



Northumberland County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

8TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Proposal in Relation to Future Arrangements for the Youth Service

Report of Graham Reiter and Audrey Kingham, Joint Interim Directors of Children's Services.

Cabinet Member: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, Lead Member for Children's Services

Purpose of report

To give members of the Committee an overview of the activity in relation to a recent review of the activity and impact of the Youth Service and provide a proposal for future arrangements of Northumberland County Council managed Youth Service activity across the county linked to the development of the Family Hub model.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. That members note the activity which has taken place during the review.
2. That members agree that moving forward the most effective way of delivering the Northumberland County Council Youth Service is through a locality based model managed through Family Hub arrangements.
3. That members agree that the delivery of most community based Youth Service groups is best done through VCS led organisations.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Enjoying, Connecting, Living and Learning priority in the NCC Corporate Plan 21-24.

Key Issues

1. There was a significant review of the Youth Service in 2016/17 leading to a change in focus and a new vision and culture statement being developed.
2. A further review of the progress of this has been undertaken following a change in the management of the Youth Service in May 2021.
3. The review has been comprehensive covering consultation with staff, needs analysis and overview of the current VCS youth provision in Northumberland.
4. The review found that the three key areas of the previous review have not been fully implemented or developed.
5. The review has undertaken an options analysis which sets out two possible options to move the Youth Service forward.
6. The first option to move the current posts of the Youth Service into the early help localities as part of the development of Family Hubs is recommended.
7. This will support the Youth Service to be more integrated with multi agency partners in the development of locality based early help and targeted services.

Background

The Youth Service underwent a significant review in 2016/17 as part of it moving to sit under the Northumberland Adolescent Service. The findings from this review led to a change to the Youth Service structure and focus being implemented following a management of change process. This was followed by investment in support from an external consultant in developing a vision and culture statement for the service.

There have been further changes with the management arrangements of the Youth Service since then and, following new management arrangements being in place from May 2021, it was agreed that a further review of how the service was functioning was timely.

The review has featured a number of activities:

- Group discussions with the staff
- Staff survey
- Review of the delivery model agreed in 2018
- Needs analysis of young people across the county using determinants of anti-social behaviour, youth justice referrals and referrals to SORTED as well as wider deprivation figures.
- Identification of the number, location and size of VCS youth organisations across the county
- Meeting with county wide VCS youth providers

Following the review, it is clear that the three key elements of the previous changes to the Youth Service have not yet been fully implemented, namely:

- **Supporting individual young people using the Early Help Assessment framework** - the Youth Service, whilst supporting young people at an early help level, have not utilised the multi-agency assessment and planning process agreed through the Early Help Strategy and are not recording the interventions and outcomes for young people on the early help case recording system.
- **Developing and delivering targeted support** - the Youth Service have continued to provide youth group provision and detached youthwork in areas not identified as high in the needs analysis without any clear rationale for this.
- **Implementing a 'Grow your own' model** - whilst some progress has been made on this area this is not consistent enough and as a result the VCS have not been fully supported to enable them to access sustainable external funding meaning that in some areas of deprivation young people are not able to access the same level of support as in others. This seems to have been, in part, as a result of the focus remaining on the Youth Service continuing to deliver its own provision.

The review has identified that the current structure of the Youth Service is not able to move the Youth Service forward to further implement the above areas in full which are still seen to be valid and relevant to the aims and values of the Youth Service in Northumberland.

A thorough options analysis has been undertaken by the management overseeing the Youth Service and can be summarised as follows:

Option 1

As part of the development of the Family Hub model in Northumberland and in line with the further development of early help and targeted services for 0-19 year old children and their families that the posts within the Youth Service focussed on delivering direct youth work are moved to sit within the early help locality teams. The current service lead post becomes wholly focussed on support the VCS youth providers to develop further under the 'Grow your own' agenda.

Option 2

The Youth Service stays as is within the Northumberland Adolescent Service. Further training is provided in relation to the Early Help Assessment process and a refocus on the need to target work and support the VCS development.

Recommendation

We would recommend that members agree with progressing with Option 1. This will enable the Youth Service to become more integrated at a local level with other multi-agency partners delivering services for children, young people and families. It will support the priority and emphasis on developing Family Hub services for families in Northumberland. The managers within the early help localities are well embedded in local communities and in supporting families through the early help assessment processes. The youth work lead posts will be supported to further understand their roles in relation to the integration agenda. Further capacity will be added to support the VCS Youth Service providers to grow and develop.

Implications

Policy	This proposal fits with the national and local policy drivers around delivering services for children and families in a more integrated way at a local level.
Finance and value for money	The current model does not operate in the most efficient way to provide targeted services to those young people most at need as set out above. By integrating the postholders into the Family Hub developments this will allow them to be part of the locality level targeted offer and share their expertise with other parts of the workforce in each area. It will also enable them to be supported to use the early help framework making more of the resource invested in the posts. Support delivered to the VCS to bid for funding will increase resource into Northumberland for young people from other sources.
Legal	N/A
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	This proposed change will need to be agreed via a consultation process with the current staff team.
Property:	Staff will need to be based in different buildings than they are currently which will need to be managed.
Equalities: (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	This proposal will support more targeted work diverting young people in high need areas away from criminal activity.
Customer Considerations:	The proposal will support more young people in targeted areas who need help the most.
Carbon Reduction:	Having staff based locally will support a reduction in travel.
Health and Wellbeing	Having the Youth Service staff integrated with locality based Family Hub arrangements will support the health and wellbeing of young people and their families in each locality through a more integrated model of delivery.

Wards:	All wards
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Report sign off

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Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Acting Deputy Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
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