No Wrong Door

Ensuring young people access the right services at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs

### Challenge

Young people who enter care during their teenage years tend to spend considerable periods in residential care. They are more likely to have placement breakdowns and can follow a path of multiple placements, over time becoming distrustful of positive relationships, disengaging from education and training and falling into patterns of risky behaviour.

### Innovation

No Wrong Door is an integrated service for complex and troubled young people. Their needs are addressed within a single team. Operating from two Hubs, No Wrong Door brings together a variety of accommodation options, a range of services and outreach support under one management umbrella.

### Partners Involved

No Wrong Door is a partnership led by North Yorkshire County Council and including:

- 7 district councils
- 9 housing/accommodation providers
- Health and CAMHS
- Police

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### Our Innovation

**From placement planning to bespoke placement creation**

The Hub creates a breathing space for young people to make mistakes without hitting crisis. Together, the young person and their key worker develop a timeline and a plan of action that is reviewed regularly and which enables the young person to see and acknowledge the progress he or she has made.

**Pulling expertise into the team as needed, rather than passing cases on**

The Hub team is integrated and multi-disciplinary, including clinical psychologists, police, speech therapists, family circle workers, education and employment support and homelessness support. Practitioners work together in a single space with a common theory of practice based on the Signs of Safety framework.

**A genuine commitment to co-producing provision at every level**

The Hub requires everyone to work together and make things happen in new ways. Changing practice, culture and relationships is hard. Actively involving everyone in the design and continued development of the Hub has been essential.

**Thinking differently about assets, resources and value for money**

Our purpose is to improve outcomes in the long term, not cut costs in the short term. This means looking differently at resources and assets, and building an evidence base that shows the value in investing intensive time, money and expertise in approaches that will make a genuine difference to the lives of young people.

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### Smoothing transitions

Young people told us that they were often moved too quickly, which meant they struggled to adapt to new placements. There was often not enough follow-on support from the children’s home. The No Wrong Door model aims to provide young people with the stability, skills and support whenever they need it to successfully manage these difficult points of transition and, more broadly, the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Whether young people choose to live independently or try a family placement, whether they want to go back into education or find employment, they are consistently supported by their key worker on their journey.

### Engaging a wider group of professionals

If extra support from any other practitioner is needed, these people are pulled into the team rather than the child being referred to them. This has required bringing key partners on board to work innovatively and collaboratively with us, including the police, who have a permanent team member attached to the Hub.

### Instilling a new workforce culture

North Yorks has embraced Restorative Practice and Signs of Safety as evidence-based theories of practice that are adopted across the whole service. This provides a common framework, enabling all staff to talk to one another in the same professional language about the same young people.

### Working in partnership

Strong partnerships have been developed with police, districts, housing providers, health and CAMHS. In addition, council departments have been involved who wouldn’t normally be part of this kind of initiative, including finance and legal, to free up permission and make things happen.

### Creating flexibility to do things differently

A variety of accommodation types are offered by the Hub to meet and flex to the needs of each individual young person. Genuinely bespoke placements have been developed by thinking differently about who, where and when placements can be provided. This includes those traditionally used for holiday or education purposes, which has necessitated an exemption from Ofsted. Flexibility of residential staff has been supported by using zero-hours contracts, on top of regular salary, to pay for immediate and flexible responses.

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### Providing practical support

Many young people are unprepared for life outside the children’s home, and struggle to access education, training and employment. They are consistently supported by their key worker.

### Thinking differently about value for money

Our challenge is to improve young people’s safety and stability, reducing vulnerabilities and improving their emotional wellbeing. This will enable them to engage in education, training and work readiness; to reduce criminal activity; and to engage with the services that can best support them to get where they want to go.

While costs for new bespoke placements are initially high, these are offset by a decrease in costs as adolescents are able to drop down into more stable foster placements. Rapid, intensive responses are expensive but are used for short amounts of time to facilitate slow, managed and more sustainable moves.

### Practitioner-led development

We have maintained a focus on how the new culture is exemplified in adult and professional relationships in addition to professionals’ relationships with children and families. At the beginning of development the team held a culture and practice event that focused on getting specialist roles right and working well together. This set the tone for resilient relationships that could stay strong when things got tough.

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### No Wrong Door

Rethinking for adolescents

North Yorkshire County Council

November 2016

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### Clinical Psychologist working as the NWD Life Coach

"Having worked in several CAMHS and adult services I have seen how some of the most vulnerable people do not meet the criteria for access to mental health services, yet they experience painful levels of emotional distress. These young people continually fall into a gap in services, meaning that often no psychological support is provided.

However, while it is vital for these young people to receive psychological input I also believe that it can be entirely inappropriate for vulnerable young people to be invited to mental health services in order to talk about their thoughts and feelings. Not only because this clinic approach doesn’t work for our young people, but also because being a user of mental health services can provide a narrative that you are ‘mentally unwell’ and that there must be something ‘wrong’ with you. In fact many of the vulnerable young people I have worked with are actually experiencing very normal emotional and cognitive reactions to some very abusive and traumatic experiences, therefore while their emotional and cognitive experiences can cause a great deal of suffering they are also very normal reactions to a set of traumatic life events. If we have any hope of helping these young people we need to deliver services in a way that will not further reinforce their perceptions of themselves as being a ‘problem’, ‘not right’, ‘unwell’, or in any way ‘responsible’ for what they have experienced.

This, I believe, fits with the ‘embedded’ approach we provide within No Wrong Door. I have to admit that initially being ‘not right’, ‘unwell’, or in any way ‘responsible’ for what they have experienced.

Stories from young people

"It’s much better than I thought it would be. I have a key-worker. I can’t think of anything they could do better, I can talk to any of the staff if I need to.” Said to an Ofsted inspector regarding what the young person thought of the service.

"You can choose meals and take turns in preparing them, staff will help you, for all of us to share.”

"The best thing they do here is leave me alone for five minutes when I get wound up. Then they come and talk, they definitely help you.” Said in relation to staff’s support for the young person when they feel upset and angry.

"Staff go looking for you if you go missing.” Said to an Ofsted inspector regarding feeling safe and cared for.

"Knowing that the staff will be there after I have turned 18 makes a big difference and I know they will be because I have seen it happen with others.” Said in a young person’s focus group about what they liked most about No Wrong Door.

"It’s ok mum, it’s different to normal fostering because it’s [name] and I know him already so I am happy.”

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