

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE FOR: Dynamic Support Approach for children with complex needs

WHAT ARE WE MAKING BETTER?

Children and young people with complex needs often have multiple services and agencies involved from education, health and social care. These services and processes don't always work together, which reduces the effectiveness of the care that the child or young person is able to access.

Everyone working in isolation can lead to duplication that means children, young people and families having to retell their story again and again. It can also mean that key areas of a support are missed and the child or young person's needs are not met.

We want to make sure that all children and young people with complex needs are able to receive a holistic multi-agency review of their care and support that encompasses all their education, health and social care needs, making sure they are receiving the right type, level and quality of support to meet their needs when they need it.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We are introducing a dynamic support approach that can be used to support children and young people for whom there are concerns that their (health, education or social care) needs could escalate to the point of being admitted to a learning disability/mental health hospital setting or a therapeutic/secure residential setting. In addition it may be used for children and young people that are already within these settings that require a change in placement either due to placement breakdown or change in needs.

Where a child is identified as having complex needs services, including the local authority and CCG, in partnership with the child and family will work together to review a child's needs and think about what needs to be put in place to support the child and/or their family. We are currently developing processes to formalise this offer of support, but in the meantime we are incorporating the principles into our existing multi-agency meetings with children, young people and families.

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?

This approach has already helped a number of children and families to access the right support at the right time already in Swindon and has made sure that all a child's needs are met for those that have been part of the holistic multi-agency meeting (regardless of whether they are education, health or social care needs). Sophie is one of these examples.

Sophie*

Sophie is a child looked after in an out of area therapeutic residential school entering year 6 with an Education and Health Care Plan for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. A holistic multi-agency review of Sophie's needs has led to her being placed in a day school closer to home that specialise in social, emotional and mental health needs and is able to provide additional psychotherapeutic support for her as needed.

The school will be able to support her through to 16 so that an additional transition that could be difficult for her to manage doesn't need to happen in a years time. She will be placed permanently in a family home with the foster carers that were already doing a good job of supporting her during the holidays and weekends. Once she has started at school continued multi-agency reviews will allow additional wrap around support to be in place to support her with any education, health or social care needs that she may have.

Sophie's foster carers, social workers, health workers and education workers are all in agreement that a less intensive therapeutic provision and permanent foster placement are the right options to meet her needs at this time and to help to develop and increase her independence. Everyone is hopeful that she will excel in this placement and in agreement that this holistic multi-agency approach has been beneficial in bringing this package together.

*Name has been changed

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Plans are in progress to finalise the dynamic support approach process and terms of reference across the local authority and CCG to ensure that going forward all child and young people with complex needs can benefit from the best service and provision to meet their needs resulting in better quality care and improved outcomes. Once this is finalised it will support the joint funding process that is already in place providing robust and collaborative multi-agency joint funding approaches for children and young people in Swindon.

We will continue to review the outcomes for children and young people with complex needs to ensure that the dynamic support approach and joint funding continues to deliver high quality care and outcomes for children and young people.