

Divisions Affected – All

People Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 10 November 2022

Transitions into Adult Social Care

Report by:

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RECOMMENDATION

1. **The People Overview & Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to** note current progress in supporting young people on their journey into adulthood and comment/make recommendations on plans for the future.

Executive Summary

2. As requested by the Committee this report describes Oxfordshire's approach to supporting young people through their transition into adult services and the development and implementation of the Moving into Adulthood team in June 2021.
3. The principles of this new model were co-produced with young people, families and health, education, and social care professionals. The key recommendations were for the young person and family to have a named worker, the adoption of a case management model, to start planning earlier with a focus on outcomes.
4. The report describes how the new service is delivering on these recommendations and the impact that this is having on the young people and their families. It also highlights initiatives the service plan to deliver in the coming months as it continues to develop and improve its offer to young people on their journey into adulthood.

Background

5. The years of adolescence and early adulthood are a time of change, uncertainty, and often anxiety for many young people and their families. This is even more the case for young people who require support due to their experiences of disability, long term condition or illness, or as children in need and the barriers they often face to create the same opportunities as their peers.

6. The need for improved support for young people transitioning to adulthood, supported by social care was identified through feedback from young people and their families, staff in children's and adult services, and through Ofsted inspections and good practice guidance, which highlighted issues and potential improvements. The feedback highlighted that young people's experiences of support through transition into adulthood were variable, and too often people experience delays, and problems with communication and co-ordination.
7. The consequences of poorly co-ordinated transition arrangements can lead to safeguarding risks and costly or unnecessarily restrictive placements, as well as complaints, anxiety and distress for families who already have exceptional responsibilities in their caring roles.

Co-production

8. In response to this a co-production group formed of young people, families and front-line staff worked together to develop recommendations for improving transition into adulthood with support from social care services – the focus was on the transition between children's social care and adult social care services. The group did not review the transitions between other services, for example between children's and adults' mental health services.
9. The group met eight times to discuss their experiences of support and how things could be improved. In total the co-production project involved 108 people, a mix of people using services, carers, providers, and staff.
10. Best practice was taken into consideration when developing the recommendations including visits to Kent and Hampshire, discussions with Essex County Council, reviewing service descriptions from other areas and reviewing guidance from the National Institute for Care and Health Excellence (NICE)¹.
11. The co-production group presented to the council a comprehensive set of proposals that described what a well-supported transition from children's to adult services would look like. They recommended that the council should develop an all-age social care pathway for young people whose disabilities span their lifetime, closely aligned with health and education pathways. Annex 1 shows an example output from the co-production work with children, young people, and families. A diagram showing the co-production journey is available in Annex 2.
12. These proposals were well received by the project sponsors who approved phase two of the project – to translate the recommendation of the co-production group into a full business case. This work developed several options for how the council might organise its approach to transitions. An extensive and robust

¹ [Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services - Feb 2016 \(nice.org.uk\)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA252)

option appraisal was scrutinised by the senior leadership across children's and adult social care. The implementation of an 'all-age' service was agreed at Full Council in February 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the implementation of the service and to ensure funding for the model could be sustained implementation via an 18–25-year-olds with an in-reach into Children's services from the age of 16 was agreed.

Moving into Adulthood Service

13. The Moving into Adulthood service (MiA) went live in June 2021. The service transformed Oxfordshire County Council's approach to supporting young people and their families through transition from children's services to adult social care services.
14. The service delivers a model of support that works with young people aged 18 up to 25 years and their families as well as in-reach into children's services, schools, and colleges from 16 years to build positive relationships early in preparation for a successful move into adulthood.
15. The social care team, comprised of social workers and co-ordinators, work to achieve successful outcomes in a strengths-based way that prevents the need for statutory support and promotes opportunities for people to live as independently as possible in their own community.
16. The objective of the service is to support young people to achieve personal positive outcomes as they move into adulthood across the following domains:
 - Living as Independently as Possible
 - Education and Employment
 - Good Health
 - Friendships and Being Part of the Community
 - Keeping Safe

Named worker / case management for effective relationship building

17. At age 16 each young person is provided with a named MiA caseworker, who provides a single point of contact for them and their family throughout their journey into adulthood.

Earlier identification and planning

18. To achieve the objectives referenced above earlier identification and planning for young people is essential. This is being achieved through the following activities:
 - The service is building strong professional relationships with schools and colleges, with each setting having a named MiA link worker. This provides them with a first point of contact in relation to transitions, supports the flow of information from the service to the schools and

onwards to the children and their families. These relationships support the early identification of young people that may require support from the MiA team as they approach 16.

- The MiA team in-reach into children's planning processes in schools and colleges from the age of 16 to ensure good information and advice is available, and strong relationships are established early.
- Monthly social care transitions meetings are chaired by the MiA team, the meetings are attended by colleagues from across key services such as Children We Care For, Children with Disabilities, SEN Teams. The meetings focus on the identification and support required of children and young people from 14 years already known to the services, enabling MiA to get involved at an earlier stage and begin planning.

Improved information and communication

19. Feedback from parent carers, young people, schools, colleges, and the Moving into Adulthood co-production group identified that the information available to young people and families in relation to their journey into adulthood could be improved.
20. The MiA team work closely with schools, colleges, and the Oxfordshire Family Support Network to deliver webinars, focus groups and engagement events with parents and young people. These cover topics such as support living, mental capacity act and what support might look like for post-16s and post-18s.
21. Oxfordshire Family Support Network have also been commissioned to produce a Moving into Adulthood guide for families which will be published later this year.
22. In addition to this, the Oxfordshire post 16 network of families, schools, colleges, social care, and other key partners was relaunched in early 2022 as families agreed this was a successful way of communicating for them.

Outcome based approach

23. The MiA team's approach to work with children and young people is very much focused on what the individual wants to achieve. They are encouraged to identify and discuss what their aspirations and their passions are, whether these be social, educational, or vocational.
24. This team also works very closely with the young person's parents/family/carers as this can often represent a time of significant change for them. Together the team and the young person's loved ones work together to support them to achieve their own personal aspirations.
25. To support this, the team have developed resource guides that document the opportunities and support that is available within localities across the county. This information is invaluable in enabling the team to support the young person to achieve their outcomes.

26. The team is committed to delivering a person-centred, family-focused service, that supports young people towards achieving their outcomes. This is being evidenced through the following activities:
- Regular case audits are carried out within the team, part of these audits focus on reviewing the extent that strengths-based, outcome-focused methods are being used. With feedback to front-line staff provided as required.
 - All members of the team complete the 'Working with families' training delivered by the Oxfordshire Family Support Network.
 - A worker from each of the Oxfordshire Employment Service and Community Connections teams will work alongside the MiA Team to focus on identifying supported apprenticeship/internships and opportunities in the voluntary and community services to improve the young person's wellbeing.

Links with other services

27. In addition to the improved links with education establishments referenced above the introduction of the MiA team has also strengthened process and relationships in the following areas:

Adults' / Children's Social Care

28. The Multi-Agency Placement and Commissioning (MAPaC) decision panels are a key example of how ASC and CSC are working better together. The meetings take place fortnightly and are attended by Adults Social Care, Children's Social Care, Education, Continuing Health Care, Commissioning and Brokerage colleagues. These meetings enable funding decisions to be taken jointly by social care, education, and health. MAPaC streamlines the previously disjointed process and enables a holistic view to be taken of the young person and decisions made accordingly.
29. Children's and Adults' Social Care teams also undertake joint training in areas such as Mental Capacity Act Overview, the role of social care in SEND and, importantly, the Working with Families training delivered by the Oxfordshire Family Support Network.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

30. A key strategic objective of the SEND service, as highlighted in the recently published Oxfordshire Local Area SEND Strategy 2022-27, is to support in the positive move into adulthood for young people with SEND. The MiA team work closely with colleagues in the Preparing for Adulthood team in children's services and the schools and colleges on the early identification of young people to provide support on their journey into adulthood. To support the delivery of this strategic objective a designated Social Care Officer has been appointed to specifically focus on the links between the MiA team and SEND.

Commissioning

31. The MiA are proactively involved in commissioning process for services that support the transition from children's to adult services in a way that had not been possible previously. In particular the team are focussed on supporting the development of supported living services in the county that can be used as an alternative to out of county residential college placements. We know that from an outcomes perspective it is better for people to be based close to family and friends in communities that they know. These services are also much more cost effective and deliver better value for money for the council.

Health

32. Quarterly Health Transitions meetings are chaired by the Oxford Health Learning Disability Team, these meetings ensure that the health care of young people is taken into account during their transition alongside the social care aspects. Key partners involved in these meetings alongside the MiA Team are the Learning Disability CAMHS Team and the Continuing Health Care Team.

Voluntary and Community Services

33. The team have also established positive links with voluntary and community sector partners such as the Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN), who have been supporting with improved communications to young people and families and on joint training across Adults' and Children's services. See paragraph 44 for feedback on this relationship from OxFSN.

Impact on Young People

34. Currently the team is actively supporting **385** young people to plan for their journey into adulthood. Since the team was formed in June 2021 it has worked with a total of **560** young people.

Earlier identification and support

35. The teams have focussed on developing metrics that can evidence that we are identifying and supporting young people earlier, which leads to smoother transitions with fewer decisions made at a time of crisis.
36. Percentage of people open to MiA or who have had an assessment by their 18th birthday - Currently 85% of the people open to MiA had an assessment by their 18th birthday. The team is working towards this becoming 100%.
37. Percentage of people that were referred to MIA at age16 - Currently 21% of all referrals to the MiA team are for 16-year-olds. Due to the improved working with partners described in this paper it is expected that this figure will increase over time.

Improved transitions

38. A great example of how the team is supporting improved transitions is in relation to the work that is done to support young people out of residential education establishments back to the family home or into supported accommodation. To date the MiA team have supported 27 young people with this transition. Due to the earlier identification and the support provided by the team these have been well planned, smooth transitions. Without the need for decisions to be rushed or taken at a time of crisis, which can be stressful for workers, young people, and their families.

Innovative solutions

39. The MiA team works alongside the Adult Social Care Community Connections team to support families who wish to set up supported living for their young people and others. This enables those young people to move out of high cost, out of county residential placements into supported accommodation in Oxfordshire.
40. Working collaboratively to obtain the support of local communities is fundamental in enabling this approach to be successful. Social care and commissioning teams work closely with communities to aid this type of support to be accepted locally. This enables young people to achieve their desired outcomes by living closer to their family and friends whilst maintaining a cost-efficient approach to the delivery of locally based support.

Feedback from young people, families, and our partners

41. The team worked with young people and families to co-produce a Let's Talk Survey which enables families to provide anonymous feedback on the service they are receiving from the MiA Team. Positive comments, such as those shown below, point to improved outcomes for young people and their families:
- "All suggestions & advice has been fantastic, and we are all very grateful for all of the support given to us"
 - "Social worker is well informed and gives clear responses to queries"
 - "There are many things that Z and I really appreciate about working with you. These include:
 1. Honesty. We trust what you say to us. You deliver even difficult messages in a sensitive manner and reach agreement with us productively. You have a sensitive, successful way of challenging me when I need to be challenged which helps me move my thinking on whilst leaving me feeling supported and listened to.
 2. Availability. When we need you, you communicate quickly by text or email to arrange a suitable time to talk. When your availability to talk is

not for a few days you explain this and set a date and contact us as agreed.

3. Being able to support us from where we are. We have been emotionally exhausted by 'the system' for many years, having to fight every step of the way to navigate mystical LA SEN policy, assessment, and procedure. This has left us jaded, mistrusting and often in fight mode. You seem to have recognised this, been able to meet us where we are and are helping us to work with you. This is our first experience of ever feeling like we are working with an LA representative

Thank you for your support. We really value and trust your work with us”

- “I want to acknowledge that Kingfisher School are already working with the ‘Moving into Adulthood’ team and have been very encouraged by the knowledge, skills, and commitment to establishing a positive relationship with individual students and their families that members of that team have demonstrated”
- “Can I say how professional and helpful your interaction with A and myself has been. You quickly grasped what A’s requirements were and you have acted quickly and efficiently to put his Direct Payments and financial review in order. It is very refreshing to actually believe the system to protect my wonderful son can work and my own stress has alleviated enormously. He will always be our primary concern but if we and OCC can work together it makes the journey seem lighter.”

42. The Oxfordshire Family Support Network is one of the team’s key partners in delivering joined up support for young people moving into adulthood, below is a quote from them regarding their working relationship with the MiA Team:

- “The moving into adulthood stage is one of the most stressful times for families and can be a time of real anxiety and uncertainty. So, at OxFSN we were delighted when this team was formed.

We believe that the working relationship between OxFSN and the Moving into Adulthood Team is an example of co-production at its best and here’s why...

Right from the start, under the leadership of Sam Harper, the team have had a real commitment to working well with families. The whole team did the OxFSN Working with Families training and have demonstrated from the beginning a keenness to listen to families and work with us in order to get families input when they are seeking advice and information. Subsequently, the MIA team have been closely involved in developing the Moving into Adulthood Handbook and other materials which will benefit both professionals and families. We have continued to find the MIA team to be responsive when OxFSN approach them – we always get a reply and equally, the MIA team are proactive in referring families to us when they recognise they may need additional support.

As a result, mutual trust and a respectful working relationship has been developed, leading to a productive approach to supporting families during this most difficult stage.”

Future Plans

43. The service continues to develop and improve its offer to young people, the following initiatives are planned over the coming 12 months:
- Expanding the “Chair my own review” initiative – Chairing their own review puts the young person front and centre of the review process. It provides them with choice and control and ensures that they can voice their aspirations for the future. The team have facilitated a number of reviews in this way already and want to encourage more young people to take up this option where they are able to.
 - Work closely with Oxfordshire Employment Service (OES) to develop supported apprenticeship/internship opportunities for young people. A named OES worker will be attached to the MiA Team to specifically identify and facilitate employment opportunities for young people transitioning into adulthood.
 - Continue to work closely with the Community Connectors team to identify opportunities for young people to get involved in on the days they are not attending an educational setting. These opportunities are often in voluntary or community services and focus on opportunities to improve the young person’s wellbeing.
 - Align Moving into Adulthood planning with the Planning Lives Process which takes place at the Year 9 review (age 14). This will provide young people and their families an opportunity to develop a single plan focusing on their aspirations for the future that takes into account their education, health, and care support requirements.
 - Further promote the Let’s Talk survey - The team will continue to promote this survey and encourage young people and their families to complete it. Managers in ASC are working with colleagues in Corporate Services to identify the most effective channel to distribute the survey as well as the most appropriate times to ask for the feedback e.g., following initial review, following a service provision etc. The information gathered from the survey will be critical in the continuous improvement of the service the team offers.

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Annexes: Annex 1 Example feedback from Children & Young People
Annex 2 MiA Co-production Journey

Background papers: Nil

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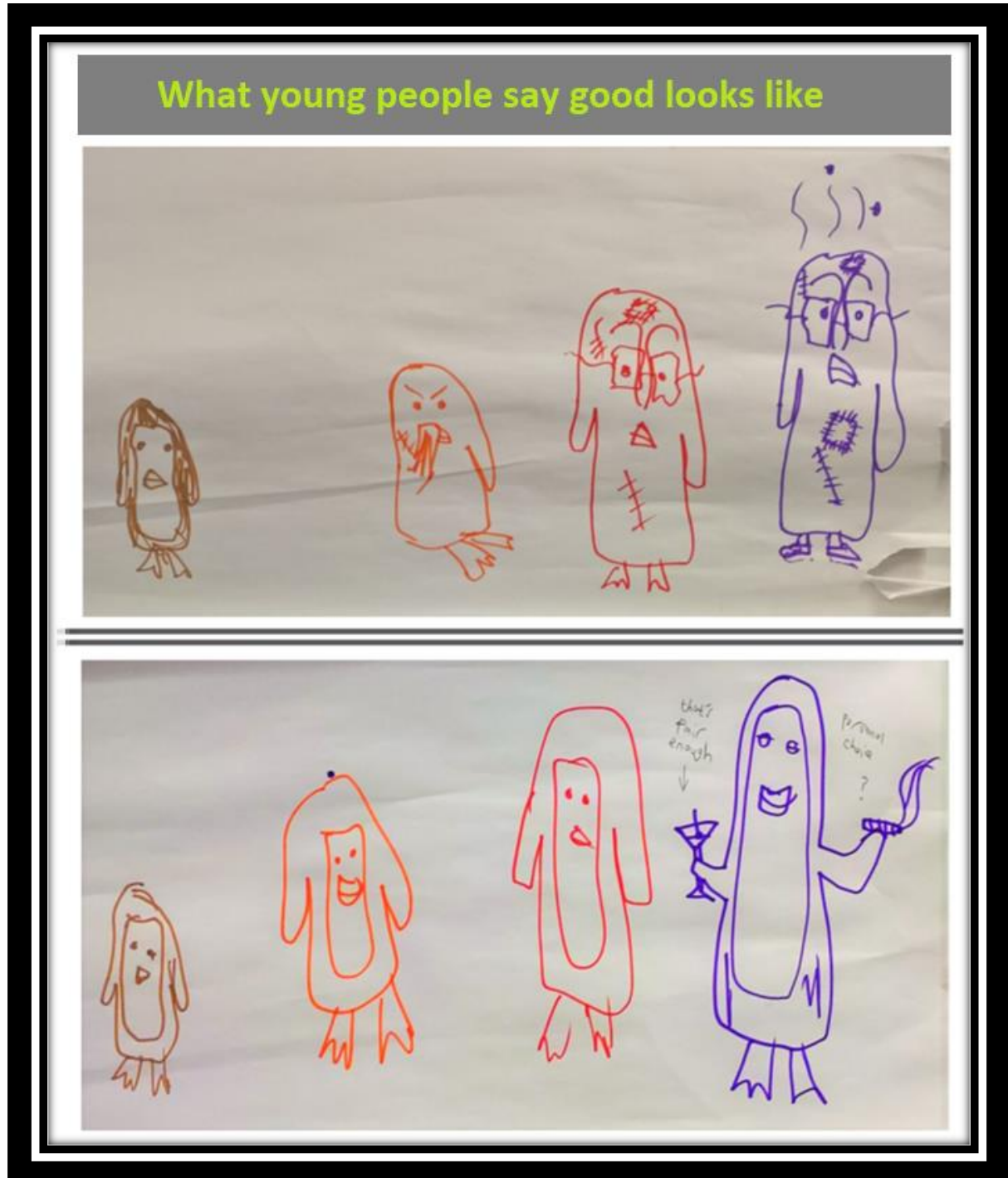
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Annex 1 - Example feedback from Children & Young People

This is a picture a member of the co-production group drew to show what we don't want to happen and what we do want to happen as young people grow up.



Annex 2 - MiA Co-production Journey

