

## **CABINET**

### **3 FEBRUARY 2022**

# **CREATION OF AN ALL AGE DISABILITY SERVICE (0-25) INCORPORATING ADULT SERVICES YOUNG ADULT TEAMS (YAT)**

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#### **Relevant Cabinet Member**

Cllr A Hardman  
Cllr A Roberts

#### **Relevant Chief Officer**

Director of Children's Services  
Strategic Director for People

#### **Recommendations**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Services recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) Approves the development of an All Age Disability Service (0-25);
  - (b) Approves the transfer of staff resource in the Young Adult's team (TUPE) to be hosted by WCF as part of an All Age Disability Service (0-25) - Integrating SEND Team, Children with a Disability Team and Young Adults Team, to improve the customer experience and drive better short and long term outcomes;
  - (c) Notes that the budget for provision and care packages remains in People Services but will be operationally managed by the new All Age Disability (0-25) service;
  - (d) Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and AD for Legal and Governance in consultation with the Strategic Director for People, Director of Children's Services and Chief Finance Officer to amend the contract with WCF and performance reporting as needed to deliver the above;
  - (e) Delegates authority to Worcestershire Children First to exercise, on the Council's behalf, the functions of Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 in respect of children and young people up to age 25 years with the exceptions set out in paragraph 26 of the report pursuant to s79 of the Care Act.

## **Background**

2. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the NHS Mandate both make clear that NHS England, CCGs and Health and Wellbeing Boards must promote the integration of services if this will improve services and/or reduce inequality, and they should consider arrangements under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006, including the use of pooled budgets. The Children Act 2004 also places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote cooperation with its partners (including the police, health service providers and youth offending teams and the probation services) in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people under 18 which includes safeguarding and the welfare of children.
3. It is under these national drivers that it is an expectation that the council and its independent company WCF should review and implement integration of its services where it is evident it could improve services and/or reduce inequalities.
4. This is joint venture of design and change between Worcestershire's People's Directorate and Worcestershire Children First
5. Currently the services to support children, young people and young adults is divided across four service areas. The Special Educational Needs and Disability service (SEND), managed by Education directorate within WCF, The Children's Social Care Children with Disability Team (CWD) until recently was within Children's Social Care but has been moved into Education to improve working together with SEND, Early Years SEND and the Young Adults Team (YAT) within People's Services, Adult Social Care. Each service is separately managed and although the Teams do work closely together the proposal is to structure these service areas together to further strengthen and enable a more co-ordinated and integrated offer to children, young people and their parent carers.
6. The programme is sponsored jointly by the Director for People and the CEO WCF/Director of Children's Services.
7. The new service would continue to be accountable and be delivering to the priorities and statutory duties of all the three service areas. This means for SEND it will be the lead agency for the refreshed Special Educational Needs Strategy and ensuring delivery of the Accelerated Progress Plan to address the four identified areas from the OFSTED CQC Inspection November 2021. For Children with Disability working to support and provide respite to prevent family breakdown and for Young Adults promotion of independent living, including employment and integration in local communities reducing dependency on services

8. The catalyst for the development of the Service came from a stakeholder engagement with parent carers and young people in the autumn of 2019 as part of the Special Educational Needs & Disability improvement. This followed OFSTED's SEND Inspection in 2018 that required an action plan for improvement and the SEND Strategy 2019-2021 to focus on Preparation for Adulthood. The participants made it clear there were a number of areas they found challenging, and it was difficult to get the right help at the right time as a young person prepared for adulthood and moved between Children's and Adults' services (often called transition). It has also been informed by both national and local feedback from children, young people and parent carers over time that constantly has raised the challenges of:

- Having to tell their "story" multiple times as they move between services
- Lack of information of options for adulthood
- Late planning and decision making
- A feeling of stop start as a new service becomes involved
- Being referred to another service to only be told they don't meet criteria
- Lack of local provision promoting independence
- Earlier decision on education options not linked to longer term plans for Adulthood i.e. course choice not linked to preferred employment choice.

9. This was reinforced by analysis of the data about late decision making, difficulties in timely planning for adulthood from the earliest of years and challenges of co-ordinating responses to this transition. This was despite the improvements that had been made from the creation of the Young Adults Team (People Directorate). There was also an issue of too many young people having their needs met out of the county away from family and their local community. It was clear a joint response was needed to both provide improved local provision and confidence to both parent carers and young people of the offer.

10. The focus of the review has been on improving the experiences of support and coordination through a joined up "offer" for those children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs aged 0 to 25.

11. The aim is to offer longer term life and independence planning for children and young people into adulthood. As a consequence, the individual will see diminishing experiences of a sharp change in their support at 18 years old (social care) or 25 years old (education). Support will be planned early, with individuals and their families/carers to ensure ongoing achievement and sustainment of their independence, enabling and empowering people to live their own lives, in their local community with choice and control.

12. Engagement with young people. Young people were engaged in the design of the SEND strategy and the All Age Disability service will be delivering to that Strategy.

13. The All Age Disability 0-25 Service is a direct response to an engagement exercise in the Autumn of 2019 where parent carers and young people identified "Hard to navigate the maze of teams/services" and "Need to bridge the gap between children's and adult services". Implementing the response was disrupted by the impact of COVID. By bringing the three service areas together we will be providing that single point of contact in each locality and co-ordinating our services better.

The development of the All Age Disability service has been informed and designed in response to what could be described as an “ongoing conversation” (Engagement events, complaints, national parent carer feedback) that has consistently raised concerns about having to tell their “story” more than once, multiple meetings, navigating the different teams and services, missing the aspiration of the 2014 Child and Family act of working to a single Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). This conversation has continued with Families in Partnership, Worcestershire’s Carers Association, Preparation for Adulthood stakeholders’ group as we have been developing both the All Age Disability structure and offer.

### **Options Considered:**

14. **Option 1** – Remain as is and improve communication and joint working. – Continued competing management priorities, absence of co-location and having a shared vision and shared accountability made this a less attractive option.

15. **Option 2** – The preferred option – To effectively deliver this as a coherent All Age Disability Service, integrating the teams is the preferred option. That is a single 0-25 Service, led by a single strategic lead, with a locality footprint of combined staff of Children with Disability (CWD), Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), Early Years SEND and Young Adults Team (YAT) under single management. This would provide a consistent and coherent offer with locality flexibility responding to levels of need and locality resources. By structuring to a locality footprint, it will improve local networks and community provision.

The benefits of restructuring into a more integrated service and the best way to enable a more coherent and coordinated approach from 0-25, in line with Special Educational Needs transformation changes brought in by the 2014 Children and Family Act, is by the Adult Services (People Directorate) provision being hosted under a single strategic leadership and management team alongside children’s services provision, to support early identification and planning.

16. **Option 3** – extend the reach of Young Adults Team to age 14 -25. This is not recommended as it risks fragmenting the joined-up processes in Children’s services and risks seeing preparation for adulthood as an Adults social Care responsibility, when it is best delivered holistically and everybody’s business, encouraging long term planning at every point of change or transition.

17. **Option 4** – suggested by some parent carers was to place SEND officers in the Young Adults Team. Whilst this did have the potential to meet many of the integrated and coordinated benefits of the preferred option it was not desirable in distancing SEND from Early Years, School Improvement, Education Support services and Children’s social care who will all have significant contributions to make to address the Accelerated Action Plan of supporting mainstream schools to be more inclusive and like option 3, risked seeing long term planning the responsibility of Adults service rather than shared by all involved.

### **Benefits**

18. The identified benefits of the proposed changes are:

- They will improve the experience for young people and their families.
- They will enable better information sharing and coordination of assessments and plans for its service users.
- Build stronger relationships with the child, young person, and their families, which leads to a more person-centred approach to provide greater consistency for families and avoid information getting lost.
- Ensure preparing for adulthood can run through the entire service, with a broader and better understanding of resources/support for the 17+ cohort.
- Achieve greater collaboration and ownership of the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and Child and Young Person's future planning.
- Have a Locality focus for each 0-25 team, enabling better links with schools and community resources and a greater understanding of that specific local area's needs.
- By integrating the teams into a single service improve joint problem solving, be more solution focused, and increase expertise and creativity across the AAD workforce and its partners.
- Improve communication between the different disciplines and individual professionals. A reported benefit from authorities that have taken similar approaches (Knowsley, North Yorkshire)

## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

19. There will be a transfer of 17.55 fte from the People Directorate to WCF. The total estimated cost of delivering the joint service is £6.35 million which is £0.2 million greater than the current combined service, to enable an improved focus on management and operational activity within the service. The additional costs to facilitate an integrated area-based model will be met from existing budgets and from efficiencies in both WCF and the People Directorate.

20. The Budgets for placements and care packages will remain for pre-18-year-olds in WCF and post-18 year olds in the Council but both will be delivered and managed through the All Age Disability 0-25 Service.

21. A contract variation will be required for WCF to accommodate the increase in cost of operation of the service undertaken by WCF with a corresponding transfer of c£0.8 million funding from the Council to WCF.

22. Young Adults Team Staff will be TUPE'd to WCF with current terms and conditions. It is not envisaged that there will be any redundancies as a result of these proposals.

23. Legal advice sought confirmed that, as there is no reduction or change in statutory criteria for accessing services it does not constitute significant change requiring formal public consultation. *Our engagement and co-production with parents will remain a key feature in our AAD services. Whilst formal public consultation is not required we are committed to hearing about the experiences, views and ideas of parents and carers and we will provide them and children and young people with opportunities to feed in their views and ideas as we develop the services. The AAD service will develop its own service user on going engagement as part of its quality assurance programme.*

24. The Council may authorise the Director of a Body Corporate to exercise its functions under the Part One of the Care Act 2014 save for those functions expressly excluded in s79(2) of the 2014 Act e.g.

- a) section 3 (promoting integration with health services etc.),
- (b) sections 6 and 7 (co-operating),
- (c) section 14 (charges),
- (d) sections 42 to 47 (safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect), or
- (e) this section.

### **Risk Implications**

25. Creating a new “cliff edge” at 25 when young people leaving the service. This is being mediated by improving longer term planning and transferring to Adults Social Care locality teams when provision is stable as is the current practice in YAT. Young adults when stable in their adulthood support will either be independent and supported by universal community services or transferred to Adult service community team at some point between their 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday according to their needs and education pathways/choices.

26. Parent cares have raised concerns about risk of dilution of Young Adult team skills and knowledge. To mitigate against this risk, there will be a “leadership team” of group managers each with lead responsibility for SEND, Children with Disabilities and one for Young Adults which will be the link with adult services.

27. The All Age Disability service will adopt WCF robust quality assurance framework that is composed of three elements:

Audits – to tell us about the quality of work.

Performance management – delivering to targets and key performance indicators

Service User feedback – to tell us how the services are being experienced and the difference they are making

28. The AAD service will be accountable to People’s directorate by providing both Key Performance Indicators and Quality Assurances measures, including users feedback. These will be utilising current measures used by YAT /SEND/CWD and confirmed by the new Director of AAD and People’s Director as a service “dashboard” on which to monitor quality, timeliness and service user experiences. We are committed to building on the best practice and experience of all the service areas.

### **Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments**

29. The Council must, during planning, decision-making and implementation, exercise a proportionate level of due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

An Equality Relevance Screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. The JIA screening did not identify any potential considerations requiring further assessment during implementation.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Joint Impact Assessment

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

#### Specific Contact Points for this report

Name, Stephen Mason Interim Head of Service All Age Disability (0-25) – Design & Change

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for People and the Director of Children's Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.