

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

People Scrutiny Commission

7th September 2015

Report : *Update on the impact of Kids Company going into administration*

Ward: City wide

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RECOMMENDATION

To be aware of the current situation relating to the impact on young people of the closure of Kids Company provision in Bristol

Summary

An overview of the impact of Kids Company going into administration and the effect it has had on young people and service provision in Bristol

Summary

1. On August 5th 2015 the national charity Kids Company, who operated in London, Liverpool and Bristol, went into administration and all of the staff were made redundant. Bristol City Council had one current commissioned service being delivered by the charity but Kids Company provided other services paid for by its own charitable funds in the City.
2. For the City Council, the Charity worked with young people in alternative education whereby they provided an educational provision for 40 pupils who cannot attend mainstream school for a variety of reasons. It was delivered at Lighthouse (Hartcliffe), Treetops (Lawrence Weston) and The Heart Lodge (Brentry). A number of issues had been emerging and as a consequence the decision not to continue with these services had already been taken and they were being decommissioned. The relevant contracts concluded at the end of this summer term and

the arrangements for alternative provision were in place for the young people who were being transitioned ready for this September. The council met with the pupils and their parents or carers to discuss their children's next school or education provider. This aspect of Kids Companies work has therefore had minimum impact in relation to them going into administration.

3. Another facility run by Kids Company on a charitable basis was the Island Centre and associated Urban Academy. These facilities worked with young people aged from 16 -23 who had complex needs. The Island provided a drop in service, 1-1 counselling and a therapy service. The urban academy took about 40 young people from the island, who were not in education, employment or training and supported their needs through art, music and cultural activities to build their confidence to move into employment. They employed 24 staff from their own funds. In the last few months just over 100 young people have been using these services. Had it not been for the charity going into administration these services funded by Kids Company would have continued.
4. The overnight closure of the above facility would have left young people with high risk complex needs very vulnerable and so immediate action was taken by council officers. Negotiations with Creative Youth Network, the owners of the building and local providers of young people services, to take on 9 ex Kids Company staff who had been working in the Island Centre as casual workers. This was to maintain a limited service funded by the council for a four week period to facilitate the soft closure and orderly transition of the young people into alternative appropriate services or provision.
 - Kids Company had 213 total children and young people on its books at The Island
 - Of these, 110 were actively using the service over the past few months
 - Of these 110, 28 were aged under-18, of whom 12 were already known to the Council as children in care or care leavers
 - Of the 110, 77 were making use of The Island at a frequency of once a fortnight or more
 - Since 10 August, there have been an average of 25 visits per day to The Island
 - The existing provision will close on September 4th.

5. On the 20th August the city council chaired a meeting of agencies and charities which had offered to support those young people previously using Kids Company services. The meeting had attendees from 29 organisations including Voscur, the umbrella organisation for Bristol's voluntary sector, all of whom are willing to help despite the understanding that there is no additional funding available. Plans are now being put in to place to ensure the young people are moved across into alternative provision.
6. Many of the young people accessing the Kids Co provision were over 19 and the statutory services available to them are more limited. It has been particularly helpful that many voluntary and third sector organisations have been trying to do all that they can to help. A significant number of the high risk young people were children in care or care leavers. The relevant lead professional for those young people has been asked to review their support needs and to manage the change.
7. A number of local managers who worked for Kids Company are continuing to seek funding to be able to provide alternative provision. They are approaching a number of political, community and philanthropic stakeholders lobbying them for support. The media coverage continues albeit at a slower pace than the initial period.
8. Creative Youth Network who own the building used by Kids Company are committed to ensuring that any new tenant also provides services for young people.
9. The receivers have taken possession of all of the confidential personal records relating to young people and these have been retained in London.
10. The Cabinet office have been receiving regular updates and are currently considering whether to provide funding to support local authorities for a short period of time in managing the transition of the young people into alternative provision.
11. The council have currently met the initial costs of maintaining the provision and supporting the appropriate closure but will look to recover these costs when fully known from the appropriate government department.

Gary Davies

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