

'Designing the Future'

**BRIDGEND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SUPPORT SERVICE**

**THE NEED FOR A MULTI DISCIPLINARY SERVICE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 - 21 WITHIN
BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH**

**Children's Directorate
Service Proposal**

March 2011

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Introduction

Within Bridgend County there is a clear and agreed view that all services which work with and for children and young people do so to ensure that they will:

- *thrive and make the best of their talents;*
- *live healthy and safe lives;*
- *become confident and caring individuals throughout their lives;*
- *know and receive their rights*

This proposal is targeted primarily at those who have responsibility for the commissioning and delivery of services for young people aged 16-21 throughout Bridgend County Borough.

A clear message from developing policies of the Welsh Assembly Government is that the future of effective public services in Wales must be built around integrated services to children and families to provide holistic support at every level of need.

This proposal builds upon the momentum of changes that are developing within the Children's Services Directorate and the wider authority, and seeks to make links with other important corporate themes and initiatives focussing on improved integrated working between teams, departments and agencies. Further reference to such links is made later on in this document.

The proposal also aims to incorporate and take on board the messages and recommendations from the recently published report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, '***From Vision to Action***' (Nov 2010), which makes specific references to children in need, looked after children, care leavers, children and young people with learning and physical disabilities, and young people who experience mental health and substance misuse problems.

In addition, reference will also be made to other key issues faced by the authority within the context of this service proposal, including the impact of the Southwark Judgement and the need for both social services and housing to work closely together in tackling and preventing youth homelessness; the need to consider how best to meet the needs of young people with emotional well-being and mental health issues and/or substance misuse issues.

Bridgend has some excellent service provision in both the statutory and voluntary sectors for adolescents and young adults, delivering a range of innovative, creative and challenging youth provision that enables and empowers this group to achieve their potential. It should be stressed at the

outset that this proposal aims to build upon and compliment such services - not to replicate, replace or undermine areas of existing good practice.

However, faced with the challenges of the current economic climate and the reality of shrinking budgets, coupled with the recent unprecedented tragic events of the cluster of suicides, it is imperative to ensure that services are fit for purpose in meeting the diverse needs of this age group and that they remain best placed to continue to deliver improved outcomes. There is, therefore, an emphasis on the need for improved collaborative working across the authority and a specific recommendation on the joint commissioning of services – particularly between children and young people’s services, supporting people and housing.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on local agencies to safeguard children and young people and to promote their welfare in all they do and to strengthen local partnerships that contribute to fulfilling this duty. It also places them under a duty to co-operate with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people.

This proposal is therefore ambitious in its intent, in the hope that it creates a meeting of minds across teams, departments and organisations within the authority to come together for the collective good of this age group and to radically reshape the way services are commissioned and delivered to meet their diverse and sometimes complex needs. To that end it is essential that young people themselves are involved in the evolution of services – not just in a tokenistic way, but fully involved throughout the commissioning process. Indeed, one consultation event has already been held to seek the views of young people on this proposal, facilitated by colleagues in the Youth Service. Feedback from the Young People can be found at Annex 1.

The proposal is underpinned by the firm belief that young people, if given the right support, encouragement and opportunities, can and will develop the necessary skills and qualities to play an active and leading role within our communities.

Background

As already stated there are some excellent pockets of service being provided across the Borough for this group of young people both in the statutory and voluntary sector. Whilst the Children and Young People’s Partnership Plan provides a very useful framework for the delivery of services to children and young people in the Borough, there appears to be no over-arching strategy across the Authority to align service provision to meet the multiple needs of vulnerable young people in Bridgend e.g. NEETS, LAC / Care-leavers, Homeless Young People. It is hoped that this paper can help address this problem and that formulation of a specialist integrated team for young people

aged 16 - 21, can more effectively and efficiently meet their needs at point of contact.

There is strong anecdotal evidence that there is a lack of co-ordination of front line services for this group of young people which can result in fragmented working. This means that young people are often asked for the same information by different agencies in different settings. This can lead to unnecessary duplication of work, or worse still, more significant issues not being picked up at all and the diverse support needs of some of our most vulnerable young people remaining unmet.

'From what we heard it is clear that service users and carers want to see a fairer system in Wales with common eligibility criteria. They want to see openness and transparency in decision making. They also want joined up services, avoiding the need to repeat their story for assessment purposes'

(3.9 'From Vision to Action')

The Southwark judgement has fundamentally realigned the housing responsibilities for homeless 16 and 17 years olds and has significant and unprecedented implications for all children's services authorities. Prior to this judgement being made, the vast majority of homeless 16 and 17 year olds that presented as homeless and in need of accommodation were assessed and supported under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act.

In the judgement, the House of Lords made it very clear that the 1989 Children Act has primacy over the Housing Act in providing for children in need, and that the duties of children's services authorities to accommodate children in need cannot be circumvented by referring to the housing authority. Furthermore and critically to children's services authorities, where a 16 or 17 year old presents as homeless to a local authority and is assessed as requiring accommodation, in all but a few exceptional cases, these young people will meet the criteria for accommodation under section 20 of the 1989 Children Act, and therefore become looked after children with all that entails.

Bridgend has received one off funding from WAG as a pilot authority and will have access to project consultants to assist the authority in formulating our response to the challenges faced by both housing and children's social services in light of the Southwark Judgment. A two day workshop aimed at senior and middle managers took place January 11th/12th. A 'SMART' action plan was developed as an output from these two days which will feed into the development proposals.

Services across agencies are being increasingly challenged by 'high risk'/'high harm' numbers of young people within Bridgend (Young People with Multiple Complex Needs) This group is likely to be affected by a number of the following problems:

- Substance and alcohol misuse and the impact on a young persons mental health
- Physical and mental health problems
- Homelessness or accommodation difficulties
- Problems with debt, financial exclusion, poverty
- Lack of basic skills, low educational attainment, unemployment
- Relationship difficulties, life and social skills deficits

It will be particularly important to give close consideration as to how the housing and support needs of this specific group of young people can best be met.

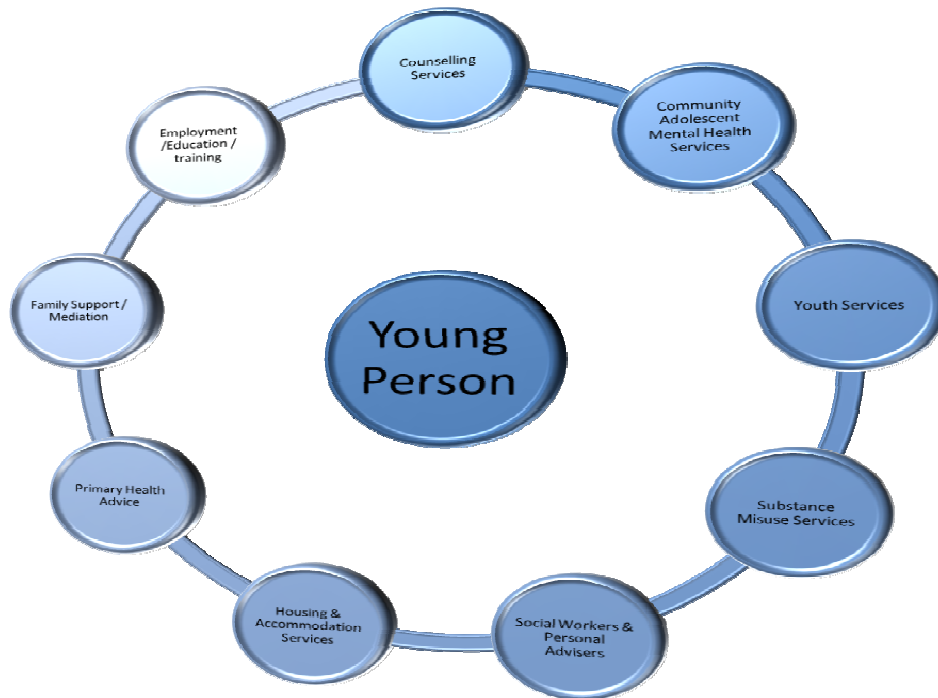
Proposal to Reshape Services

It is against this backdrop that the following proposal is made:

To amalgamate the Social Services Aftercare Team with the Youth Service 'Just Ask' Project.

The combined services of both teams would more effectively address the needs of those who are vulnerable or in need, i.e. Looked After 16+, care leavers, NEET or who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The service will offer holistic, but individually tailored packages of support and advice, working in partnership with young people to promote positive outcomes in relation to their health and wellbeing, housing provision, educational achievements and employment prospects. The service will be managed by the Children's Services Directorate but would hope to negotiate resource input from partners in Health and the Communities Directorate.

BRIDGEND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUPPORT SERVICE MODEL



The majority of young people that will be supported will be from one or more of the following groups:

- Looked After Children 16+
- Care leavers aged 16 to 21 (higher if in education)
- Young persons not in education employment or training
- 16/17 year old homeless
- Young people experiencing mental health or substance misuse problems
- Disabled young people who **do not** have complex needs
- All other young people who need advice and support.

Proposed Services

It is envisaged that services would include:

- Family Support and Mediation
- Welfare Rights and support to make a range of applications
- Primary healthcare advice and services
- Advice for young asylum seekers and refugees
- Education, Training and Employment advice and support
- Substance Misuse Services
- Counselling
- Social Work and Personal Adviser Services
- Housing and Homelessness Services
- Supported Lodgings
- Access to Sport and Leisure opportunities
- **Aftercare Support / LAC 16+**

The Aftercare team will continue with their existing responsibilities to young people leaving care under the Children Act 1989 and the Children Leaving Care Act 2000, but in addition take responsibility for all looked after young people 16+. This would necessitate a slight change of role for the qualified Social Work staff within the team, namely becoming responsible for LAC arrangements and completing Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans and supporting young people in need under S17. However, in order to ensure that we are Munby compliant with Leaving Care Regulations, additional staff will be needed in the role of Personal Adviser to work alongside the allocated Social Worker. (This may present opportunities for staff with relevant experience in other services such as from our residential services, youth service or within the voluntary sector.)

- **Section 17 Assessments**

The Social Work Team will take on responsibility for S17 assessments for 16 and 17 year olds presenting as in need, with the benefit of relieving pressure on the Intake and Assessment Team, and providing a more comprehensive package of support to those young people deemed 'vulnerable and in need'.

- **Housing and Accommodation Services**

There may be scope to second a housing officer from housing services to sit with this newly configured team. This officer will have responsibility for providing advice and support to young people experiencing homelessness or accommodation difficulties and work closely with social services in assessing the needs of 16/17 year old homeless young people. The housing officer will also act as liaison officer with, Registered Social Landlord's and supported housing providers e.g. Llamau, Wallich Clifford. There will be close collaboration with the housing department and the supporting people team and the Accommodation Officer will help in the commissioning of housing related services.

- **Employment Co-ordinator**

Bridgend has been working hard to improve the education and employment opportunities for Looked-After Children and Care Leavers via development of a number of schemes. These include a pilot traineeship programme, work experience placements and apprenticeship opportunities. The Employment Co-ordinator will have responsibility for further developing and managing the above programmes and for developing closer links with Careers Wales, 14-19 Network, Youth Gateway and suitable training providers to improve outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training. There may be opportunities to offer this post as a secondment or to find external funding for this important post.

- **Life Skills**

Life Skills support is already currently provided by the Just Ask service and it is envisaged within this model that Youth Services continue to deliver this important work within the new service model. The aim would be to deliver a rolling programme of group work events aimed at equipping young people with vital life skills – e.g. healthy eating, parenting support, sexual health, budgeting, sustaining a tenancy, developing a positive self image, and forming healthy relationships. This programme will be instrumental in helping young people to raise their self esteem and have a positive self image, but will also assist with practical support and advice on a one to one basis. Specific links could also be made with the 14-19 Pre-Vent initiative which is working to reduce the numbers of young people not involved in education, employment or training (NEETS).

- **Access to Mainstream Youth Services**

The Just Ask element of the new model would again provide opportunities for young people to make links with wider youth service activity and provision across the Borough. They will provide

opportunities for young people to experience residential events, access to external programmes such as the Prince's Trust development programme and Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and feed into the Youth Council to ensure that this group of young people have their views represented and heard. They will encourage young people to access local youth service provision and to participate in specialist projects involving young people. Just Ask currently assist in managing a volunteer scheme and it is envisaged this would continue.

- **Mental Health Services – CPN**

Access to direct Mental Health Services is a critical component to the proposed make up of this new service. It is hoped that negotiation could be given to seconding a CPN with a background in child and adolescent mental health. They will provide clinical advice and support to young people and professionals on mental health needs. They will work directly with young people and young adults who have mental health issues. This can range from feeling low in mood, anxiety attacks, self harming, emotional issues such as anger and aggression, personal problems with relationships or families, bereavement issues, suicidal thoughts or any other difficulties young people may have. They will work closely with other professionals including the Looked After Children's Health Visitor. In terms of management arrangements, clinical supervision of this team member would continue to be provided via the Local Health Board.

- **Access to Counselling Services**

Bridgend Youth Service already has a very well established Youth Counselling provision located at Just Ask. This service would compliment other aspects of services listed above and add significant value to the work of an integrated service.

- **Effective working relationships**

It is critical in partnership working that staff maintain their professional links with the Department or agency which employs them. This ensures they keep up to date with local and national policy and practice and that they inform their Department or agency about the issues and trends they are finding in their work. The two-way flow of information that Partners will achieve will also ensure that working relationships remain dynamic and supportive. Working together is surprisingly easy, because with shared values and purpose and regular contact, all partners benefit from the inter-agency model of working.

The Benefits / Intended Outcomes for Young People

There is a growing body of research supported by local anecdotal evidence that shows this group of young people often have multiple needs that are inter-related and that require the input and support of more than one professional or agency at a time. For example young people who experience mental health problems or those who have drug and alcohol problems, are less likely to sustain permanent tenancy's and are at greater risk of becoming homeless or holding down steady employment. This model would bring key services together in one place to more effectively meet this broad range of needs.

'Our vision is for a system where service users move seamlessly between services, or access a number of mutually supportive services without necessarily being aware that they are being provided by different service providers or service sectors. We should aim to remove the need for multiple assessments and reduce the risk of drop out from service, particularly when users are waiting to move from one service to another'

(Wales Substance Misuse Strategy Vision Statement – 2008)

This closer collaborative working will assist in plugging current gaps that exist in services, addressing areas where people are in danger of falling between services, or worse still receiving no service at all.

There is a considerable wealth of knowledge, skill and experience across a range of agency's that if brought together would benefit young people immensely.

Further Benefits and Intended Outcomes Include:

- Improved Collaborative Working – adopt a joint commissioning approach of housing and young people's support services to meet identified needs
- Streamlined Assessment for young people
- Universal Service but with tiered levels of intervention – incorporate use of 456 model
- Better targeted Outcomes for Young People – Health and Wellbeing, Education, Training, Employment, Housing
- Located in suitable town centre premises from which to deliver services, but with flexibility to operate from community hubs
- Better joined up work between teams and departments leading to improved services and cost efficiency's
- In addition to being consistent with the needs that young people are identifying, this model also reflects the Welsh Assembly Governments priority to provide multi-agency service provision based upon the 'team

around the child model' as adopted by Families First. It is also consistent with recommendations made in the Independent Commission on Social Services report 'From Vision to Action'.

- For Young People in Bridgend to Receive the best Local Services in the UK

Outcomes

An outcome is the end result of a process and, in the context of children and young people, an outcome should always be expressed in terms of change for the better in the life of the child or young person. The six outcomes within the 456 Model for children and young people are that all children and young people will:

1. learn and achieve
2. participate and enjoy
3. give and receive respect
4. be healthy
5. be safe
6. be confident and self-reliant

Defining the outcomes in this way is particularly helpful when identifying needs and commissioning services to meet those needs. While the 6 outcomes are broad and high level, it is possible to attach measures to them which will indicate how far the outcomes are being achieved for any child or group of children and young people.

Risks / Unintended Consequences

- Strategic Drift – Lots of meetings, but no action or change
- Teams or Services being resistant to change – protecting resources/ budgets that might be considered to be at risk under new model
- Unnecessary duplication of existing services
- Create significant increase in Aftercare Team workload and Just Ask Services, but without increased staff or resources to effectively deliver improvements in services to young people as intended

Links to Other Key Strategic BCBC Initiatives and Programmes

- **Children and Young People's Plan** - CYPP
- **NEETS Strategy** – Louise Simpson (Pre-Vent)
- **Implications and responses to impact for Bridgend of the Southwark ruling**, and Housing and Homelessness Issues in general – Rob Owen / Angie Bowen / Jane Cullen
- **Supporting People Inspection** – Ian Hibble
- **Substance Misuse Strategy** – Clare Fauvel
- **Children's Services Residential Re-design** – Nicola Echanis

- **Youth Service / 14-19 Network developments**
- **4,5,6 Model**
- **Connecting Families** – Mark Lewis/Nicola Echanis

Key Stakeholders

- Young people and their families
- Youth Service
- Voluntary/Third Sector
- Social Services Safeguarding and Family Support Services
- Adult Social Services
- Children and Young People’s Partnership
- LSB
- 14 – 19 Network
- Housing and Homelessness Department
- Supporting People Team
- Substance Misuse Services
- Health
- Senior Officers and Commissioning Officers
- Elected Members

Financial / Resource Implications

This proposal is not seeking new funding to deliver this model, rather to explore how existing services can more effectively adopt a joined up approach to service delivery, whilst at the same time improving the quality of services on offer. There is scope within this model for financial savings to be made, with the possibility to share accommodation, resources and time saved in unnecessary duplication of tasks and via realigning of existing budgets across teams and services. It will, however, be necessary to undertake further work to more clearly identify the anticipated demands on the service to ensure that appropriate staffing and resources are available to deliver the services highlighted within the proposal. This should be undertaken in conjunction between the Children’s and Communities Directorate’s and involve Health as a key partner agency.

Next Steps

- Learn from other Authorities how they went about implementing similar change – Torfaen, Plymouth, Oxfordshire. – invite to give presentations to Senior Officers, Elected Members (representatives

from both Plymouth and Oxfordshire have kindly agreed to give presentations if invited).

- Consult with Young People on their views about the idea to develop a multi disciplinary service – will it be of benefit to them?
- Develop a Project Implementation Group involving partner agencies and young people with clear terms of reference, and adopt a joint commissioning process to housing and support services.
- Develop an Action Plan with identified time frames for delivery of new service model
- Consult along the way
- Gain Cabinet and Senior Management approval for new service model
- Consult again
- Launch

Conclusion

The development of such a service will provide a more robust and comprehensive support network to some of our most vulnerable young people within our communities.

The vision is that this team will minimise and reduce the risks to those most vulnerable within in Bridgend, whilst actively promoting positive opportunities for young people to thrive and succeed. Our aim will be to help young people realise their aspirations and dreams and reach their full potential.

**Finally, 'Bridgend Young People Deserve the Best'.
Our challenge is to ensure that we deliver on this
commitment!**

Annex 1

Young People's Consultation Event on Proposal for Development of an Integrated Service for Young People aged 16 -21 – December 5th 2010

Consultation event (After Care Team): -

On behalf of the After Care Team in Bridgend, a consultation event day was held in the Just Ask information Centre on Sunday December 5th 2010. The aim of the event was to work with young people in order to gather their views and opinions on services within Bridgend. There is a need to outline the development of multi-disciplinary services for young people aged 16-21, and consider young people's views on any changes to service delivery. A further objective of the consultation event was to gather and review young people's opinions regarding location of their regularly used services, the possible consolidation of services, accessibility and much more.

The outline of the consultation event was to welcome and introduce the participants to each other, whilst providing a brief overview of the day. There were three different activities available to the young people, which were, a 'create your own service' activity, a Photoshop workshop, as well as a filming activity, whilst completing a questionnaire set by staff, in order to gather individual responses. The 'create your own service' allowed young people to take control of what they think a generic service if any, should be like for young people within Bridgend. The separate groups set out to explore firstly, the location of where they would like the main services to be for young people in the Bridgend area, secondly, what should be the opening times, what professionals should work within this service, as well as what important issues should be considered. The location chosen by the groups was in Bridgend town centre, where they went on to explain that Bridgend town centre is 'in the middle of everything', allowing young people to have easy access. However, the third group stated that Sarn would be the ideal place for young people's services, because they feel there is a great need among young people within this area.

Within their service, the young people reported wanting to see mainly and information, advice and guidance worker, followed by a youth worker, training and development worker, counsellor and drug and alcohol/sexual health worker. The groups felt that these professions were of high importance to young people in Bridgend. The ideal opening times for their ideal service was also similar across the groups, stating that they would like to see their organisation/service open Monday to Saturday, mainly from 9-7pm. The top three headings which young people found to be of importance were housing, health and employment/training.

The overall feedback was positive for the filming consultation, and the questions included such things as, listing positives and negatives about current services in Bridgend, ways in which services can be improved, attractions and expectations of services. The general feedback was positive; however, participants stated that it would be ideal and easier for young people to have accessible services in one place, to have a good friendly and non-judgmental service, as well as good advice.

Finally, young people were provided with a questionnaire, asking them about their satisfaction with current services in Bridgend, as well as what they would change about services. Overall responses indicate that young people are aware of services available to them in Bridgend. The responses also indicate that in order to get any help and advice, they

would use the following resources, internet, leaflets, youth worker as well as their friends. Furthermore, almost all responses stated that participants would like one service in one place. Overall, the consultation event was very successful. Young people enjoy the activities and the workshops, and they enjoyed the opportunity to have their say and express their opinions. The results stated that young people know where to go to access advice tailored to their needs. The participants feel that there are many positive aspects to current services; however, they would like to see a generic service in one place. This would improve participation, making it easily accessible and would improve efficiency. This consultation day has formed a basis for further consultation with young people in Bridgend.