

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children's Young People and Education Executive Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Children's Services and Education Director of Public Health and Wellbeing
DATE:	9 th January 2020

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children's Young People and Education Public Health and Wellbeing
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT: Blackburn with Darwen Adolescent Strategy 2019-2023

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Adolescent Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen has been developed to clearly set out in one place all the services and support for our young people aged 8 to 19 years.

Over 600 young people, staff, partners and elected members have been consulted on what should be included, and this feedback has directly influenced the design of services and shaped future plans.

For Blackburn with Darwen the definition of adolescence has been expanded to 8-19 years to be inclusive of younger children, as part of our commitment to prevention work. This also ensures that all the children and young people we work with are represented in our strategy and the development of the Blackburn with Darwen offer.

The strategy supports young people who collectively have a wide range of needs, and ensures that provision and intervention is offered across Universal, Targeted and Specialist services and across all levels of need (Continuum of Need and Response).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board: approves the Blackburn with Darwen Adolescent Strategy (2019-23) (Appendix A).

3. BACKGROUND

There are approximately 18,500 children and young people aged 11 to 19 years living in Blackburn with Darwen, for which Children's Services and partners deliver a range of support and intervention through both universal services and targeted support. The Adolescent Services arm of Children's Services co-ordinates this offer to ensure that young people get the right help at the right time, and where they are in need of help and protection, they receive a service which safeguards and protects

them.

The development of an Adolescent Strategy is a key Council priority to provide support and services for some of our most vulnerable young people. Evidence suggests some of our young people have needs that are far too great for individual agencies to meet on their own - such as schools, health or other universal services, and often the young people are not eligible for support from statutory social care services.

For young people and their families the strategy outlines what to expect from services and how support can be accessed. The strategy also informs partners working with young people and families, both within and outside the Local Authority, of what Blackburn with Darwen's offer is to help navigate which service or services will be of most benefit to a young person, depending on their level of need.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

At the heart of the strategy is the drive to support our young people more effectively and improve their experiences, wellbeing and life chances during these important transitional years. For some young people, issues affecting their families can repeat over time with growing intensity and complexity, which can lead to increased vulnerability in their teenage years. Partnership working to prevent entry into care, custody or from becoming 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) and keeping young people safe is a focus for this strategy, as well as the need to sustain improvements for young people for longer periods of time.

Children's Services and partners are working with an increasing number of young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Supporting young people and their families at an early stage and at all levels of need, through the framework set out in this strategy, reduces pressure on statutory services by intervening early to prevent entry into care, where appropriate to do so.

Where children and families are assessed but do not meet thresholds for statutory intervention, there is an opportunity to provide early help to prevent further escalation at a later point in time. Some children may be stuck in a 'revolving door' into Children's Services, repeatedly referred and assessed but not accessing appropriate help. This potentially risks children enduring prolonged periods where needs are not addressed and increases the likelihood of recurrent episodes of abuse, neglect or maltreatment.

A collaborative approach to providing support through aligned services is key to the success of the offer to our young people. Over a number of years, the local area has worked to build close and effective partnerships across services with multi-agency teams in many disciplines, and this has strengthened the quality and scope of support available.

The development of a multi-agency Adolescent Hub for 2019/20 will align teams and services in one place to better support our young people and improve their experience of working with the professionals in their lives. Young people in Blackburn with Darwen have told us that they want to access services in one location. In response, a 'one-stop shop' Hub is being developed to access multiple services supporting young people across the continuum of need and response spectrum.

The Hub will boast an integrated team to support young people throughout their adolescent life journey to prevent young people from being transferred between services, and instead supported by one dedicated team. This team will comprise of key partners including Lancashire Care Foundation Trust, Child Action Northwest, Go2 and practitioners from East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service (ELCAS), who will offer advice and signposting to appropriate services. Young people will have access to a lead professional or key worker to support them with their interactions with services, providing consistency to the young person enabling strong and trusting relationships to

develop.

Also in development for 2019/20 is a dedicated Adolescent Panel consisting of key partners to create a bespoke resource to focus specifically on the support needs of young people. The process will enable the right professionals to collectively agree the right multi-agency package of support for a young person and their family which will lead to a faster response and more effective step down to universal provision through partnership working and effective signposting.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The approach in this strategy is informed by recognised good practice and discussion with national and local partners, which has shaped our thinking locally to adopt an innovative and proven model of practice when working with adolescents.

The strategy links with and complements other existing strategies in the borough for children and young people and their families, and does not replace them. These include the Neglect Strategy, Early Help Strategy, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Social Integration Strategy and the Healthy Child Programme.

The effectiveness of the Adolescent Strategy is monitored through the Children's Services Service Development & Practice Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The Service Development and Practice Improvement Plan sets out the priorities and actions that Adolescent Services is responsible to deliver and performance is reported quarterly.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The strategy will be delivered using existing financial resources. Separate contractual arrangements to deliver universal services are in place for Blackburn Rovers Community Trust and Blackburn Youth Zone.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The strategy model will be delivered through the reorganisation and alignment of existing teams.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

9. CONSULTATIONS

The key priorities within this strategy have been developed through consultation with young people and their families and key partners but are also influenced by the wider borough's vision for children and young people. A number of workshops have also been delivered with a cross section of the Children's Services workforce and Elected Members to develop practice, approach and future plans.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Imran Akuji, Head of Adolescent Services
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DATE:	29/11/2019
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A Adolescent Strategy 2019-23
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