

# **Bath and North East Somerset Children's Service**

## **Care Matters implementation plan year 3**

### **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This report sets out plans for the third year of implementation of Care Matters in Bath and North East Somerset.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The first Bath and North East Somerset Care Matters implementation plan in May 2008 set out the background to the Care Matters agenda. Most of this detail is not therefore repeated in this year's plan.
- 2.2 Since May 2008 the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 has received the royal assent. The Act gives legislative effect to key aspects of the Care Matters agenda. Detailed regulations and guidance under this Act were published in March 2010.
- 2.3 In Bath and North East Somerset there are currently 153 children in care (Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2010). This includes around 40 children who are on interim care orders, or are in care by agreement with parents for 4 months or less, who could therefore be seen as 'on the edge of care'. There are also around 50 young people aged 18-21 supported in moving on from care.
- 2.4 While most indicators used to measure the effectiveness of services for children in care are good or very good for children in our care locally, on the key outcome indicators of education achievement and participation in education, employment and training in particular there is still a significant gap between our children in care and their peers.

### **3 Bath and North East Somerset – current performance on the Care Matters agenda**

- 3.1 Care Matters brings both challenges and opportunities. For Bath and North East Somerset the key challenges and opportunities are often two sides of the same coin. For example, as a small authority we have the opportunity to see what is needed for each individual child and to work closely together across services, but the challenge of targeting our efforts wisely. As a high performing authority we are in an excellent position to take the opportunity presented by Care Matters, but face the challenge of how to improve further on some key measures.
- 3.2 The implementation plan sets out actions required to achieve the aims of Care Matters in Bath and North East Somerset. These actions are set in the context of the current strengths and areas for improvement in services for children in care locally and the resources available.

- 3.3 As stated above while we achieve good or very good results on most indicators for children in care, on the key indicators of education and participation in education, employment and training there is still a significant gap. While most children in Bath and North East Somerset do well on these measures, children in care generally do less well, although there is significant variation year to year due to small cohorts.
- 3.4 In respect of placement stability which is a key underpinning for improved outcomes we have set a (challenging) local target of 10% or less of children experiencing 3 or more placements in a year. Since 2008/9 we have achieved this target. We have also achieved a sustained improvement in long term placement stability since 2008/9. This should provide a good basis to achieve the improvements in long term outcomes we seek.
- 3.5 In 2009 16.7% of our children in care in year 11 achieved 5 grades A\*-C at GCSE. This is better than the national average for children in care (13% in 2007), but significantly worse than the level for children in the population both nationally and locally.
- 3.6 In the year to March 2010 93% of our care leavers were in suitable accommodation on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, an improvement on previous years' performance which has tended to be around 80%. Participation in education, employment and training on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday had improved from a low of 32% in 2008/9 to 60%. This is a significant improvement, but still below our local target of 75%.

## **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The implementation plan sets out actions to achieve the aims of Care Matters, building on our strengths and addressing obstacles which could otherwise prevent the step change required in outcomes.
- 4.2 This plan details steps to be taken now to continue implementing the Care Matters agenda in Bath and North East Somerset. These include actions that give impetus to this work and actions that will underpin its continuing and long term success.
- 4.3 Actions to give impetus to the work include the pledge to children and young people in care and establishment of a children in care council. The pledge was an early action from Care Matters, included in the Corporate Parenting Strategy adopted in 2007 and has been completed and published in April 2008. The plan also includes measures that we were required to implement immediately such as Personal Education Allowances and routine assessment of emotional well-being.
- 4.5 The plan includes planned expenditure of £186,000 per annum from April 2010. This is within the funding currently allocated by the Council for Care Matters. This expenditure is subject to review in the light of in-year changes in the Area Based Grant which contributes to the Care Matters budget.
- 4.6 This plan will be reviewed to ensure the actions within it are progressed, costs are monitored and outcomes achieved. The review

of year three will inform development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy from 2011.

**Care matters implementation plan year 3: 2010/11**

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Support for family and friends care</b>					
Provide more parenting support to prevent children coming into care and support children to return from care to their families	Increase parenting support capacity at 117 Project	£18,000 pa	From July 2008	Higher number of parents using parenting support Maintain low number of children in care or reduce further	Increased capacity in place. Higher no. of parents using service. No. of children coming into care under s.20 aged 10+ reduced following the development of parenting services at 117.
Improve framework to support family and friends to prevent care and to achieve permanence from care	Await government guidance on framework for support of family and friends. Review local framework when national guidance available.	Risk of increased costs depending on clarity and scope of expected national framework.	To be confirmed.	Increased numbers of children supported in family and friends care	2008 local review of adoption allowances addressed pressures in existing framework for permanence support.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Care planning and review</b>					
Assess emotional well-being of children & young people in care.	Use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) by main carer at annual health assessment. Establish system for collecting and using SDQ information to target CAMHS for children in care.	None.	Requirement from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2008 – scoring of questionnaires forms part of returns to central government since March 2009.	SDQ's completed for all children and young people in care annually. Improved emotional well-being.	Local protocol in place. SDQ's being completed and collated.
JAR action – reduce offending by children in care	Implement JAR action plan on offending of children in care	None.	Ongoing	Reduced offending by children in care.	Protocol between children's social care and YOT in place, lower levels of offending by children in care.
Improve assessment, care planning and review	Implement revised regulations and guidance on care planning, placement and review.	None.	Complete work by March 2011	Improved assessments, plans and reviews, contributing to improved outcomes for children.	Social care conferences planned for autumn 2010 to train staff on revised framework. Work underway to amend ICS forms. Work being planned to revise local procedures.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Placements</b>					
<p>Increase capacity of in-house fostering service to provide placements for adolescents and disabled children/children with complex needs.</p> <p>Strengthen management and coordination of local family placements for children with high level and/or complex needs.</p>	<p>Additional Assistant Team Manager post in Family Placement Team</p>	<p>£48,000 pa</p>	<p>July 2008</p>	<p>Target to increase from 80 children placed in-house at March 2010 to 88 by March 2011.</p>	<p>Assistant team manager in place and boost to recruitment budget for 2010/11 from another budget. Foster carer recruitment strategy already increasing capacity – number of children placed in-house up to around 80 by March 2010.</p>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Placement needs analysis.	Undertake placement needs analysis. This will update and improve the analysis set out in our Placement Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care and Children with Complex Needs.	None	April-June 2010	Improved understanding of our placement needs.	Placement commissioning strategy being updated in line with new placement sufficiency regulations and guidance.
Reduce use of out of area placements, reduce changes of placement.	Continue to implement Placement Commissioning Strategy.	Within placement budgets.	Ongoing	Improved placement stability. Increased number of local foster placements.	Placement commissioning strategy in place and on track. Placement stability now within target of 10% or less of children with 3 or more placements in a year, down from 12.5% in year to March 08.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Education</b>					
<p><b>JAR action</b> - robust analysis of the progress made by children in care in relation to their potential or predicted grades, or the progress made by all looked after children in local schools. Systematically and regularly monitor and review attainment and other relevant measures for all individual children in care as a basis for targeted action to maximise achievements.</p>	<p>Establish system for a group of key social care and education managers to review all measures for all children 3 times a year including attainment, progress and other education measures. Establish 'virtual school head'. Complete agreed JAR action plan.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Significant cost implications.</p>	<p>From July 2008</p>	<p>Improved education achievements for all children and young people in care.</p>	<p>Virtual school headteacher established 2009 with additional funding from Schools Forum. Virtual School Development Plan in place. Robust analysis of data established and forms basis of Virtual School support for educational achievements. Virtual School progress reports quarterly to Corporate Parenting Members Group.</p>



<b>Objective</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Implement Personal Education Allowances (PEA) for all children in care at risk of not achieving required standards.	Establish systems for identifying eligible children through Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and managing expenditure of allowances on catch-up tuition, PC's and other extra support to improve children's achievements.	£18,500 (reduced from £30,000 due to in-year change to Area Based Grant)	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2008	Improved education attainment and achievements.	PEA system in place and managed by Virtual School. Increasing number of children in care benefiting.  The PEA budget forms part of the whole Virtual School budget. The budget has not been fully spent as many children who are eligible for PEA are so well supported by schools and carers it has not been possible to identify permissible expenditure under PEA. The policy and guidance will be reviewed to ensure manageability of the reduction.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Transport to school to prevent moves in key stage 4 and minimise moves during school year for all children	Review current arrangements for school transport for children in care.	£30,000 to create sustainable budget for transport to school of children in care.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2009	Minimise changes of school placement for children in care.	Review completed. Stability of school placement being achieved, and evidence shows positive impact on attainment. Results in budget pressures of £30,000 pa. School travel protocol established for children in care. Pooled budget created with Schools Admissions and Transport Service and fully committed at present to support school travel for children placed with in-house foster carers.
Promote school action on attainment of children in care	Prepare training on the role of designated teacher for children in care when, as expected, this is made statutory.	None	2010	Improved education outcomes.	Virtual school has delivered training to designated teachers and established revised school led system for Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for children in care.

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Deliver 25 hours per week education to all children in care	Schools to deliver 25 hours per week. Education support services to assist when children are excluded.	Schools are funded to deliver full time education.	Requires schools to take responsibility for 25 hours when children on roll, additional central support may be needed for a few children when excluded or otherwise at risk	25 hours education pw delivered to all children in care Improved placement stability	Virtual School monitoring education provision received by children in care.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Social work</b>					
<p>Improve capacity in Children in Care Team to manage information and ensure social work time for direct work with children.</p>	<p>Increase admin capacity in Looked After Children Team by 1 post – fixed term pending wider review of admin across social care teams.</p> <p>Workforce review as part of the Integrated Solution project supported by the Children’s Workforce Development Council</p>	<p>£20,000 pa</p>	<p>July 2008</p>	<p>Improved booking and recording arrangements for health assessments and SDQ’s.</p> <p>Improved recording arrangements for assessment and planning freeing social work time for direct contact with children.</p> <p>Admin system established to support the Virtual School with PEPs and Personal Education Allowances (see above).</p>	<p>Increased admin capacity in place.</p> <p>Admin system in place for PEA and PEP monitoring.</p> <p>Admin systems in development for SDQ.</p>
<b>Moving on from care</b>					
<p>JAR action - ensure that no care leaver or vulnerable teenage</p>	<p>Complete JAR action plan.</p>	<p>£18,500 to support promotion of</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> April 2009</p>	<p>Eliminate use of B&amp;B for vulnerable</p>	<p>Young People’s Housing Group established to take forward</p>

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<p>parent is in unsuitable accommodation. Continuity of care placements to 18. Extension of foster placements beyond 18.</p>	<p>Provide continuity of foster placement to 18 and sometimes to 19 for those young people who want it. This can be achieved within existing local frameworks. Most young people locally already stay until 18 and some beyond. Audit likely numbers and project costs if these increase.</p>	<p>young people staying put with foster carers to 19 (reduced from £30,000 following in-year reduction in Area Based Grant)</p>		<p>young people. Maximise number of young people staying in same family placement to 18 or 19. Increase participation in EET at 19. Increase numbers in suitable accommodation at 19.</p>	<p>JAR action plan. Audit shows significant and growing number of care leavers in supported lodgings or board and lodgings at 18, many with former carers. Arrangements have been piloted and formal guidance now being established. Number in suitable accommodation at 19 improved to 93% in year 2009/10. The Care Matters funding has been added into the whole leaving care budget, so the reduction in ABG is a smaller % of the overall budget. Leaving Care Finance Scheme to be reviewed and tightened. Staying Put policy to be confirmed as this is good practice at 18 and improves outcome measures. Lower numbers of care leavers in the last 2 years have reduced pressure on this budget however increasing numbers</p>

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					this year due to the Southwark judgement on young homeless people and anticipated increased numbers in the next 2 years will place this budget under significant pressure.
Improve participation in Education, Employment and Training	Establish protocol between leaving care service, Connexions and colleges Care to work initiative bringing together new partnership to focus on employability of care leavers.	None	By March 2010	Improved participation in EET by care leavers	Protocol established. Care to work partnership established. Prior consideration for care leavers to Council apprenticeships. EET rate for care leavers at 19 <sup>th</sup> birthday improved for year 2009/10 to 60%.
£2000 bursary for HE	Current support for HE audited - levels of support for young people in HE from B&NES already higher than new bursary.	None – existing support was greater than bursary level in practice	2009/10	Increase in EET rate for 19 year old care leavers. Increase participation in HE.	Audit shows all our care leavers in HE already supported at higher than bursary levels.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<b>Management and participation</b>					
Publish pledge to children and young people in care	A pledge has been drawn up with input from elected Members and Shout Out the advocacy service.	None.	April 2008	Pledge in place. Standards of service to children in care improve.	Pledge in place.
Establish and support children in care council	Contribute to establishment of participation officer post – 1 day a week, plus operating costs for children in care council. Children in care council will be key to holding us to account on the pledge to children and young people in care.	£10,000 pa	July 2008	Children in care council established and functioning by summer 2009.	Strategic Planning Officer (participation) in place. In Care Council in place and has organised celebration events for children in care. In Care Council establishing links with Corporate Parenting Members Group.

Objective	How	Cost	When	Outcomes	Progress
<p>Manage implementation, rewrite procedures &amp; guidance, report progress to elected Members as Corporate Parents.</p>	<p>Implementation led by Care and Young People Service Manager together with the Children in Care Quality Assurance and Strategy Group as the lead group at officer level for corporate parenting. Regular updates to Corporate Parenting Members Group.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Procedures require complete revision now revised regulations and guidance have been issued by government.</p>	<p>Procedures and guidance for children in care updated Care Matters programme delivered Corporate Parenting Strategy to be put in place from April 2011.</p>	<p>Work underway to deliver Care Matters and revise procedures. Progress and performance report to Corporate Parenting Members Group and Overview and Scrutiny Panel in autumn 2010 to inform development of Corporate Parenting Strategy.</p>