

REPORT TITLE:	Discharge of Roles and Responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council
REPORT AUTHOR:	Councillor Adam Wilkinson
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:	Children and Young People's Services
DATE:	September 2022
CYPS update	
<p>Education</p> <p>Paul Tinsley has returned to Calderdale to pick up the role as our Interim Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion. Paul met with the Primary Heads the Secondary Heads in his first week back in post and is working closely with them to reduce school exclusions and put additional resources into Special Educational Needs support for children.</p> <p>School Effectiveness</p> <p>There are significant changes planned by the Government for the Councils role in Education. The Government's aim is that all schools are Academies by 2030 and the funding we get to support schools to improve ends in March 2023. There are a number of outstanding Headteachers and associates working with us until March focused on those schools we feel are at most risk of a judgement below 'Good' in the event of an Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>So as from April 2023 there will be no Government funding for local authorities to provide school improvement functions. This will require us to fund such services from core budgets (difficult given the financial pressures on the Councils budgets), traded services or through delegated funding from Schools Forum. The Education team are preparing a paper for Schools Forum to consider the implications for Calderdale schools around the removal of grant funding. In the meantime, we continue to work with schools through challenge, where needed, and in supporting best practice.</p> <p>SEND</p> <p>Data shows a significant increase in the request for SEND support and assessments for an Education Health and Care Plan. We have seen more than an 80% increase in</p>	

demand for assessments of special needs over the past three years, much higher than the national average. This increased demand continues to put pressure on our services and has also contributed to capacity issues in terms of specialist school places for Calderdale children and young people with SEND.

In response to these significant pressures, our Directorate Leadership Team has approved additional capacity with the appointment of a new interim Head of SEND (Alex Webley), another Team Manager and additional SEN case officers. This is funded from the High Needs block. We are working closely with our Special School heads to see where we can increase capacity by way of more specialist school places and provision of outreach support. This includes looking at physical space as well as creating 'Additional Resource Hubs' in the primary and secondary sector.

The increase in demand and lack of capacity has also contributed to a rise in SEN tribunal cases and complaints, although the team also continue to receive compliments for their hard work. Our expression of interest in a new build Special School is aimed at supporting capacity longer term and, if successful, would bring investment of around £20-£25m to create over 150 new SEND places for Calderdale children and young people. This would also relieve pressure on SEND transport budgets and the need for out of area placements at much higher costs than we could provide through local provision. We should know by the end of the year if this bid has been successful.

I joined several council colleagues in attending the AGM of Unique Ways who support families of children with disabilities. Julie Jenkins and Ben Leaman were guest speakers at the event. As a council we are dedicated to improving the coproduction of services for children and young people with SEND by working with organisations such as Unique Ways and Family Voice Calderdale.

Inclusion

Post Covid 19 we have seen greater challenges around attendance, behaviour, mental health, and exclusions. Suspensions from schools have increased, as have permanent exclusions. There are pressures on Alternative Provision places, more days lost to learning and greater impact on disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. The Council has a statutory duty to provide alternative education where pupils are permanently excluded from school and due to rising numbers this is presenting significant challenges.

To tackle this, we are working with our schools to look at how we might provide more preventative work and reduce the need for exclusion. This is not easy given the lack of funding we have available, but we continue to work with schools on the solutions. Education are working with partners including health, Youth Justice and Police, as well

as seeking to identify more Alternative Provision places to support pupils at risk of exclusion.

We are working with all secondary schools to make sure there is regular reintegration of pupils returning to mainstream from the Whitley Alternative provision. This will release space for other pupils to receive the support and intervention they need.

Children's Social Care

Performance has remained strong in our social care teams. In the last 3 months the demand at our Front Door has levelled out after a period of increasing demand and remains similar or slightly below our statistical neighbours. Our performance in terms of timeliness of assessments is high at over 96% for assessments completed within 45 days. The caseloads within our assessment and locality teams, including children looked after teams remain manageable and within our target limits. Quality assurance work is providing evidence of good quality work, with the voice of children and young people clearly coming through and social workers know their children well. We are continuing to work to train new members of staff in systemic practice and embedding this relationship-based approach across all areas of the service, including fostering and residential services.

LGA Peer Review of Corporate Parenting

The Peer Review took place on 10th – 12th October and we had positive feedback from the team, regarding our work as Corporate Parents and particularly about our engagement with young people to hear their voice. Many elected members, officers and partner agencies were interviewed as part of this process and the review team met with young people directly. The review explored key themes around:

- Governance and board effectiveness
- The voice of children in care and care leavers
- Whole council ownership and understanding
- Partnerships

There were many strengths identified including the strong commitment of the Council to our children in care and care leavers demonstrated by elected members and senior officers and our high aspirations for them to achieve in life. Partnerships were viewed as a strength also with health partners attending Corporate Parenting Panel. The team could see children's voice evident in all aspects of our work from fostering and independent reviewing to mainstream social work. Accepting that some of our formal young people's forums may have faltered somewhat during the pandemic, work is on track to revive these important groups for young people to work with us on design and co-production of services. An area for consideration highlighted was to develop a more

structured approach to Corporate Parenting Panel, with themed meetings to develop stronger collective challenge and action to fulfil our ambitions as corporate parents and grandparents. The LGA will be working with us in the coming months to facilitate workshops for Panel members and officers to help us achieve this.

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice service was inspected in May 2022 and was rated as “Requires Improvement”. Since then, the staff have been working hard to develop and improve the service. The Youth Justice Board has just given us very positive feedback that most elements of our improvement plan have been met or exceeded so the service is well on track to deliver high quality preventive and statutory services to our young people. The team is working closely with our youth services and partners on work to try to prevent and divert young people from crime and from repeat offending. Daniel Smith, the Youth Justice Manager has been recently promoted to acting Service Manager for the YJS and for Youth Services and will ensure that these services work effectively together to support our vulnerable young people.

Workforce Development

Recruitment and retention of social workers remains a key priority as we continue to have some challenges in recruiting permanent staff across the service, in common with most other local authorities in the country. The children’s and adults social care service have come together in a working group over recent months with HR colleagues to progress a review of pay scales to ensure that we remain competitive with our immediate council neighbours to attract staff and reduce reliance on agency workers. This work is near completion, and we are also working on our “offer” to social care staff to support retention and to refresh our marketing and recruitment campaigns with the support of our comms team. It is hoped that these efforts yield a positive result in coming months alongside our continuing close work with the University Teaching Partnership, Step Up to Social Work and Social Work Apprenticeship scheme to attract new trainee social workers. We are also forming a partnership with Frontline who are a leading children’s social work charity to recruit additional trainee staff next year to support our “grown our own” approach to developing and retaining excellent social workers.

CYPS Commissioning Activity

Domestic Abuse Support Service

The current contract for community based Domestic Abuse Support Services in Calderdale ends in June 2023. A Domestic Abuse Recommissioning Group, including representatives of partners sitting on the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board, has

reviewed current provision alongside recommendations identified within Calderdale's Domestic Abuse Whole System Review. This process has informed development of a Service Specification for the new Domestic Abuse Support Service, which will include:

- Delivery of trauma-informed support to victims of domestic abuse, aged 16 and older, at all levels of risk of harm (standard, medium and high)
- Specific provision co-working alongside the Police at times of the week when incidents of domestic abuse are at a peak
- Specific provision in relation to supporting recovery and move on from domestic abuse

This service will be commissioned via a competitive tender process for a new contract start in July

Support for Young People who identify as LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Service has been recently recommissioned and is currently in the mobilisation stage with the new provider the Brunswick Centre, with the new contract due to start from 1/12/22. Young People with lived experience were involved in the stakeholder group which helped to develop the new service specification and also were part of the tender evaluation panel. The new provider has worked closely with the outgoing provider (Barnardo's) and they have worked jointly to inform the young people and families of the change in provider and supported the continuity of service delivery in the early stages to help with the transition. The service will provide safe and positive places for young people who live in Calderdale to talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity and provide a range of support for young people to achieve positive outcomes including:

- Groupwork for young people between the ages of 13 to 19
- Emotional Health and Well Being 1:1 support to LGBTQ+ young people aged 11 to 21 years. For young people who have Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) or who have been Children Looked After (CLA) they will be able to access the service until they are 25.
- Family and Peer support
- Volunteering Opportunities

Evaluation of Open Access Youth Service Pilot

Youth club and outreach youth work for young people aged 13-19 years (25 years for those with SEND) is currently being delivered in Ovenden, Mixenden, Rastrick and Park Wards by Newground Together and Himmat as the result of a pilot commissioned in August 2021. A comprehensive evaluation of the pilots has been produced jointly between Commissioners and Children and Young People's Services to inform future

commissioning intentions. The evaluation includes an assessment of performance data and needs as well as feedback from staff and from young people who use the service and makes recommendations for the future commissioning of Open Access Youth Services beyond March 2023.

Children's Centres - Day Care Inspection outcomes

Ofsted inspections of Day Care provision within Children's Centres recommenced this year. There have been 6 inspections across the two providers Halifax Opportunities Trust (HOT) and North Halifax Partnership (NHP) from February to August 2022. Kevin Pearce Day Care provision (NHP) received an Outstanding judgement (was previously Good) with Elland, Innovations, Wellholme Park, Jubilee and Todmorden all receiving Good judgements.

Alternative provision

In addition to the Service Level Agreement with Whitely Academy to provide Alternative Provision Places for excluded pupils, discussions are taking place to look to establish an Alternative Provision Framework agreement which attracts a range of providers willing and able to offer high quality Alternative Provision placements outside the classroom for Calderdale pupils who struggle to engage with mainstream classroom learning. These may take the form of vocational provision or support with numeracy/literacy but they are generally offered in a less formal environment in small group settings. We want to go 'out to the market' to attract such providers to offer to work with our pupils who may benefit from such an approach. Being part of a Calderdale Alternative Provision Framework would not guarantee being commissioned to offer support but would provide us with an approved list that we could either commission as a LA or recommend to schools as quality assured and with effective safeguarding policies.

School Safeguarding Service

Out of 103 maintained schools and academies in Calderdale, 99 have bought into the service now. This has increased from 80% take up from when the service first traded 4 years ago. Private schools also buy the service and this year we have expanded to include schools from outside the LA (Kirklees and Bradford) as part of academy chains making a total of 111 schools benefitting from the excellent service we provide.

Independent Reviewing Service

The Independent Reviewing service has continued to deliver child protection conferences in a timely manner and perform consistently better than our statistical

neighbours, Yorkshire and Humber and England comparators. For end of year 2021, Calderdale is ranked number 1.

Our Initial Child Protection conferences are 100% in timescale compared to 93% shown at the end of year statistics of our 'Statistical Neighbours (and a similar figure seen in the England average). We perform similarly with delivery of child protection review conferences at 92% in timescales, compared to the 80% figures of our statistical neighbours.

LADO

The review of the LADO service against the National LADO Network National Standards has been completed and RAG rated. No red areas were identified, with 6 amber and 31 green. This equates to 84% of the domains being met fully, with 16% partially met and requiring some further development.