

Report of the Director of Children, Education and Communities

**Update on implementation of Local Area Teams - their role in supporting vulnerable children**

**Summary**

1. In March and July of 2016 the Council Executive endorsed proposals to create Local Area Teams. Local Area Teams bring together a range of pre-existing services to form a new set of preventative arrangements for families from pregnancy through to adult hood. This paper provides an update on implementation of Local Area Teams following their launch in January 2017.

**Background**

2. We know that for most families York is a great place to grow up and that the vast majority of children are safe, resilient and achieving. However we also know that some children and young people will have a very different experience. The recently launched Local Area Teams will be a key part of tackling this inequality in order to improve the long term prospects of families most in need.
3. We know that by tackling issues as they emerge there is a significant chance of preventing long term poor outcomes and the need for more specialised and high cost services at a later stage ; not only across children's services but across a range of public services right across the city.
4. This paper presents an update on progress following the launch of Local Area Teams in January 2017 and how Local Area Teams support vulnerable children and young people.

**Ofsted Inspection**

5. In November and December 2016 Ofsted carried out an extensive inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The overall judgement received was "Good" and reflected that York has a strong base from which to build our work with children and young people.

6. The detailed feedback and recommendations from the Ofsted report strengthened the case for the introduction of Local Area Teams and reflected our own understanding of existing arrangements. The quote below taken from the Ofsted report demonstrates this.
  - a. “A mature multi-agency partnership works effectively to identify children who may benefit from early help services. While early help services are well coordinated, senior leaders have recognised the need to improve the delivery of early help interventions in order to improve the way that families are supported. Firm plans are in place to establish three multi-agency local area teams from January 2017.”

### **Local Area Teams**

7. Local Area Teams (LAT) are a key part of York’s early help response to working with children, young people and families from pregnancy through to adulthood (the 0-19yrs (25yrs for disability) agenda). A Local Area Team (LAT) is a multi-agency team covering one of three defined geographical areas of York. The purpose of a Local Area Team is:
  - a. To prevent the escalation of needs which may require, if not addressed, statutory, complex and costly interventions at a later point.
  - b. To reduce inequality of outcomes for our communities across York.
8. Local Area Teams are not just a set of council services. They are multi-agency and bring together all partners in a local area that exist in the lives of children, young people and families. This way Local Area Teams can bring together the full power of our communities to address need and build resilience. Annex A provides a summary of Local Area Teams and
9. Local Area Teams focus their work on vulnerable children and young people that are not yet receiving a statutory intervention (e.g. a child in care). These two service areas (statutory interventions and voluntary interventions) will work closely together to ensure that children and young people and their families get the right service at the right time. Providing effective early help should reduce the number of children and young people who need the support of statutory services. However early identification of significant concerns will also ensure that those children and young people most in need will receive the appropriate level of help and intervention.

## **All Together Active**

10. One area where Local Area Teams clearly interacts with children in care is through the delivery of the All Together Active group. All Together Active (ATA) is the result of a week long workshop at York St John during the summer of 2007 for Looked After Children. After evaluating the session it became very clear that the young people wanted a regular session for children in care, where they could talk openly about their situations and be fully understood by their peers and not feel 'different'.
11. The group started at Huntington School until it grew too big for the room at the school and then went on to run at The Lighthouse on a fortnightly basis. The young people named the group 'ATA' (All Together Active) and asked for the session to include a meal.
12. ATA has since carried on running in a similar format but more recently has run from Moorlane and was supported by the Youth and Community Development Team which has been consolidated within Local Area Teams.
13. There are eight young people that regularly attend ATA and a consultation was launched as to how to improve the reach and impact of the group. Consultation took place with:
  - a. Young people who attend ATA
  - b. Foster carers
  - c. Staff members
  - d. Volunteers
  - e. Connexions for Virtual Schools
  - f. Children Rights Manager
  - g. Volunteer Lead
  - h. Show Me That I Matter
14. Following this consultation a new model for the delivery of ATA will be rolled out over the course of 2017. The first step will be to move the sessions back to their original fortnightly frequency. Work is underway with the Speak Up Service to look at how the I Matter Too group can join together with ATA to give a participation as well as social element to the group. This joining of the groups would most likely happen in the Autumn of 2017 to allow further work with young people that currently attend the sessions.

## **Launch of Local Area Teams**

15. The creation of Local Area Teams has been achieved by bringing together a range of pre-existing early help and family services. This is a significant programme of change and as a result has meant that the initial weeks of transition into the new arrangements have focussed on:
  - a. Engagement with partners and developing Multi-Agency input into the new model. Including the rationalisation of partnership based governance arrangements to support the new operating model.
  - b. Designing and piloting a new commissioning and grants programme.
  - c. Designing and establishing key elements of the operating model and the consolidation of a significant number of business processes and systems. In addition work to establish new teams and training of staff in new systems and approaches.
  - d. Ensuring transitional arrangements for pre-existing services (e.g. children's centre provision, Castlegate, Family Information Service, Family Focus, Personal Support and Inclusion service etc).
16. Ensuring a safe and effective transition into the new arrangements has been of unparalleled importance. For many service users they will not have noticed any significant change to delivery. As the new model become more established the offer made to children, young people and families will become more visible and will develop to reflect the full aspirations outlined to the Council Executive in 2016.

## **Early progress of Local Area Teams**

17. Although still in the early stages of development Local Area Teams can demonstrate a strong start and some initial successes:
  - a. Most schools have been visited by LAT practitioners and initial feedback from schools has been generally very positive.
  - b. Local Area Teams are piloting a piece of work in the North of the city to look improving school attendance. This has been identified as an issue schools wanted some further input on. Local Area Teams will undertake attendance consultation meetings with each school. This would be to identify families at early help level where attendance is an issue and they feel additional intervention is needed beyond what the school can support with. Local Area Teams can support gaining a more holistic view of family issues acting as barriers/root cause for persistent absence.

The Local Area Team will establish an attendance champion to support bringing together and working with leads within each school. The school leads and LAT Champions will form an attendance focus group where sharing of good practice, exploring new approaches and problem solving can happen in relation to improving attendance.

- c. Over 100 voluntary and community sector partners have been engaged in the development of Local Area Teams and over £56k of funding has been awarded to 19 different organisations that work with children, young people and families. Further rounds of commissioning and grants will be made available in the coming months.
- d. Community and Partnership Officers from Local Area Teams have attended a number of ward committee meetings across the city. The role of the Community and Partnership Officer with these meetings is to help link the needs of children, young people and families to ward processes and budgets. For example parents in Wigginton said they could not access “baby self-weighing scales” in the local community. The Community and Partnership Officer from the North Local Area Team worked with the Health Visiting team and Wigginton Parish Council. A local playgroup in Wigginton has agreed to offer the free use of a room that parents could access to self weigh their babies. With support from the Community and Partnership Officer an application to Parish Council to fund baby self-weighing scales which was successful.

18. A critical feature of Local Area Teams is happening on an individual level with children and families. Some short summaries are given below that give a flavour of some of the direct way in which LATs are working with local partners and families to improve families.

- a. A partner agency highlighted to LATs a mum who was very isolated and not engaging with services. The mum engaged with a practitioner from Local Area Teams who worked with mum to understand what was happening in the family. As a result the family has been supported to access two year old funded childcare, the parent to apply for Disability Living Allowance and an older child has been supported to engage with the carers centre as a young carer. As a result the family is now much more engaged with appropriate services and support to meet their needs and develop their resilience.
- b. A young person who had dropped out from college and parents were struggling to contain their behaviour at home. The young person has not engaged previously with referrals to support

services and the parent is unsure of what to try next. The Learning and Work Adviser has met with the mum and is beginning to engage multi-agency partners including local Police Community Support Officers that can help to address the underlying issues within the family.

- c. A child with poor school attendance met with the school attendance officer alongside a representative from Local Area Teams. The school attendance officer set out the process of formal sanctions that would happen if attendance did not improve. The Local Area Support Practitioner undertook a short piece of work with the family about how they could improve attendance. Following this meeting attendance has increased dramatically.
- d. In another case of poor school attendance the Local Area Support Practitioner identified a cause for bouts of non-attendance. The Local Area Support Practitioner worked with the school on addressing this trigger and as a result attendance has improved.
- e. A Single Assessment was completed for a family and the recommendation was for Early Help. There are a large number of children in the family and a need was identified regarding a 2 year old child where there were concerns about Speech and Language delay. A direct piece of work was completed which included using the Wellcomm Tool (Speech and Language assessment tool) to inform a Speech and Language referral and then to provide activities and strategies to support the child's progress over the coming weeks. The family had not taken up the 2 year old early years entitlement. The family was supported to understand their options and the value of children attending an early years setting to support their development. The child will now be accessing free childcare provision with a nursery after Easter. This should have a significant impact on the progress made around Speech and Language.

The other needs identified in the Single Assessment were regarding a primary aged child. The Local Area Support Practitioner linked to the primary school discussed ongoing support and will check-in with the school about supporting this family through their regular updates/link with school staff.

### **Engagement with partners and developing Multi-Agency input into the new model – Schools**

19. The new LAT management team have been carrying out visits to schools across York. This is to introduce the new service to schools and establish an understanding of need the schools see in local families. Schools play a critical front line role in the early help agenda so establishing strong early relationships with schools has been seen as a priority for the service.
20. Visits to schools by LAT managers have been followed up by each school being given named link workers known as Local Area Support Practitioners. The Local Area Support Practitioner (LASP) is a new role and is all about ensuring the right response to what children, young people and families need. LASPs will be named contacts and form strong relationships with key partners in the local areas such as schools, childcare providers, health provision and the voluntary and community sector. They will be regularly seen in these settings and act as a key source of support for families and for the children's workforce.

### **Engagement with partners and developing Multi-Agency input into the new model – North Yorkshire Police**

21. A shared vision with North Yorkshire Police around early help instigated the work to create Local Area Teams back in 2015. We are now at a stage where the multi-agency involvement of North Yorkshire Police comes into clearer focus.
22. At the time of writing an event to bring together staff from City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police has been planned. This will establish the operational detail of how a number of Police Community Support Officers will integrate into Local Area Teams. This integration is truly innovative and will allow staff to work together in a much more seamless way than before in response to the needs of local communities.

### **Engagement with partners and developing Multi-Agency input into the new model – Healthy Child Service**

23. The Healthy Child Service is currently in the process of being remodelled and will form a key element of Local Area Teams in the future. This presents a fantastic opportunity to engage with all families and develop routes for families to access more support when they need it. This additional support could come from Local Area Teams or brokered from which ever partner is most appropriate.

## **Engagement with partners and developing Multi-Agency input into the new model – Community and Voluntary Sector**

24. Key voluntary and community sector partners have been engaged either by LAT management or by LAT Community and Partnership Officers. This is in order to discuss the opportunities presented by the creation of Local Area Teams and to listen to the views of community and voluntary sectors partners working with families.
25. A revised set of governance arrangements for Local Area Teams has been introduced. These new arrangements have consolidated the Early Help Subgroup and Troubled Families Partnership Board which sat under the YorOK Board and City of York Safeguarding Children's Board. This reduces the number of meetings taking place and provides a clearer partnership based focus to our early help agenda. The first meeting of this new group, the Local Area Delivery Partnership, is scheduled to take place at the beginning of March.

### **Designing and piloting a new commissioning and grants programme**

26. On the 31<sup>st</sup> October nearly 100 partners from the voluntary and community sector attended an event hosted by the York Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). This event explored the new Local Area Team model with partners and launched a pilot round of funding to build capacity and readiness for the future.
27. Following this event over £56k of funding was awarded to 19 different organisations that work with children, young people and families. Examples of work funded include:
  - a. Supporting disadvantaged young people to access the Duke of Edinburgh scheme
  - b. A drop-in service and Take a Bow Drama club at the Old School in Wigginton for young people aged 13 - 15.
  - c. The Romance Academy is a nationwide sex and relationships initiative working to help young people make wise and informed decisions.
  - d. Detached outreach for young people through Lifezone – The Rock of York's existing project for 5-11 year olds in Clifton.
  - e. Supporting a new Baby & Toddler Group to become established at the Burton Stone Lane Centre. The new group will provide peer support for other parents.



- f. York Mind supported to deliver a weekly peer support group for 13-16 year olds experiencing difficulties with their mental health and emotional well-being.
- g. New Visuality delivering an arts based positive activity with targeted young people
- h. Targeted support for families to access breakfast clubs and holiday provision in the West of the city.
- i. Positive activity sports sessions targeting young carers across the city.
- j. A parenting course for parents of toddlers, which will run simultaneously in Turkish and Arabic and a pilot mentoring project for young refugees and asylum seekers aged 16-19.
- k. Supporting the development of a dads peer support group in York running cookery schools across the city.
- l. Delivery of Skate Park sessions at community venues across the city and work with a group of young leaders from Canon Lee school to take them through the Young Sports Leaders Award. This will mean the young people can support the delivery and engagement with young people at some of the targeted venues.
- m. A physical Literacy programme called Animalates as a way of encouraging interaction and physical activity between parents/ carers and their children at 4 venues across the city.
- n. Supporting a new positive activity group for boys aged 12-17 year olds in the North of the city.
- o. A year long project which targets and identifies girls from disadvantaged areas and poor socioeconomic backgrounds in York in need of support to raise self esteem
- p. Support for the York Parent Carer Forum to undertake a project from January to March 2017 for parents and carers of disabled young people and mental health.

28. In addition to providing funding to support the delivery of projects the more creative use of assets has been explored. For example the council owned a number of resources that the community and voluntary sector could use to support themselves and their work with children and young people. These resources included a mobile skate park, a mobile youth provision van (Urbie) and two people transporter vans.

29. Voluntary and community sector groups were able to see the resources and put in expressions of interest into taking on ownership of the assets. The conditions set for any asset transfer could be summarised as:
- a. remain a community resource which other community groups can access
  - b. affiliate and work to the Community Transport Association guidelines - in the case of the people transporters
  - c. Under go the necessary checks and to ensure their future use meets the necessary safety standards
30. All of these assets have now been successfully transfers to voluntary and community sector partners to ensure that the city can continue to benefit from them.
31. Learning from the experience of the work outlined above and previous commissioning and grants programmes will now go on to inform future work. It is anticipated that in 2017/18 city Local Area Teams will provide up to £300k of funding to the voluntary and community sector to improve support for children, young people and families.

**Designing and establishing key elements of the operating model and the consolidation of a significant number of business processes and systems**

32. It should be noted that this is and will continue to be a significant piece of work. The pre-existing service areas that have come together to form Local Area Teams had over a number of years established their own processes and ways of working. The creation of Local Area Teams drives an imperative to revisit a large amount of our operational practice and remodel it. This is in order to ensure our processes are as lean and efficient as possible but also that they are effective and fit for purpose. For example consolidating our processes around facilities management and rationalising our use of different database systems.

**Ensuring transitional arrangements for pre-existing services**

33. When undertaking a significant programme of change such as the introduction of Local Area Teams it is important to get the transition from existing provision right. This is both for those individual children, young people and families that are receiving support as well as for broader service delivery.
34. In late 2016 details of all children, young people and families either currently receiving support from services forming Local Area Teams, or on the waiting list to do so, were gathered together. As these are

individuals or individual families the transition for each case was necessarily unique. Local Area Teams reviewed a range of factors such work to date, ongoing need, the involvement of partner agencies and future options within the context of the new operating model. Each case was unique but transition could be summarised as:

- a. That individual(s) continued to receive support from the same practitioner.
- b. That individual(s) continued to receive support but from a different practitioner.
- c. That partner agencies leading work with families would be supported by the best placed practitioners within Local Area Teams to take work forward.
- d. That need identified through individual level work would go on to inform the grants and commissioning work of Local Area Teams and others.

35. For the transition of broader service provision arrangements these have been designed to phase in over the opening months of 2017. This is in order to land new arrangements safely and as smoothly as possible. For example an interim set of groups and activities have been arranged for the beginning of the year within children's centres. From April onwards these will begin to take the shape of the new offer provided by Local Area Teams.

36. The city centre offer currently delivered from Castlegate by Local Area Teams will relocate to Sycamore House later in 2017. Ahead of this move young people can continue to access an interim city-centre offer from Castlegate. The core elements of the interim offer from Castlegate are outlined below.

- a. **Universal Information and signposting drop in** - Information Officers are developing and delivering a information drop in for any young person. They will provide initial information and signposting to further support where required eg Housing and Benefits advice, making appointments etc.
- b. The Information Officers will be available face to face initially on set days to all young people wishing to make use of the centre.
- c. New developments include young people being able to text, email or ring an Information Officer to access information and support.
- d. **Specialist Information Advice and Guidance** - Trained Learning and Work Advisers from the Local Area Teams will

provide specialist information, advice and guidance to young people who are in the care of the LA, those in alternative education provision, those in the youth justice system, and those aged 16-18 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

- e. The Learning and Work Advisers will provide information, advice and guidance through appointments, group work and workshops at arranged times to suit the needs of the young people and they will also have available appointments at other locations across the city based upon identified need.
- f. **Counselling offer** - Work is progressing to develop a specification for an enhanced service that should be in place by June/July 2017 with an external provider. In the meantime young people can continue to access the counselling offer through Castlegate.

37. Plans have been drawn up for the redevelopment of Sycamore House to create a joint young people's and adults offer in the city. In late 2016 a group of young people drawn from users of Castlegate, the Show Me That I Matter Panel and the Youth Council took part in a consultation on plans for the building. The consultation has helpfully informed both the design of the building itself as well as the operational delivery of a joint offer.

### **Council Plan**

38. The development of Local Area Teams directly relates to the Council Plan 2015-19 priorities:

- a. 'A focus on frontline services' - to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged, can access reliable services and community facilities.

39. The introduction of this new operating model is a major part of delivering the shared, partnership vision and priorities of the new Children and Young People's Plan 2016-20:

- a. Vision: Children and Young People are at the heart of our City and of everything we do. Delivering 'Safe, resilient and Achieving' services with 4 fundamental priorities:
  - i. Early Help
  - ii. Emotional and Mental Health
  - iii. Narrowing Gaps in Outcomes

#### iv. Priority Groups of Children and Young People

### Risk Management

40. Throughout the development of Local Area Teams a risk register was in place to identify and mitigate any risks. This has now been revised to reflect risks associated with the roll out of Local Area Teams. Identified risks and the management of these are shared on a regular basis with the Directorate Management Team for Children, Education and Communities.

### Recommendations

41. Members of the Corporate Parenting Board are asked to note this report.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the implementation of Local Area Teams.

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**Report Approved**  Date 24/3/17

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** None

**Wards Affected:**

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices**

Annex A – Local Area Teams Summary

Abbreviations used in report

ATA	All Together Active
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service
LAT	Local Area Team
LASP	Local Area Support Practitioner
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training