

# **Bournemouth Borough Council**

## **Redesign of the Out of Hours Service for Social Care**

### **Appendix to Cabinet Member Decision Record**

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a new model for service delivery of social care Out of Hours services.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Adult and Children's Social Care Out of Hours Service is hosted by Borough of Poole on behalf of Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and Borough of Poole. The service operates when daytime offices are closed, which is broadly 17:00 until 09.00 during the working week and then 24 hours per day at weekends and bank holidays. The service is based in Poole, from where telephone enquiries are received and visiting social workers are deployed.
- 2.2 The purpose of the service is to respond where it is apparent that a child or young person, an older person, person with a disability, mental health condition or other vulnerable person requires urgent care and support or is likely to suffer harm if action is not taken before the next working day.
- 2.3 The team is staffed by 11 full time equivalent Social Workers, two Administrative Assistants and a Service Manager. The team are supplemented by a range of social workers who are on-call or can be engaged as "locum" staff at short notice. At any one time, there are between two and four members of staff on duty.
- 2.4 The Out of Hours Service, the structure for which is set out in figure 1, is governed by an Inter-Agency Management Group comprised of Heads of Service and Service Directors from across the three partner local authorities.
- 2.5 Although the Out of Hours Service has been successful over many years in supporting good outcomes for people in crisis, and is based on a cost effective approach which integrates the work of three local authorities, the model has become dated and is increasingly unfit for the future.

### **Figure 1: Current Model for Adult Out of Hours Service**

#### **3. THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

- 3.1 The Out of Hours service is experiencing workforce limitations and in recent years has experienced difficulty recruiting suitably skilled and experienced staff. As social work has moved away from a generic model, there are now few professionals experienced in both adult and children's work. The Out of Hours team, at June 2018, are severely depleted and operating using a number of locum social workers. Recent recruitment rounds have failed to attract candidates who are qualified for both adult mental health assessments and children's social work. Locum staff are also very difficult to recruit and tend to stay for only short periods of time, raising concerns about the consistency and quality of service that can be provided by such temporary staff.
- 3.2 Feedback from two recent Ofsted inspections, involving comments and recommendations for both Poole and Bournemouth, have sighted weaknesses for vulnerable children. An Ofsted inspection in Poole (September 2017), as well as internal audits, have identified the need for quality and management improvements within the current service. Ofsted stated in their inspection report: 'Children who need help from the out of hours service do not consistently receive a good enough response. This weakens the Councils response to children's needs when issues arise outside of office hours. In a small number of cases, unacceptable responses left children in vulnerable situations for too long'. As part of the Ofsted pilot inspection of Bournemouth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in August 2017, Ofsted stated: 'The Out of Hours Service serving Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset lacks children's social work experience. This was evident in the poor quality of case recording. It lacks detail and analysis.'
- 3.3 Of particular concern has been the low level of staffing cover. The current model requires the social workers on duty to screen calls, resolve enquiries and undertake visits; all of which place pressure on staff, and at times of high demand, can have

an adverse impact on practice issues such as case recording, follow-up of incidents and detailed case planning.

- 3.4 Concerns have also been raised about the current model not including a supervisory manager on duty to oversee the quality of work and assist with the resolution of complex or high risk situations. There is management cover available by telephone outside of office hours, but this does not provide the depth of supervisory management that would be expected in a modern Out of Hours Service. The nature of work with children and young people is very different to that of adults, and what has become clear is that both areas of work need specialist and discrete management in order to properly monitor quality.
- 3.5 A significant driver for change has also been the increase in statutory mental health assessments, rising from 324 calls outside of office hours in 2007/8 to just short of 800 for 2017/18. A Mental Health Act assessment, which requires an attending doctor, can result in a resident being detained in a psychiatric hospital, and consequently it is necessary for the social worker to both locate a vacant hospital bed and arrange ambulance transport. A single Mental Health Act assessment can, consequently, take several hours.
- 3.6 Despite the increase in demand, staffing levels have remained unchanged and consequently it is necessary for people to wait several hours for a Mental Health Act assessment at times of peak demand, and for these assessments to severely limit the capacity available to respond to other types of calls; in particular, children and young people. Of all Mental Health Act assessments, the majority occur overnight and weekends and take up nearly 50% of the entire out of hours service workload. With insufficient resources within the Out of Hours teams to respond rapidly, greater pressure is placed on colleagues in Dorset Police, who often attend to people experiencing a mental health crisis and have to wait for a social worker to become available, and Dorset HealthCare staff, particularly at St Anne's hospital who, similarly, have to wait for a social worker to become available in order to assess and admit patients with a mental health need.
- 3.7 A review of the service was undertaken in 2017, concluding that the Out of Hours team was not sustainable in the current structure because it was insufficiently resourced to respond to children, young people and adults in need of emergency support. The overwhelming and increasing demand for Mental Health Act assessments was limiting the service's ability to respond to children and young people in need. Children and young people in need are often held at police stations or in hospital, and in cases such as this need to be seen rapidly in order to develop an immediate plan which avoids an emergency foster placement where possible but is able to make safe arrangements for such a placement where necessary. Where a young person is in police custody, the Out of Hours Service is required to provide an "appropriate adult" before the police are able to proceed. The service does not have the capacity to respond sufficiently rapidly to situations like this because of the workforce pressures and the demands for adult mental health assessments.
- 3.8 The review concluded that in order for the service to operate in a way which was safe and sustainable, it should be separated into two discrete services; one serving children and young people and a second for adults. The advantages of separating the Adult and Children's Services for Out of Hours work include the flexibility to recruit specialist and experienced staff and managers for each service as well as

greater capacity and resilience, particularly for responses to children and young people. Separating children's services from adults will allow a discrete and dedicated focus on protecting and planning for children and young people in emergency situations, and in particular those instances such as detention in a police station or hospital. Increasingly, councils are electing to separate adult and children's out of hours services because of workforce and capacity issues, and so the proposal contained within this report is consistent with other local authorities.

- 3.9 Dorset County Council have elected, from September 2018, to withdraw from the service for children and young people and establish a separate children's Out of Hours team for the Dorset County Council area. Although a decision is yet to be taken, consideration is also being given by Dorset County Council to a separate adult service. In light of this, the focus of redesign has been Bournemouth and Poole only, with an anticipation of Christchurch joining the service from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, but recognising that there may be an opportunity for Dorset County Council to remain or re-join as a partner of the Adult service, to some extent at a later date.

#### 4. **SERVICE DESIGN FOR THE ADULT MODEL**

- 4.1 The proposed adult model will provide a single point of access and response to anyone in crisis or who is concerned about the immediate welfare of someone with care and support needs, including those who are frail, with a physical or learning disability and people with mental ill health. The service is designed as an emergency response service and is expected to deal with:

- adults in crisis requiring statutory assessment (particularly under the Mental Health Act);
- adults experiencing harm from abuse or neglect;
- adults who have care packages which have failed;
- adults requiring emergency care home placements;
- adults in need of urgent support and signposting to essential services.

- 4.2 Figure 2 summarises the structure for the new Adults OOHS model.

## Figure 2: Proposed Model for Adult Out of Hours Service

Key: EDS = Emergency Duty Service; Pink denotes management; dark blue denotes unqualified staff; light blue denotes qualified staff

- 4.3 Rather than qualified social workers undertaking all tasks, as happens with the current model, the proposed model offers the more efficient approach of blending qualified and unqualified staff. The model also enhances the management structure to ensure a better quality of direct case supervision and decision making.
- 4.4 The service will employ five Contact Officers who will be skilled (but unqualified) to screen and risk assess all calls, many of which will be resolved at that first point of contact. Where further work, such as a Mental Health Act assessment, is required, the Contact Officer will hand over the enquiry to a qualified social worker.
- 4.5 Contact Officers will also make necessary arrangements on behalf of the qualified social workers in order to maximise their availability for direct client contact. These arrangements could involve, for example, locating a doctor to accompany the social worker on the Mental Health Act assessment visit, preparing case records and assisting with case recording. The current model requires the social workers on duty to undertake these tasks for themselves, which reduces their capacity to directly respond to individuals and limits the time they have available for good quality case recording and case planning.
- 4.6 The proposed service will employ seven social workers, all qualified as Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) to cover demand from Bournemouth and Poole (and ultimately Christchurch from 1st April 2019).
- 4.7 The new adult services model is based on the appointment of one operational manager reporting to an existing adult social care Service Manager. The operational manager, although having some responsibilities which can only be carried out during daytime office hours, would be expected to be on site for some periods of time when the service is operational and to be on call for advice and support. The model also includes an on-site senior/supervisory officer.

5. **SERVICE DESIGN FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MODEL**

- 5.1 The Children's Out of Hours Service aims to provide an essential social work service to children and young people outside normal office hours on behalf of Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole.
- 5.2 The service will respond to emergencies where immediate Children's Social Care intervention is required to safeguard a vulnerable child, respond to all referrals that the Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to respond to and offers a single point of access for screening calls and providing advice and signposting when required.
- 5.3 The service will be operational to the public and partner agencies from:
- 17:00 – 09:00 Monday to Friday (from 17:00 – midnight the staff will be physically on duty in the office and from midnight – 09:00 the service will be covered by staff on-call);
  - 09:00 – 09:00 Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holiday periods (from 09:00 - midnight the staff will be physically on duty in the office and from midnight – 09:00 the service will be covered by staff on-call).
- 5.4 Figure 3 summarises the structure for the new Children and Young People's OOHS model.

Key: Pink denotes management; blue denotes unqualified staff; grey denotes qualified staff

**Figure 3: Proposed structure for the new Children and Young People's OOHS model**

- 5.5 All calls to the Children's Out of Hours Service will be filtered via a triage service operating 24 hours, 7 days per week. This triage service can be provided through either the Careline Service in Bournemouth Council or the Control Room Service provided by the Borough of Poole. At this stage, calls will be identified as either requiring no further action; requiring advice and guidance or requiring social work response. All calls will be recorded within the triage process and those requiring a response will divert to the professionally qualified and experienced Children's Services practitioners.
- 5.6 The triage service and Children's Out of Hours Service will be co-located to ensure that any ambiguous or complex calls so that consultation is available from a qualified children's social work professional.
- 5.7 The proposed service will employ an Operational Team Manager, 2.16 full-time equivalent (FTE) Senior Practitioners, 3.11 FTE Social Workers and 1 FTE on-call retained worker to cover the demand across Bournemouth and Poole and from April 2019 for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area. Responses will include providing professional advice and guidance to the public and partner agencies, undertaking statutory child protection investigations with partner agencies; visits to assess safety and take emergency action (including placing children when appropriate in care); attendance at police stations when young people are arrested and require the attendance of a professional "appropriate adult" and support and advice to foster and residential carers when young people in care are in crisis. Senior Practitioners are professionally qualified social workers who have advanced skills and who will also provide support, guidance and supervision to other staff within the service and therefore add resilience to the management of the service.
- 5.8 Calls received between midnight and 9am, weekdays and weekends, which require further investigation by a qualified social worker, will be referred to an on-call retained worker. The on-call retained workers will be qualified day time social workers who have volunteered to be on a Retained Worker Rota. Staff on the Retained Worker Rota will be paid a flat rate standby payment for the nights they are on call and if they are called the hours worked will be paid at their usual day time rate. The number of shifts they can volunteer for will be managed to complement their substantive post and management of the team.
- 5.9 The Team Manager will report to a Service Manager. Whilst primarily working daytime hours the Team Manager will be expected to be on site for some shifts and to support and back fill in emergencies.

## 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The service costs will rise because of the loss of economies of scale in splitting the existing service, the withdrawal of Dorset County Council from the service and the necessity to enhance the management and staffing structures.
- 6.2 It is recognised that investment in the Out of Hours Service has not kept pace with rising demand over many years, and consequently the service redesign does call for greater revenue funding. In order to mitigate the impact of this, a number of models have been costed prior to settling on the approach described in this report. In doing this, efficiencies such as the use of unqualified staff where appropriate and

careful and proportionate grading for a range of posts (including management) have resulted in efficient and innovative models of operation being developed.

6.3 The services have been designed to accommodate the formation of new Councils in 2019, and in particular the models are expected to absorb demand from Christchurch resident without further costs.

6.4 Table 1 sets out the costs for the new services for Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole.

	Poole			
	New Model Budget Required	Current Budget <sup>(1)</sup>	Additional funding required (annual cost)	2018/19 additional required (based on September implementation)
Adults	£382,498	£191,360	£191,138	£110,860
Children <sup>(2)</sup>	£226,000	£107,640	£118,360	£68,649
<b>Total</b>	<b>£608,498</b>	<b>£299,000</b>	<b>£309,498</b>	<b>£179,509</b>

	Bournemouth			
	New Model Budget Required	Current Budget <sup>(1)</sup>	Additional funding required (annual cost)	2018/19 additional required (based on September implementation)
Adults	£562,992	£186,240	£376,752	£218,516
Children <sup>(2)</sup>	£226,000	£104,760	£121,240	£70,319
<b>Total</b>	<b>£788,992</b>	<b>£291,000</b>	<b>£497,992</b>	<b>£288,835</b>

	New Authority (BCP)		
	New Model Budget Required	Current Budget <sup>(1)</sup>	Additional funding required (annual cost)
Adults	£945,490	£377,600	£567,890
Children <sup>(2)</sup>	£452,000	£212,400	£239,600
Disaggregated budget for Christchurch		£40,000	£-40,000
<b>Total BoP &amp; BBC</b>	<b>£1,397,490</b>	<b>£630,000</b>	<b>£767,490</b>

**Table 1: Out of Hours Service Costs for New Model**

<sup>(1)</sup> 17/18 cost and Current Budget have been split 64% Adults and 36% Children's (based on existing contract)

<sup>(2)</sup> Required budget for new Children's' Model based on 50/50 Bournemouth/Poole.

*nb: Implementation in 2018/19 would incur a part year expense, equivalent to 7 months of service operation.*

6.5 One-off available resources have been identified for 2018/19 to fund the part year costs of both new services models. However, it should be noted that for the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council the costs of the new service will be substantially more than the current levels budgeted for and consequently, this additional expenditure will need to be addressed as part of budget building for the new Council.



## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Out of Hours service has become increasingly unfit for purpose because of a sharp increase in demand, insufficient staffing establishment, difficulty identifying a suitably multi-skilled workforce and an increasingly limited ability to respond to children and young people because of the pressure to meet statutory adult mental health obligations.
- 7.2 It has been proposed that the service is transformed, separating the adult service from the children and young people's service in order to better focus on discrete demands placed on each and to invest in sufficient staffing capacity to ensure a high quality response to residents in need of emergency care and support.
- 7.3 It is recognised that in undertaking this transformation, the cost of service provision will rise sharply and place an additional financial burden on the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority. Both internal review of the service and external inspection has evidenced that transformation is necessary in order to provide a resilient and safe level of service to local residents.

### **REPORT OF:**

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