

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

Update on the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership

1.0 Key Points

- 1.1 Following its previous report to the Board in March 2009, this paper presents an update on the activities of the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP). A draft action plan is attached at appendix 1, to be discussed at the MALAP meeting on 17th September.
- 1.2 North Yorkshire established the MALAP in 2007 to provide strategic oversight for services for looked after children. MALAPs have been introduced in a number of local authorities following government encouragement although they have no statutory basis. The MALAP oversees the development of services and outcomes for looked after children, working to the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 1.3 The MALAP reports to the Children's Trust Board. Oversight is also provided by the Oversight and Scrutiny Committee, by the Corporate Parenting Group, and by the Young People's Council.
- 1.4 421 children and young people are currently in care in North Yorkshire.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note some developments with services for looked after children and care leavers and approve the draft action plan for the MALAP.

3.0 Update on activity

- 3.1 The Looked After Strategy presented to the February Strategic Partnership Board set out a 3 year strategy to improve services and outcomes for children in care and leaving care in North Yorkshire. This sets out a number of key priorities which the MALAP will report on to the Trust Board over the coming months:

- Implement the Looked After strategy
- Develop the Child Placement strategy
- Develop an accommodation strategy for care leavers / vulnerable young people
- Develop integrated commissioning processes
- Develop and implement an innovative kinship care policy
- Develop an effective performance management framework
- Implement Restorative practices and TCI in children's units
- Improve fostering services in line with national standards and recent inspection findings
- Develop adoption support services and implement a performance management framework for adoption practice
- Provide stable placements for LAC and ensure good quality Care Plans are carried out in a timely fashion

- Ensure children and young people's participation is central to planning for themselves and service planning
- 3.2 Good outcomes for children and the key priorities set out in this paper are both dependent upon good inter-agency partnership working and good intra-agency working arrangements. As such, it is vital that the performance management framework is understood and owned by all partners. It is planned that an Operational Managers group supports the work of the MALAP with a clear responsibility to deliver the performance agenda set by the MALAP. This report includes a section with national and local performance targets for children and care and care leavers.

4 Some of the detail:

4.1 Young People's Council

The Young People's Council (YPC) is now well established in North Yorkshire. It is made up of 12 looked after young people and care leavers aged between 14 -25 years and is attended by the Children's Director and the Executive Member with the lead for looked after young people, as well as other officers. The YPC meets formally every three months and holds extra meetings as required.

The members of the YPC are elected from the 4 participation groups across the county and can sit on the YPC for 18 months. They attend and present reports to the Corporate Parenting Group and the MALAP, and have presented at several conferences. Four care experienced young people are employed through the NYCC Apprenticeship scheme, to coordinate running the YPC. The apprentices are employed full time for 12 months.

The key issues for the YPC are:

- Foster carers to be well trained and have more awareness and understanding of young people's issues.
- Looked after young people and care leavers to know about their financial entitlements.
- Improve information, advice and support to looked after young people and care leavers.
- Improve accommodation for care leavers

4.2 Permanence and use of Special Guardianship Orders:

Securing lasting family relationships should be the primary purpose of care in North Yorkshire. Within this framework, an innovative approach to the use of Special Guardianship Orders for children in care has been developed. These are new Orders that give the special guardian full parental responsibility for a child, including being able to make important decisions, and allows children and young people to move out of care within a secure family relationship, usually with an existing foster carer. Although parents still have parental responsibility, the special guardian has full authority over the child's needs.

North Yorkshire has set up a Panel to deal with cases where this Order may be suitable, the only authority in the region to do so. The numbers of children and families moving to this arrangement is increasing and is measured within a Local Area Agreement (L 61).

4.3 Kinship Care

A Kinship Care Policy has been drafted and the coming months will see this turned into a procedural framework to increase the range of options available for children who have to come into care. Kinship care describes children by their relationship with their carers (usually an existing relationship, either as relative or friend), rather than by the arrangements for their care, their legal status, or their placement type. This policy will promote the use of this form of care for children, challenging traditional notions about how care is provided.

Evidence suggests that outcomes for children looked after by kinship carers can be as good, and sometimes better, than for other looked after children. Placements tend to be more stable, children feel loved, report higher levels of satisfaction, appear to be as safe, and their behaviour is perceived as less of a problem. It is easier for children in kinship care to maintain a sense of family and cultural identity and to maintain contact with the rest of their family and social network.

4.4 Accommodation strategy

This is a key part of the Looked After Strategy and a key issue for the YPC. The recent *G v Southwark* judgement further underlines the importance of developing a suitable range and availability of accommodation for care leavers and other vulnerable young people within the county.

A separate paper is presented to the Trust Board today around homelessness for 16 and 17 year old young people and young people leaving care and this details some key aspects within the overall strategy to improve access to suitable accommodation for care leavers. Other initiatives include developing a supported lodgings scheme and the refurbishment of 65 Dean Road, Scarborough (The STAR Project). This will provide 2 units of bedsit accommodation and 1 unit of emergency accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people, primarily leaving Stepney Road Children's Centre, and some office accommodation for staff from different agencies who work with young people.

4.5 Placement strategy

A placement strategy is being developed that includes local fostering services, the development of more specialist fostering services, including two treatment fostering programmes supported by government grants; the further development of residential services and the growth of outreach services for young people on the edge of care; the **Aiming High** programme for disabled children; and the development of a **Staying Put** pilot to enable young people to remain with foster carers to age 21.

Developing an integrated commissioning strategy will further support the range of placement choices available locally and prevent children leaving their home areas. The accommodation strategy is developing to provide secure and safe accommodation for young people as they move to independence, noting the future challenges that will be presented by the *G v Southwark* ruling.

4.6 Performance management

A detailed performance management framework has been put together incorporating national indicators and a number of local indicators which are seen as key elements of an effective performance management framework. In addition to this, North Yorkshire has developed some whole system measures to better understand how the whole system is working. These are attached in appendix 1 at the end of this document.

4.7 Talking About Care

In May, North Yorkshire hosted the fifth **Talking About Care** conference at Selby High School. Over 170 delegates from Children's Services across the region attended, to share and celebrate good practice that improves outcomes for children in care.

Delegates watched a DVD '**No Roof No Job**' commissioned for the conference, involving young people from the Young People's Council, exploring the link between good outcomes for care leavers and economic wellbeing.

Workshops including **Staying Put** (post 18 fostering) and Preventative Fostering, local innovations supported by government grants reflecting a view at DCSF that North Yorkshire is an authority that is able to deliver new services.

It is planned that a further conference will be scheduled for the future, in partnership with Government Office.

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8th September 2009

Appendix 1:

MALAP Action Plan 2009 - 10

- 1 The Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of services for LAC. The MALAP informs and works to the priorities set in our Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and oversees good practice and performance improvements for LAC. This first draft of an action plan sets out planned activities for the remainder of this financial year and sets the direction until 2011.

- 2 **Key priorities 2009 – 2010:**
 - Implement the Looked After strategy
 - Develop the Child Placement strategy
 - Develop an accommodation strategy for care leavers / vulnerable young people
 - Develop integrated commissioning processes
 - Develop and implement an innovative Kinship Care policy
 - Develop an effective performance management framework
 - Improve fostering services in line with national standards and recent inspection findings
 - Develop adoption support services and implement a performance management framework for adoption practice
 - Provide stable placements for LAC and ensure good quality Care Plans are carried out in a timely fashion
 - Ensure children and young people's participation is central to planning for themselves and service planning
 - Implement Restorative practices and TCI in children's units

- 3 **Detail from the CYPP**

- 3.1 **What we are going to do this year (2009-10):**
 1. Review and report on health services for Looked After Children, including 16+, to inform future commissioning and targeting of services.
 2. Establish a budget to increase access to venues for reviews.
 3. Develop innovative practice to enable young people to chair their own reviews.
 4. Complete the child placement strategy, including a differentiated range of placements.
 5. Young People's Council will launch the pledge and explore broadening it's role to incorporate younger Looked After children and consultation with children and young people with LDD.
 6. Collate an integrated dataset for the MALAP with quarterly monitoring to inform planning.
 7. Implement the Staying Put grant to extend foster placements of children in Education, Employment or Training until they are 21.
 8. Implement the training plan for foster carers.
 9. Implement independent review for foster carers.
 10. Implement Phase 2 Treatment Foster Care (Hopscotch scheme).
 11. Secure robust data sharing for the education of LAC.
 12. Annual celebration day for Looked After Children.

3.2 How we will know we are improving:

Target Summary for Year 1: 2008-9

- 75% of core assessments for children's social care were carried out within 35 days of their commencement
- 93.9% of children and young people who are Looked After participate in their reviews.
- 96% of LAC reviews carried out within statutory timescales, from a target for 100%
- The stability of placements is in line with the 2006-7 baseline at 71.1%.
- The number of adoptions of children who are Looked After slightly decreased from the 2007/8 baseline of 6.9% to 6.6%
- The number of children looked after placed out of county was reduced to 74, showing significant improvement on the target of 85
- Educational attainment for LAC improves (see Enjoy and Achieve 3.1)
- 70.4% Care Leavers are in Education, Employment and Training (see Achieve Economic Well-being)

Year 2: 2009-10

- Every Looked After Child to have a Core Assessment, Care Plan, Placement Information Record (PIR), PEP and Initial Health Assessment.
- 82% of core assessments for children's social care are carried out within 35 days of their commencement
- 100% of children and young people who are Looked After participate in their reviews.
- 100% of LAC reviews carried out within statutory timescales.
- Improved stability of placements from 2006-7 baseline (71.3%).
- Increase the number of adoptions of children who are Looked After from 2006-7 baseline (6.9%)
- Number of children looked after placed out of county further reduced (80).
- Educational attainment of LAC improves (see Enjoy and Achieve 3.1)
- Further narrow the gap at GCSE compared to peers at 5A*-C, including English and Maths.
- 85% Care Leavers in education, employment or training (see Achieve Economic Well-being)

Year 3: 2010-11

- Every Looked After Child to have a Core Assessment, Care Plan, PIR, PEP and Initial Health Assessment

4 Performance management framework:

Within Children's Social Care each service area has developed a Service Area Plan (SAP). The SAP for looked after children contains both local and national indicators for looked after children and care leavers, updated quarterly (in normal circumstances: currently data is very fragile because of ICS). The following tables from the SAP provide a detailed performance management framework and it is proposed that this is used as the multi-agency performance framework for looked after children and care leavers.

Children's Social care Service Action Plan for LAC 2009-10

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| Objective 1: Develop and implement 3 Year Looked After Children strategy in North Yorkshire |
| SMT/General Manager Actions: |
| 1) Obtain Strategic Partnership commitment to 3 year looked after strategy with high ambitions for all children in care |
| 2) Reduce numbers of children who come into or remain in care, ensuring long term care only used for small number of children with therapeutic or specialist needs |
| 3) Establish child placement strategy to improve placements, reduce numbers placed out of county and improve effectiveness of care |
| Team Action Plans objectives: |
| 1) Effective use of resources to reduce factors which lead children to enter or remain in care |
| 2) increase number of children moving beyond care to lasting family relationships, including adoption, special guardianship and residence orders |
| 3) implement kinship care policy to increase proportion of children living in this form of care as proportion of all children in care |
| Targets: |
| 1) Reduce incidences of children needing to come into or remain in care |
| 2) Increase effectiveness of services for children on edge of care |
| 3) Placement Planning Panel to improve match of children with resources and support commissioning agenda |
| 4) SGOs, ROs and adoptions (LAA) and kinship care |
| 5) Reduction in number of children placed outside authority as proportion of all children in care |
| Objective 4: Deliver performance agenda for looked after children and care leavers |
| SMT/General Manager Actions: |
| 1) Set out multi agency performance agenda for looked after and leaving care using National Indicator set and local measures |
| 2) Develop whole system measures for LAC system |
| 3) Continuously monitor performance |
| Team Action Plans objectives: |
| 1) Local and national performance measures agreed and understood |
| 2) 3 priorities identified for each team to equal or exceed current practice |
| 3) Identify area of poorest performance and improve |
| Set targets for all indicators to monitor at county and team levels (national and local): |
| 1) Monitor admissions and discharges from care (local) |
| 2) Monitor duration in care for all discharges (local) |
| 3) All school age children to have PEP completed within 20 days of coming into care and regularly reviewed (local) |
| 4) All 3+ children to have completed PEP within 20 days of coming into care and regularly reviewed (local) |
| 5) Proportion of children looked after continuously for at least 12 months who had teeth checked and annual health assessment (local) |

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| 6) Emotional and behavioural health of children in care (SDQ) | NI 58 |
| 7) Stability of placement after agency decision to adopt | NI 61 |
| 8) Number of moves | NI 62 (9%) |
| 9) Length of placement | NI 63 |
| 10) Reviewed in timescales | NI 66 (100%) |
| 11) Children who run away from care | NI 71 |
| 12) Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 | NI 99 |
| 13) Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2 | NI 100 |
| 14) Children in care achieving 5 A* - C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 including English and Maths | NI 101 |
| 15) Care leavers in suitable accommodation | NI 147 (94%) |
| 16) Care leavers in employment, education or training | NI 148 (0.76%) |
| 17) SGOs, ROs and adoptions (LAA) and kinship care. Target: 46 | L 61 |
| 18) Reduction in number of children placed outside authority as proportion of all children in care (low is good performance). Target: 80 | L 62 |

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September 2009