

**Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10.00 am**

**Lead Member PDS Report**

**Independent Care Review**

The findings for the Independent Care Review have been collated and will be published at the end of May. B&NES has played an integral part in this review and the B&NES case study that will be nationally publicised was in relation to some of the excellent work taking place in our Family Placement Team.

**Ofsted**

The Ofsted report was published on 19th April which found that Children in Bath and North East Somerset receive a good service. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and increasing demand, senior leaders have been effective in strengthening services since Ofsted's last inspection in 2017. Substantial investment by political and senior leaders and an effective model of social work practice have played a key part in this. The report reflects the dedication and commitment of the workforce and the excellent service that we provide to our local community.

Community Care have featured an article on B&NES inspection report, please see link.

<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/04/22/councils-pre-proceedings-prevent-children-enter-care-ofsted-good-grading/>

**Civic Centre**

The Keynsham Civic Centre refurbishment is scheduled to be completed on 16th June and Children's Services are looking forward to returning to the office space while also continuing with the hybrid ways of working.

**Children Missing Education Service**

The Service is responsible for:

- supporting B&NES schools with attendance, which can lead to issuing Penalty Notices and court action
- issuing chaperone licenced for performances
- issuing work permits for young people
- Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) in relation to performances
- Performance Licences for school age children and young people
- Fair Access requests – under the new attendance guidance there is a requirement that the LA considers the fair access requests to ensure that they meet the prescribed criteria.

In an average year, the team receive approximately 1300 referrals related to poor school attendance and around 1000 tasks associated with Performance Licences, Chaperone Approvals, Employment Permits and Penalty notices.

In addition, the CMES Manager has allocated one part-time Officer to support the asylum seeker families with school applications. This has involved coordinating with the translation service, completing forms, liaising with schools, establishing funding routes, and liaising with other professionals, e.g. around transport, free school meals.

The Service will also support the Ukraine host families who have offered accommodation to those families seeking shelter from the conflict in their home country. To date, we are aware that 73 children will arrive in B&NES. 27 have arrived in date. The council is not the in-year admissions authority for the vast majority of schools in B&NES. However, we are working with Multi-Academy Trusts and Academies to support them in their role of offering school places. The DFE will provide funding to help these children in their school placements. We are awaiting the final guidance from the DFE on how this can be utilised.

### **Attendance in B&NES Schools**

Overall, school attendance in B&NES is currently 92.48%. This is slightly down on where we would expect the regional average to be; however, the attendance for the whole year has been affected by Covid absence which was much higher in terms 1, 2 & 3. However, we are seeing rates in primary and secondary schools return to normal.

More families have elected to home educate since the pandemic, and there are currently just under 200 children electively home educated in B&NES. This is up from 128 in January 2020.

The LA's Alternative Learning team continues to provide a range of services to support these families appropriately and where necessary, we liaise closely with our colleagues in social care.

### **School Admissions**

Applicants applying for a secondary school place in B&NES are able to select 5 preferences. For 2022/23 school admissions, 97.9% of B&NES residents received one of their overall secondary school preferences.

Primary school place applicants can select 3 preferences. For 2022/23 school admissions, 99% of B&NES applicants received one of their overall primary school preferences.

All families are provided with information on how they can formally appeal for a school place.

## **Education Reform**

Since my last report, an education white paper and a SEND green paper have been released. These two papers are potentially significant pieces of education reform. Both papers' details are found in the links below:

### **Education White Paper**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>

A helpful summary produced by the NGA is located in the link below.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/1c2159b5-a2ff-4a33-a74d-2b639fa3a328/nga-white-paper-summary-20220401.pdf>

The final details of how this reform will be delivered are not known. However, additional responsibilities around school admissions and clarity over the future of the Local Authority's role in education are two areas that we will consider closely.

### **SEND Green Paper**

This is an overdue and much needed green paper expected to address significant difficulties in the support provided for our Children with SEND. The link below takes you to the paper, a summary and a formal consultation on the proposals.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation>

This paper does not relate to education alone and covers health and social care; it also indicates significant reform to the delivery of Alternative Education Provision.

Our SEND Strategy Group is working through the paper and will submit a formal response in time for the July consultation deadline. Some of the proposals are very welcome but require significant legislation to be implemented. However, on the face of it, we are welcoming a lot of the proposals to standardised some parts of the system and the drive to seek more accountability and clarify for families, children, and young people.

### **Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG)**

B&NES is in phase 3 of the national rollout of the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG). The funding is managed and coordinated nationally by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) within DHSC. The purpose of the grant is to improve drug and alcohol treatment support and outcomes for people experiencing, or at risk of, rough sleeping who have drug and alcohol dependence needs. The funding will be for 2022-25, with bids asked for to cover 2022-24 in the first instance.

A working group that included LA commissioners for housing and drug and alcohol services, HCRG care group commissioners, DHI directors, Julian House, Reach (housing support

service), Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, and DHSC/OHID was created to identify need, consult with the target population and workers, and design a model to meet gaps identified. As a result of this work, a funding bid has been submitted that focuses on improvements in the following areas:

- Access and engagement in drug and alcohol treatment
- Continuity of care – engagement is maintained as clients move into longer term accommodation
- Resilient and sustainable models of care – build resilience based on the needs of B&NES population

The application was for approx. £2.1m for 2022-24. We hope to hear in the next few weeks how much of the funding applied for we will actually receive, and the DHSC want to see progress in implementation from July. This funding will be of great benefit to our drug and alcohol services and their clients who are, or are at risk of, rough sleeping.

### **Social prescribing in B&NES**

Our community provider (HCRG Care Group) works collaboratively with local Primary Care Networks to provide an integrated social prescribing service through DHI using NHS and council funding.

The offer from DHI follows the national specification for social prescribing, and is primarily advertised through B&NES GP surgeries and the Community Wellbeing Hub. Patients and social prescribers work together to identify services and activities that best match the patients' needs, and through conversations and information build patients' confidence to access community groups and support. There is one PCN, Three Valleys, that is in the process of employing their own social prescribing link workers, and a focus for the PCN in 2022 is social prescribing.

In B&NES, social prescribers work closely with the Community Wellbeing Hub, for example by supporting the transition of complex patients to Wellbeing Coaches in the Community Wellbeing Hub, who in turn spend more time working through their needs and coordinating the right package of community support.

As well as information about socially prescribed activities being available via health professionals, information about all activities are available on the B&NES [Wellbeing College](#) website, and includes activities such as arts activities, creative writing, gardening/allotment growing, mindfulness, cookery, healthy eating advice, and a range of physical activity options.

### **Active travel and social prescribing feasibility study - bid for Department for Transport (DfT) funding**

B&NES Council was successful in being awarded £100k from DfT to carry out a feasibility study to develop plans for a three-year Social Prescribing and Active Travel programme in the Somer Valley area as part of a national pilot. The feasibility study was submitted to DfT at the end of April by the public health and sustainable communities directorates in collaboration with many partners, and we will hear whether we have been successful in being awarded funding in June.

The feasibility study needed to demonstrate how an active travel and social prescribing offer can meet the needs of underrepresented groups and reduce health inequalities, actively promote increased levels of physical activity through cycling and walking, support a shift in peoples travel choices to active travel, and demonstrate clear links between infrastructure development and the proposed social prescribing schemes.

The funding bid is for £1.6m over three years (2022/23 – 2024/25). If successful, the project will initially focus on an offer in Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield, Paulton, though with the option of expanding the offer across the Three Valleys PCN area.

The proposal is to set up and operate a 'Walking and Cycling Hub' in the Healthy Living Centre in Radstock. It will be a 'one stop shop' for walking and cycling support, activities, cycle hire, cycle repair, and information on active travel routes. As well as the main hub in Radstock there will be regular 'pop-up' hubs in high-street locations in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Paulton offering the same interventions. The pilot will take referrals from community services, health professionals, self-referral, and a range of other routes.