

Budget Proposals 2017/18: Restructure of the Youth Support, Family Resource, Help for Families and Young Carers Services

Consultation Summary Report

Why we consulted?

Over the last five years, we've had to find savings of £41m. Since 2012/13, the government has given us less money by reducing the Revenue Support Grant by £30m, whilst over the same period we've seen increased demand for our services.

For 2017/18, we estimate that our budget will be £117m. To achieve a balanced budget we'll have to identify £8m of savings or increases in our income.

In order to inform this process, we published a list of those proposals which would likely have a direct impact on service users, and sought the views from those affected and interested:

- to understand the likely impact
- to identify any measures to reduce their impact
- to explore any possible alternatives for both savings and income generation

Approach

We published all the proposals on our website on 31 October 2016 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 December 2016.

Respondents were directed to a [central index page](#), which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd taken into account. Feedback was then invited through an online form, and through a dedicated email address. Hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were also made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 800 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Heads of Service also made direct contact with those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on the 31 October 2016, and further publicised our consultations through our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We also placed posters in our main offices and libraries, and made them available to WBC Councillors and Parish and Town Councils to put up in the wards/parishes.

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Proposal Background

These services encompass staff and functions that are delivered as a part of the Integrated Youth Support Service, the Family Resource Service, and the service known as Help for Families, as well as the Young Carers Service.

The combined services currently employ 16.8 Full-time equivalent (F.T.E.) staff, including qualified social workers and youth workers, alongside other highly skilled professionals.

Proposal Details

To integrate the four service areas into one service called the Targeted Intervention Service. This new service will form part of the wider Children and Family Services and focus its support in a more targeted way on:

- Families at the risk of breakdown
- Children and Young People on the edge of care
- Families impacted by Domestic Abuse, parental mental health or parental substance misuse
- Children or Young People at risk of, or subject to, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Children or Young people who are reported as missing
- Children or Young People who are experiencing caring responsibilities (Young Carers)

It is estimated that this will save us £108,000 per annum, out of a combined budget of £1,114,010 and will be largely achieved through management savings to protect front line delivery as much as is possible.

Legislation Requirements

The majority of the work within these services takes place underneath the threshold of requiring statutory intervention. The work is predominantly focussed on delivering support with the aim of avoiding any concerns escalating to a point where statutory intervention is needed. There are some statutory functions within the services which are, and will continue to be, delivered by appropriately qualified professionals who understand levels of need and risks alongside Section 17 (Children Act, 1989), as well as having the skills to meet our responsibilities under Working Together Guidance and to strengthen our Protection and Early Help provision. It also supports Young Carers alongside the expectations of the Children and Families Act and Care Act 2014.

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 20 responses were received.

Summary of Main Points

There was a significant level of support for the proposal and 55% of responses agreed with proposals

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The main points raised by those who disagreed were:

- Concern for any reduction in provision to a vulnerable cohort of young people
- Concern about the long term affect on statutory services (increased demand and escalation of need) through a reduction of preventative support
- Concern that bringing together family work and work with young people may dilute the focus of work particularly on young people
- Concern regarding the longevity of support to young people requiring help. The proposal is that the work will be time limited and focussed interventions.
- Ensure stronger staff utilisation efficiently and reduce bureaucracy

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Are you...?

	Number	%
Or anyone you care for, a user of this service	1	5%
A resident of West Berkshire	13	65%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	4	20%
A Parish/Town Councillor	4	20%
A District Councillor	0	0%
A Service Provider	0	0%
A Partner Organisation	1	5%
Other	2	10%

2. How far do you agree with the proposal to integrate the Youth Support, Family Resource, Help for Families and Young Carers Services into one service called the Targeted Intervention Service?

	Number	%
Agree	11	55%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	25%
Don't know	0	0%
Not answered	4	20%
Total	20	100%

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

The proposal was considered to potentially impact some of our most vulnerable young people who may benefit from longer term advice and support; both in terms of the quality of support given if this was diluted by professionals also working with whole families, and in regard to the longevity of support.

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- 4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.**

A suggestion given was that a reduction in the impact on those affected could be achieved through ensuring any savings are taken from senior or middle manager posts, as opposed to front line provision.

- 5. Do you have any other suggestions as to how these savings (approximately £108,000) might be delivered within this service? If so, please provide details.**

There were no specific suggestions as to how £108,000 savings may be delivered differently from within the service. However, it was suggested that consideration should be given to whether income or charging opportunities could be more fully utilised

- 6. Do you have any suggestions on how we might increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council?**

Suggestions were raised in regard to accommodation utilisation e.g. room charging and sharing of services. Also whether some services or group work could be offered to other services or agencies, who may be willing to buy in this work and skills within the new service

- 7. Is there any way that you, or your organisation, can contribute in helping to alleviate the impact of this proposal? If so, please provide details of how you can help.**

There were no specific contributions offered to alleviate the impact

- 8. Any further comments?**

Many of the consultation comments received were positive about the proposals outlined. 55% agreed with the proposals, with a view highlighted that combining the skills and knowledge within the proposed service may improve overall delivery.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Mac Heath
Head of Children and Family Services
16 December 2016

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

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All the responses have been provided verbatim as an appendix to this report. Whilst this summary seeks to distil the key, substantive points made, it should also be read in conjunction with the more detailed verbatim comments to ensure a full, rounded perspective of the views and comments are considered.