

Public Health Nursing Spotlight Review – Health and Wellbeing / People’s Scrutiny

Report of the Spotlight Review Group

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: that Cabinet be recommended to adopt the approach set out in Option 3 of Report [CS/17/6](#) and transfer the 0-19 Public Health Nursing services to the County Council from 1 April 2018.

1. Context

At Cabinet on 11 January 2017 approval was given to consultations being undertaken on the proposed process for procuring a new contract/arrangements for commissioning of children's services upon the expiry of the current five-year contract with Virgin Care Limited on 31 March 2018; such consultation to take place during January and February 2017 with a further report to the Cabinet in March 2017 to determine the preferred option.

It was subsequently agreed that Health and Wellbeing / People’s Scrutiny undertake a spotlight review to consider the following Public Health Nursing services options set out in the January Cabinet Report (CS/17/6).

2. Background

In April 2013, the County Council and NHS Devon (Devon Primary Care Trust) entered into a 3+1+1 year (five year maximum) contract for the delivery of integrated children’s services with Virgin Care Limited via a pooled budget arrangement. The services are currently commissioned from this pooled budget with Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group acting on behalf of the commissioning partners as the Co-ordinating Commissioner. The intention of the commissioners at that time was to bring together three main elements of existing health services for children:

- Public Health Nursing services and the mandated National Child Measurement Programme (health visitors and school nurses)
- Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS)
- Specialist Children with Additional Needs services (for those with complex needs such as physical and learning disability)

The pooled budget has a total value of almost £35 million per annum. The contract ends on 31st March 2018 and because it has already been extended twice, it cannot be extended again under national regulations. In terms of the County Council’s current financial contribution to the pooled budget:

- £3.5 million in specialist children’s services.
- £11.9 million in 0-19 Public Health Nursing services.

Devon County Council’s investment in Public Health Nursing is from the Public Health Grant, which is for the delivery of Public Health England’s national specification for a 0-19 service and is currently subject to a mandate (via a statutory instrument) for the five universal checks between 0 and 5 years of age. The service forms part of the Director of Public Health’s responsibilities made under section 6C of the NHS 2006 Act, inserted by section 18 of the 2012 Act. This funding currently represents 41% of the total ring-fenced Public Health Grant for 2016-17 from Public Health England.

The process of pre-procurement formally commenced in June 2016. An independent chair was appointed to establish and chair a Pre-Procurement Board, the aim of which was to clarify intentions, begin collating the necessary finance and contractual data and, based on this, produce a set of recommendations on the approach to procurement.

3. Spotlight Review

On 6 February 2017 members held evidence gathering sessions with the following witnesses to the review and appreciated their attendance at short notice:

- Virginia Pearson, Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity / Councillor Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Linda Murray, Head of Public Health Nursing, Virgin Care / Cathy Ellingford, Head of Care Effectiveness, Virgin Care
- Louise Campion, Principal Officer – Health and Wellbeing, Swindon Borough Council
- Philippa Court, Senior Manager: Early Help Provision, Devon County Council
- Phil Norrey, Chief Executive, Devon County Council
- Jo Olsson, Chief Officer for Children's Services, Devon County Council / Councillor James McInnes, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills

4. Conclusion

The spotlight review considered the three options set out in the January cabinet report and concluded that Option 3 represents an opportunity for the County Council to take greater control in the delivery of children's services. There is a need to strengthen the governance arrangements, accelerate the pace of integration to ensure the system enables effective working together and brings services closer to where children can access them. It is this integration of health, education and social care services that makes the biggest difference to outcomes for children and in particular for those that are more vulnerable.

Currently it would appear that early help has made some advances but it remains under-developed in Devon, and the position set out in the Ofsted inspection in 2015 has not changed significantly. Further work is needed to establish expectations and to clarify roles and responsibilities in terms of early help across the partnership. The County Council's strategic role is vital as the catalyst on the drive to improve each child's outcomes and start in life. Therefore it is critically important to have a Public Health workforce that works seamlessly with children's centres schools and early years settings.

The spotlight review appreciates that Option 3 and the in-sourcing of 0-19 Public Health Nursing Services would not be without risk. The transfer would represent a significant period of change and disruption as well as it being a considerable undertaking to bring the service in-house for next year. Clinical governance would also be an issue, and needs to be absolutely clear. Registration would be required with CQC and undergoing CQC inspection is an onerous process similar to Ofsted inspections. However if changes to strengthen early help, bridging the gap between universal, targeted and specialist services, are not implemented, not only is there a risk that costs in specialist services will rise, but that outcomes for some of Devon's most vulnerable children may suffer.

Delaying the longer term decision with Option 1 has some advantages, but it would mean that staff had another year of uncertainty and organisational change sets back progress, something the County Council can ill afford to allow. The impact of continuing financial restrictions, along with necessary changes in expectations, made Option 2 less favourable.

Members of the Spotlight Review:

Sara Randall Johnson (Chair of Spotlight Review / People's Scrutiny Committee)

Rob Hannaford

Andy Hannan

Debo Sellis

Richard Westlake (Chair of Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing: Councillor Andrea Davis

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor James McInnes

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