- 4.7 The protocol between Housing and 16 Plus is working well. The 16 Plus Service currently has a designated worker who deals with all new referrals in respect of homelessness. Since the set up of the team no young person has been placed in a Bed and Breakfast Setting, as following assessment the worker has been able to maintain the young person within their family with support being offered. This designated worker is training all the team members to enable them to carry out such assessments with Housing rather than it be one person's responsibility. Housing report that relationships between the teams is much improved and the service is working more effectively for young people in Caerphilly.
- 4.8 This is just one policy that required updating following the launch of the 16 Plus Service. This month a draft policy has been written for Asylum Seekers who are supported via the Looked After Process. This will be presented to the Divisional Management Team in the near future, along with other policies and procedures when required.
- 4.9 The 16 Plus Service is now responsible for the 'Shout Out Group'. This was previously managed by the Children's Rights Officer, but as he has changed roles within the authority it was felt timely to look at this service. As a result Emma Phipps-McGill from NYAS and Janine Edwards, Team Manager 16 Plus have worked together to relaunch the 'Shout Out Group'. This now meets on a monthly basis with set themes to discuss and activities to support young people.
- 4.10 Linked to the above, the Service is currently piloted a 16 Plus Facebook page. This will allow the team to deliver messages in the medium that children and young people use and hopefully target a wider audience. Information from the 'Shout Out Group' can be shared on line with young people. Initially this will be piloted with up to fifteen carefully selected young people to ensure any issues can be dealt with before it goes 'live'.
- 4.11 Now that the 16 Plus Service has been in existence for nearly six months it has allowed staff to think about the future of developments in this area. Two proposals for the next six to twelve months are:

- The launch of 'The Journey Through Care' – this is a lifestory for the child/ young person and follows on from the success of the 'Independent Check List'. Foster Carers will be requested to contribute to the Child's life story and record significant events in the child's life so that it can be shared with the young person later on in the lives.
- Research with Cardiff University – Cardiff University are carrying out research on Care leavers who are pregnant. They will use the CCBC database to track the young people who are pregnant, looking at the outcomes they achieve over a period of time.

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 in the past when considering the set up of the 16 Plus Service. Budgets were realigned to meet the new demands of the Service.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Personnel Implications.

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 updated information about the 16 Plus Service.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To appraise members of the Health, Social Care & Well-being Scrutiny Committee of the current position within the 16 Plus Service.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

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 Consultees: Councillor Robin Woodyatt, Cabinet Member Social Services
 Social Services Senior Management Team
 Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director Children's Services
 Children's Services Divisional Management Team
 Janine Edwards, 16 Plus Service Team Manager
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