



Improving cross sector support for children in complex situations with multiple needs

Task and finish group terms of reference

Task and finish group vision

To improve how system partners work together to support and improve outcomes for children and young people who are currently (or at risk of) being deprived of their liberty and who are in the most complex situations, by ensuring that there is an aligned cross-government approach to design, commission and deliver the best possible model of integrated care (children's social care, health, education and youth justice), supported by key stakeholders.

Cohort

The group will focus the first phase of its work on supporting the development of evidence based, therapeutic, integrated co-commissioned models of care and provision to meet the needs of children and young people who are currently (or at risk of) being deprived of their liberty¹ because they pose a danger to themselves or to others, and/or who have been detained for youth justice reasons, whose needs cannot be met through Secure Children Home provision AND whose needs/circumstances cover any of the following:

- Have multiple complex needs across several domains (mental/physical health, social care, education), requiring integrated co-commissioned provision.
- Have severe/high levels of distress.
- May have been referred for a mental health assessment – while noting children and young people may have been assessed under the Mental Health Act and found not to be detainable, or their needs may not be able to be appropriately met within a mental health inpatient unit.
- History of significant/adverse childhood trauma

¹ There has been a steep increase in deprivation of liberty orders (DOLOs) made under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court (which can be used to authorise the DoL of a child when none of the other statutory mechanisms apply, for example when there are no places available in secure children's homes or the criteria under s.25 are not met) – Nuffield DOLOs data.

We recognise that children in this cohort may experience co-morbidity with neurodevelopmental needs and that some may be subject to being detained for justice reasons. This work will be the foundation for future work looking at other cohorts and settings. Future work will explore early help and intervention prior to provision being required.

Task and finish group objectives in 2023 to 2024

Developing further evidence-based guidance, integrated pathway design and other system resources across health, children's social care and youth justice, informed by the Framework for Integrated Care, to support the system to deliver personalised, effective and good quality care. This may include:

- Identifying best practice and supporting its wider adoption.
- Developing the evidence base around success factors and positive practice for meeting the needs of the agreed cohort.
- Mapping user journeys to collate information around barriers, solutions and innovative practice case studies.
- Agree recommendations to pilot and evaluate implementation of integrated model of safe, therapeutic care for the agreed cohort.
- Ensure work is embedded in and taken forward through wider reform programmes where feasible.
- At project closure, make recommendations for future short-, medium- and long-term work.

Task and Finish Group purpose/principles

We will develop and adopt agreed language and narrative (including that these children and young people are everyone's responsibility), modelled through communications and senior leadership, to ensure holistic, therapeutic care which crosses institutional boundaries, that will seek to avoid institutionalised care where possible.

We will establish a stakeholder council to inform and co-produce the work of the group and ensure it aligns with evidence and what children and young people and their family/carers need from cross sector service providers and commissioners.

We will ensure recommendations are grounded in evidence, informed by data, and are deliverable by facilitating testing of innovations and roll-out (where appropriate), collecting and analysing service evaluation data, considering workforce development.

Composition

The Task and Finish Group will meet every 6 weeks. Membership will comprise:

- Department for Education
- NHS England
- Department for Health and Social Care

- Ministry of Justice
- Association of Directors of Childrens Services
- Youth Custody Service
- Office of the Children's Commissioner

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