

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE - 31 March 2015

Draft Central Bedfordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25)

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This report relates to a non-Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is for Executive to consider and approve the draft Central Bedfordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **Approve the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25), as set out in Appendix B.**
2. **Note the preparation work officers have carried out and endorse the commencement of the implementation phase, across agencies within Central Bedfordshire.**

Summary

2. This report responds in part to the inception of the Children and Families Act 2014 and in part, the pending Care Act 2014. Specifically the report outlines the proposed framework to improve support to young people with SEND of transitional age (14-25) and their family carers.
3. The report illustrates the governance arrangements that have supported the work undertaken and demonstrates how the Council sought the views of young people, family carers and a wide range of partner agencies and stakeholders to inform the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25).

4. The report summarises the next steps for the implementation of the proposed strategy, which will see a Delivery Partnership oversee implementation of the PfA programme that will ensure that young people and their family carers have improved experiences and outcomes during the transition years (14-25).

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

5. Details about Central Bedfordshire's Transitions from childhood to adulthood workstream were considered by the Social Care Health and Housing (SCH&H) Overview and Scrutiny on the 22 September 2014. "The Transitions pathway for young people - Getting it right" presentation was delivered jointly by the Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and the Assistant Director for School Improvement. Some members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also in attendance
6. In light of this update Members raised the following points:
 - Whether the Council would support children until they reach the age of 25 years. The Executive Member advised there was a lack of clarity about this from Government; however, if a child had special educational needs, they would be supported until the age of 25 years old where appropriate.
 - Queries regarding the plans that had been put in place to ensure social workers would support a child into adulthood. The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care advised that there would be a seamless service in place and training was planned for social workers.
 - Whether engagement with young people and Looked after Children had taken place in light of the SEND reforms. It was explained that engagement work has commenced to ensure children and young people with SEND participate in shaping and implementing the SEND reforms.

Background

7. The Children and Families Act came to effect in September 2014, setting out reform to the systems for adoption, Looked after Children (LAC), family justice and SEND.
8. The Children & Families Act takes forward reforms to the system of support for SEND that was originally set out in '*Support and Aspiration: a new approach to SEN and Disability*' (DfE 2010) by:
 - Replacing statements of special educational needs and learning difficulty assessment with a new single, simpler 0 -25 assessment process: Education Health and Care Plan
 - Providing statutory protections comparable to those currently associated with the statement up to 25 years in further education

- Requiring local authorities to publish a local offer showing the support available to disabled children and young people and those with SEN, and their families
 - Giving parents of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans the right to a personal budget for their support
 - Improving cooperation between all of the services that support children and their families, requiring Local Authorities and Health to work together to improve outcomes by joint commissioning between local authorities which from 2013 now include public health responsibilities, clinical commissioners, and universal commissioners (0-5)
 - Ensuring mediation is in place for disputes prior to referral, to appeal, to tribunal and trialling giving children the right to appeal
9. The Support and Aspiration Programme was initiated by Children's Services to implement reforms to the system of SEND support, as introduced by the Children & Families Act 2014. Principally this centres on improved support for young people with SEND and their families to reach their full potential, receive appropriate support from birth to 25 years and jointly commission a range of universal and specialist services across children's, health and care services.
10. The Support and Aspirations Programme consists of a number of work streams, all of which have parent representation and work is being co-produced with parents in each area. Young people are involved through the participation work and are influencing the programme development. The Support and Aspirations Programme reports to the Children's Trust Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
11. A key component of the SEND reforms is improving child to adult transition support, which will enable young people with SEND, including all disabilities, to build their skills and independence and access the care and support they need to move into adulthood and live fulfilling lives.
12. The 'Transition from childhood to adulthood' work stream reported into the Support & Aspiration Board, with the key aims to:
- Undertake a detailed needs analysis of needs to inform future strategic planning and commissioning of adult transition services.
 - Initiate a pilot for young people aged 14–25 with SEND currently accessing transitions support services in the north and south of the authority in order to redesign the transitions pathway.
 - Deliver a multi-agency transitions strategy and pathway for all disabled young people and adults aged 14-25, which outlines how all services and agencies, will work in partnership to offer a positive transition experience and improved outcomes.

- Implement findings from the pilot for young people with SEND aged 14–25 years, informed by the work undertaken within the overall Support and Aspiration programme.
13. The Council commissioned Prospects, an external provider of services to young people and adults, primarily due to their extensive experience of working with people with SEND. Prospects were asked to examine existing transitions practice and research customer experiences, working with a broad cohort of young people and their family carers.
 14. A range of research methods were used to capture the views and experiences of young people and their family carers, which included face-to-face interviews and telephone based questionnaires. Research was undertaken at a range of venues including local schools and colleges to explore issues in more detail.
 15. In addition, innovative techniques were used to encourage young people to discuss specific issues and participate in the research activity. This included the 'Vox Box' video diary booth that enabled individuals and groups to record their views and expectations, and a group of 'Young Researchers' who were able to undertake peer-to-peer learning at each stage in the research and pilot activity. The findings of the research can be found in Appendix A.

Preparing for Adulthood

16. Completion of the research phase of the transitions project led to the development of a clear offer for young people with SEND to prepare for adult life and meet their future care and support needs, as detailed below and documented formally within the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25).

The strategy states that Central Bedfordshire Council and partners will:

- Encourage young people to have aspirations and believe in what they can do and realise how much they can achieve.
- Work with everyone who is involved in supporting young people as they approach adulthood to have positive aspirations for them and support them in a way that helps young people to achieve their goals.
- Enable young people to live healthy and fulfilling lives, supported by a range of local care and support services and accessible healthcare.

Implementing the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25)

17. A Preparing for Adulthood Delivery Partnership has been established to move the project into an implementation phase

18. The Delivery Partnership is a constituent work stream of the Support and Aspiration Programme and will be important in the implementation of the draft strategy. It has a strong focus on co production and includes representation from family carers and young people themselves as well as a wide range of professionals from all services and agencies.
19. This multi agency partnership will deliver, with young people and parent carers, the necessary change to ensure young people develop their skills and abilities, and build their independence as they move towards adulthood. It will also ensure families are appropriately supported and involved in this journey. The principles of the strategy and pathway are applicable to all young people no matter what their level of disability.
20. The first meeting of the Preparing for Adulthood Delivery Partnership was held on the 12 February 2015, at which the initial scope of the programme was proposed, as follows:-
 - Work Package 1 - Development of Commissioning evidence base and Joint Commissioning Intentions (14-25).
 - Work Package 2 - Creation of Preparing for Adulthood Design Principles.
 - Work Package 3 - Preparing for Adulthood Communications, Engagement and Training Programme.
 - Work Package 4 - Review of key worker role (14-25).
 - Work Package 5 - Define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved 14-25, this includes the Young People, Parent Carers, CBC, Health and Education.
 - Work Package 6 - Development and implementation of the transitions (14-25) feedback/customer experience mechanism.
 - Work Package 7 - Ensure the Preparing for Adulthood pathway reflects improved & enhanced operational practice.
21. The current Support and Aspiration governance framework will remain in place to oversee the delivery of the whole programme across 2016-17.
22. A detailed action plan will be reported through the Support and Aspiration governance framework with updates to the Children's Trust Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Legislative requirements

23. Legislative reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 and Care Act 2014 will both apply to disabled young people with SEND aged 18-25 and their families.

Children & Families Act 2014

24. Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 is central to reforming of the system of SEND support and sets out clear expectations for all services and local agencies to work in partnership to improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.
25. The reforms create a system from birth to 25 through the development of coordinated assessment and single Education, Health And Care Plans; improving cooperation between all services responsible for providing education, health or social care; and giving parents and young people greater choice and control over their support.
26. Transforming the support system for young people with SEND is intended to ensure that services consistently achieve the best outcomes by making vulnerable children, young people and their parents have greater choice and control in decisions and that their needs are properly met.
27. A vital element of the legislative reforms is enabling all services and agencies to work in partnership to support young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood and improve their outcomes. Regulations state that local authorities must:
 - Set out the support available in the Local Offer to help children and young people with SEND move into adulthood.
 - Jointly commission support provision for children and young people with SEND across education, health and social care.
 - Ensure the transition to adult care and support is well planned and integrated with annual reviews of the Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plans that must include provision to assist in preparing for adulthood from year 9 (age 13 to 14).
28. Central Bedfordshire Council's draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) is compliant with the spirit of the Children and Families Act 2014 and, as noted above, there are key parts of the Act that are relevant to this draft strategy.

The Care Act 2014

29. The Care Act 2014 pulls together threads from many different Acts into a single, modern framework for care and support. It reforms how the law works, prioritising key principles around the promotion of individual wellbeing, preventing the need for care and increasing choice and independence for all adults and carers over the age of 18.
30. The intended outcome of the new legislation is that people's wellbeing, needs and goals are prioritised. Importantly, there are clear duties to understand and plan for supporting young people, when they turn 18, who are likely to have assessed care needs, along with the future needs of their carers and young carers.

31. Statutory Guidance to accompany the Care Act 2014 sets out the duties local authorities must meet in providing care and support. This includes having due regard to guidance on transition planning for young people with SEND and their families in the preparation for adulthood. For example, the guidance details at what stage a transition assessment must be carried out and the need to identify and plan for meeting the future care and support needs of young people and their carers.
32. The draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) seeks to strengthen established practice for transition planning in order to improve the outcomes for young people with SEND as they move into adulthood. The draft strategy is compliant with the Care Act in relation to understanding and planning to meet the future care and support needs of young people.
33. Whilst this report and accompanying draft strategy deals with supporting young people with SEND in their transition from childhood to adulthood, the Council acknowledges that there are other young people that will need support too. The Council is committed to supporting such young people in line with the Care Act 2014 and the accompanying statutory Guidance.

Options for consideration

34. None.

Reason/s for decision

35. The decision is necessary to enable the project to commence the implementation of the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) across Central Bedfordshire.

Reason for urgency

36. Not applicable.

Council Priorities

37. The draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) contributes to achieving the following Council priorities:
 - Promote health and well being and protect the vulnerable.
 - Improved educational attainment.
 - Enhancing your local community – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

38. The Council, through the strategy, is demonstrating its commitment to complying with the relevant provisions within the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 in respect of young people with SEND transitioning to adulthood.

Financial Implications

39. There are no immediate direct financial implications relating to the implementation of the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25). It is anticipated that the new strategy and resulting care pathways will improve outcomes for young people and ensure better value for money.
40. Implementation costs of the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) will be funded by base budgets.

Risk Management Implications

41. The project will utilise formal project management techniques, including a project risk register, which is reviewed at each Preparing for Adulthood Delivery Partnership meeting.

Equalities Implications

42. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
43. A full equality assessment will be conducted as part of development and implementation of the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) to ensure that due regard is given to the impact of the draft strategy on the Council's residents, particularly those who are vulnerable and hard to reach.
44. Furthermore the development and implementation of the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) is likely to have a positive overall impact in terms of advancing equality of opportunity.

Conclusion and next Steps

45. Members are asked to approve the draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25), as set out as Appendix B.
46. Members are asked to endorse the preparation work that has been carried out by the work stream and the commencement of the implementation plans, for young people with SEND aged 14-25 and their families.

Appendices

47. The following appendix is attached:-
 - Appendix A – Support & Aspirations Transitions Workstream - research phase findings.

- Appendix B - Draft Central Bedfordshire SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25).

Background Papers

48. None