

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

27th November 2017

Report of the Head of Children and Young People Services – Andrew Jarrett

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Clinical Support (Family Support Services)

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to make an amendment to a proposal approved by this Committee in November 2016 regarding the development of a clinical support service to young people and carers within the Family Action Support Team Service (FAST) as follows:-

Create 1 x Part time Clinical Psychologist (Grade 12 18.5 hours per week JEID3789)

Create 1 x Full Time Consultant Social Worker - Therapeutic Placement Support (Grade 10 JEID3109)

1 x Full Time Play Therapist (Grade 7, JEID 3686)

Executive Summary

In September 2016 Members approved the proposal to run the FAST in house by the Local Authority and to cease the contract held by Action for Children for delivering the service.

As part of the recommendations, approval was also given to develop an in house clinical support service to provide a service to children and young people with emotional and well-being difficulties who were unable to access specialist support through the CAMHS Service.

Approval was given to recruit a Lead Clinical Psychologist and a full time Play Therapist.

The Play Therapist has been appointed, but there has been an ongoing difficulty in recruiting a Lead Clinical Psychologist.

It is now proposed that an amendment is made to the original structure of the Clinical support team and that instead of the team consisting of a Lead Clinical Psychologist and Play Therapist, that the team instead will be made up of a Play Therapist (Grade 7), a Therapeutic placement support Consultant Social Worker (Grade 10) and a part time Psychologist (Grade 12).

Background

In 2015 a review was undertaken of Family Support Services in Neath Port Talbot to consider their effectiveness and to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Members approved a report in 2015 to remodel the Family Action Support Service to support the most complex young people and families and to safely reduce the number of Looked after Children and enable children to remain with their families.

The success of the remodelling is apparent in its contribution to the overall number of Looked after Children reducing significantly during the 18 months that followed. The Family Action Support Team was at this time commissioned from Action for Children.

In 2016, a further report was approved by Members to bring the service back into the management of the Local Authority. Although the remodelling had been successful it was agreed that there were additional benefits to running the service in house in terms of the service being responsive to the changing needs of the population and in terms of building a cohesive family support service.

As part of the approval to bring the Family Action Support Team back into the Local Authority, approval was given to develop an in house clinical support team.

It was recognised that many of the children and young people who are known to the service and Looked After are unable to access core services through CAMHS. The nature of their experiences means that many young people experience significant emotional wellbeing difficulties, but these do not meet the threshold criteria to be considered to have a mental health difficulty. The impact of a child's emotional difficulties can have a significant influence on the ability of foster carers to manage their care, resulting in young people experiencing placement breakdown and placement moves which can further exaggerate their emotional difficulties. The aim of the Clinical Service is to provide direct therapy to children and to support foster carers/carers to better understand the reasons for a child's behaviour in order to increase their stability and the opportunity for them to better develop long lasting relationships which are the cornerstone to them becoming successful individuals.

The approval given by Members was to establish within the structure a Lead Clinical Psychology post and Play Therapy post.

The total budget approved for establishing these posts was £91,170

Progress to date

The Play Therapist was appointed in April 2017. The Play Therapist undertakes a combination of direct therapeutic work with children and providing consultations to Social Workers to advise on behaviour management as well as direct interventions with Foster Carers to help them to better understand children's behaviours so they are able to feel

more confident about their skills and their ability to meet the children's needs.

The availability of dedicated time to support direct interventions with children and Carers has been invaluable.

To date the Lead Clinical Psychology post has remained vacant. The funding for the post was agreed at the equivalent of the NHS paygrade 8b (£47,062 - per annum). It has not been possible to recruit to the post in partnership with AMBU in accordance with the original proposal. This has primarily been due to the availability of professionals in this area of work who would be in a position to be seconded from their existing post. Similar discussions have taken place with Cwm Taf Health (CAMHS) but similarly it has not been possible to progress this further.

One option which has been considered is to advertise the post as part of the Children's Services structure. There has been some difficulty in pursuing this:

In order to advertise the post as an NPT post a Job Evaluation was required. The Job Evaluation placed the Lead Consultant Psychology post as an NPT Grade 12 post. This is the equivalent of an NHS grade 8a post which is £40,429 - £47,092 per annum, not a Grade 8b post which is the grading for a Lead Clinical Psychologist. Advertising as a Grade 12 post (£41,025 - £43,821 per annum) would not attract a Lead Clinical Psychologist.

Advertising the post as a full time post contracted to the Local Authority raised difficulties with practitioners whose preference was to have a mixture of independent work and work linked to a clinical setting (such as a health board) in order to maintain their own professional links and accreditation.

Proposal

The proposal is to request an amendment to the original cohort of staff for the Clinical Support Team.

What is proposed is that instead of 1 Play Therapist and a full time Lead Clinical Psychologist; that the funding that has been agreed is used to employ a part time (up to 18.5 hours a week) Psychologist (Grade 12) and a full time Consultant Social Worker (Grade 10) with a specialism in Therapeutic support.

Through discussion with professionals in AMBU consideration has been given to whether the post can be covered by an NHS 8a Clinical Psychologist. This is considered to be appropriate, as the service lead will be directed and overseen by the Principal Officer and Team Manager for the fostering service.

In respect of the Play Therapist - during the time that the Play Therapist has been in post, what has been most successful is the availability to provide direct work with children and carers and where necessary this has been supplemented by commissioned psychological assessments and clinical overview.

The role of the Consultant Social worker would be to work with carers; to supplement the Therapist in assisting the carer to better understand the reasons for behaviours and to provide skills to the carers to support them in managing challenging behaviours. The Consultant Social Worker would also provide direct work with children which would include the use of a range of tools such as life story work for more complex young people; stem story work to help children understand their past and attachments and working to a trauma recovery model and supporting and helping all of the people in the child's life to develop a secure based attachment model to how they respond to the child's need. The aim would be to build resilience in both the carer and the child.

The part time Psychologist role would be to oversee the interventions for the child and carers and give advice and guidance from a clinical perspective; including where necessary assessments of the child to inform the service of how best to meet the needs of the child.

Discussion with professionals who work in a Clinical setting have indicated that there is an increased likelihood of attracting a Psychologist to a part time position as this enable them to continue to have a balance of work in a health based clinical setting and undertake independent work in addition to the work with the service.

Consideration has been given to spot purchasing the Psychology intervention but the preferred service would be to have a member of staff who is able to be part of the regular support to Foster Carers. This in turn has the added advantage of being attractive to new carers who are considering fostering with Neath Port Talbot.

Financial impact

A Financial assessment is attached.

The total budget agreed for establishing the clinical support service is £91,170

The maximum cost of a Clinical Psychologist (including employment costs) is at Grade 12 for up to 18.5 hours a week is £29,360.

The maximum cost of a full time Consultant Social Worker: Grade 10 is £53,650

The proposed revised staffing can be achieved within the already agreed cost.

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members APPROVE the amendment to the approved structure of the Clinical Support Service within the Family Action Support Team as follows:-:

Create 1 x Part time Clinical Psychologist (Grade 12 18.5 hours per week JEID3789)

Create 1 x Full Time Consultant Social Worker - Therapeutic Placement Support (Grade 10 JEID3109)

1 x Full Time Play Therapist (Grade 7, JEID 3686)

FOR DECISION

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The reason for the proposals are as follows;

There have been difficulties in being able to recruit a full time Lead Consultant Psychologist and the post has remained vacant.

A part time Clinical Psychologist post is more attractive to clinicians so we are more likely to recruit to the post without compromising the ethos of the service that we are trying to deliver.

A Consultant Social Worker is a highly skilled post and would be a Practitioner who would have significant experience in delivering direct work to children and carers. They would work under the guidance of the Psychologist and Play Therapist and would have the ability to deliver a wider service to more young people than the Psychologist alone.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Financial Assessment.

Appendix 2 - Current and Proposed Structures

List of Background Papers

None

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