

Audit Summary – Transition from Children to Adults

Background and Context

- 1.1 The Council is required to support young people to enable them to live successful independent lives. Young people in care on or after their 16th birthday are entitled to support up to the age of 21, and in some instances up to 25. The responsibility for care moves between the Children and Families and Adult Social Care Services at the age of 18 and therefore a timely needs assessment is imperative.

Scope and Objectives

- 1.2 The objective of the audit was to review and assess the effectiveness of the systems for the transition, to ensure completeness, timeliness and appropriate consideration of the needs of the young person. The scope of the assignment included the following areas:

- Timely forecasting of young people for transition and supporting plans to deliver transition
- Care assessments and packages
- Review of processes and responsibilities
- Data and reporting
- Care costs and budget monitoring.

The scope of the assignment excluded appropriateness of care provided.

Audit Opinion

- 1.3 Overall, Internal Audit provided “**Limited Assurance**” on the effectiveness of the systems for the transition from children in care to adults, to ensure completeness, timeliness, and appropriate consideration of the needs of the young person.

Key Messages and Findings:

- 1.4 Issues with transition had been acknowledged by senior management and a project had already been initiated to review and improve upon the existing transition arrangements. The findings of the audit will inform the development of the project.
- 1.5 Internal Audit raised four high priority (H) and five medium (M) findings in respect of the following key weaknesses:
- Internal Audit were unable to confirm that all young people requiring transition support had been identified and were preparing for transition
 - There was no documented process or criteria to affirm when young people should be referred for transition
 - There were delays in assessments for young people referred for transition; in March 2023 there were waiting lists of 46 Transition Assessments and 99 Care Act Assessments for the Young Adult Transition Service (YATS) (under 18) and YATS (18-25) respectively
 - There was no common understanding of the transition process between Children, Families and Safer Communities (CFS), or Adult Social Care (ASC); there was little evidence of supervision in the sample of cases Internal Audit reviewed
 - The YATS (under 18s) standard operating procedure (SOP) was not being followed
 - There was no common understanding of the roles which CFS and ASC teams should play in the transition process
 - Three different systems from the Liquidlogic suite were used to manage cases; these were not integrated.

- There was no reconciliation between systems and between CFS and ASC Services to confirm the number of young people that need to transition, are transitioning or have transitioned in a given time period; there was no forecasting of future demand
- Delays in assessments made it difficult to demonstrate that young people's needs are being met and that value for money is being achieved.

Management Response:

- 1.6 The findings of the report have been accepted by management who have agreed management actions to address them. These include:
- 1.7.1 The BCC Corporate Transitions Project (see overview at 1.8 to 1.10 below) is to undertake a diagnostic exercise to provide a clear set of recommendations and deliverables. The diagnostic will incorporate the issues highlighted in this report. This is to include analysis to understand the consolidated figure of young people transitioning over a period or at a point of time.
Progress Report: *The project has consolidated data sets from several sources (Liquid Logic Adults System (LAS), Liquid Logic Children's System (LCS), Early Help Module (EHM), Finance spreadsheets from Children's Services and full list of children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP's). Work to confirm 16 and 17 year olds from this list, who may require an assessment of need as they approach adulthood, is in progress. In excess of 70% records checked and validated by operational teams. The remaining records continue to be worked on.*
- 1.7.2 A new process is to be implemented that will support early consideration of eligible needs, through a Safeguarding lens, under the Care Act framework from age 14, in a way that protects the integrity of the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and process.
Progress Report: *Research and benchmarking with other Local Authorities to identify a suitable model for Bristol has been completed. Process work to establish potential changes has started. Options for system changes in advance of a new model are being proposed and will be considered at the conclusion at the project at the end of March.*
- 1.7.3 A service development plan was agreed in November 2022, which provides a number of areas for improvement in the transitions service. A focus is on waiting list throughput for work coming in and out of the service.
Progress Report: *As part of the development, the Young Adults Transitions Service (YATS) combined to make a new service in April 2023. This has created some increased capacity and as of August 2023 the waiting list has been reduced by 50%. The waiting list has been prioritised and all those who required allocations to support timely education placements have been assessed. The Service Manager is working closely with the YATS team leadership in regular sessions and away days to develop a consistent approach to supervision and application of policy related to support of staff and performance management. To support the focus on service/team level improvements, an additional fixed term (12 months) Team Manager is now in post and has started as the lead manager for YATS in October 2023. This role will be responsible for supporting the meeting of the KPI's linked to service improvements.*
- 1.7.4 The development plan for changes to the YATS service include Learning and development plans targeted at team level to improve staff support, wellbeing, and secure practice improvements. These are now being scheduled and the first bespoke session is running on 14th November 2023 on Trauma Informed Practice.
Progress Report: *There is already a new Supervision Policy, launched in early 2023, that the YATS leadership team have accessed, and significant improvements to standards have been noted. This supports a new training offer specifically for Supervision that the team managers of YATS must undertake within 12 months, where appropriate. YATS managers are all either scheduled for this training or have completed.*
- 1.7.5 Forecasting will be part of the BCC Transitions Project and pipeline work in commissioning.
Progress Report: *The existing Qlik (Data recording tool) report requires development to ensure all young people are visible on the management reporting tool; the revised specification for reporting will be developed*

in conjunction with the confirmation of cohort to enable future reporting to proactively provide the lists and potential costs for pipeline work to support commissioning, finance and operational colleagues in future transition work. A move to Power BI reporting will be included in the Business Case to align with other reporting frameworks.

- 1.7.6 The Pathways/young person's journey is in the process of being mapped as part of the Corporate Transitions Project. This mapping will feed into the future operating model and process redesign across Adults, Children and Education including transitions.
Progress Report: *Mapping work will be used to highlight the pathways for transitions either through the Transitions Service to Adults Social Care Services or for Transition through other pathways to universal services.*
- 1.7.7 Tracking the progress of the development plan will be subject to regular review via the quality improvement and performance (QUIP) reporting and governance process. The KPI's and deliverables in the plan have been the focus for YATS leaders as part of the new annual performance reviews in July 2023. October 2023 QUIP board received an update on the YATS development plan.
Progress Report: *This is ongoing and last reported to QUIP on 28th September 2023.*
- 1.7.8 A review of the YATS Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is underway, there will be collaboration across partnerships and departments to ensure new pathways are considered jointly.
Progress Report: *Review with other OFSTED graded Outstanding local authorities was completed by 31st October to ensure that we have understood the delivery options more widely and will bring any learning into Bristol's model before the evaluation and update to the SOP.*
- 1.7.9 The Transitions project will enable the delivery of a process redesign and new transitions pathway, to include a Transitional Safeguarding Pathway, with a focus on through care services.
Progress Report: *Childrens recording systems will be aligned to ensure visibility and development of new pathways will enable better transition journey for children/young people. Information can be obtained from the dashboard if filtered or requested from the Performance team. The issue is that reports are not set up to show the identified gaps. Analysis of the dashboard is being included in the early diagnostic stages and work with the Performance Team to understand the resource requirements for the required development are in progress.*

Overview of the Transitions Project

- 1.8 The Transitions Project has been established to support the development of the Transition Service in Bristol to support improved pathways for young people. Work with the Adults Social Care, Children's Social Care and Education services to build strong pathways, support adoption of new processes, and deliver a pathway designed to support the young person at the heart of the activity. The project has the following objectives:
1. Improve the experience of children and young people who transition between Children and/or Education Services to Adults Services;
 2. Agree to a future model that results in a smoother transition process and;
 3. Run the agreed pathway with a small group of early adopters to evaluate the chosen model against the following criteria:
 - a) That this results in a smoother transition for the young people and their families
 - b) That the information available to all parties is appropriate and timely through the pathway design
 - c) That the model is appropriate for all internal stakeholders and supports quality management and use of information regarding the young person
 - d) That the model is scalable across all pathways
 - e) That all internal stakeholders have understood the change that the model will bring to their processes and engagement from each area to support the change
 - f) To understand the benefits that good case management will deliver in terms of efficiencies to process and value for money.

- 1.9 The transitions project diagnostic will include a review of data/insight, technology appraisal (integration) and future performance monitoring (single view). The analysis of the early adopter and review will feed into the wider full business case. This information is reported on via the monitoring through Joint Adult Social Care and Children's and Families Service Executive Directors Meeting.
- 1.10 As part of the transitions project, reporting will be improved to inform activity levels and provide positive confirmation that all young people have been identified to enable the targeting for improvements. The project will align with the ASC Transformation programme to enable work across commissioning to develop the market to deliver choice at best value.