

# People & Health Overview Committee

21 March 2023

## Birth To Settled Adulthood - Report of the Independent Chair

### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

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**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:** An update to the Committee on progress with the Birth To Settled Adulthood Programme (B2SA).

**Recommendation:** The Committee is requested to provide feedback.

**Reason for Recommendation:** Birth To Settled Adulthood is a major improvement and transformation programme and the Committee has an important role to play in ensuring that it has the desired impact.

### 1. Report

1.1 As Independent Chair I made my last (and initial) report to the Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and committed to regular updates at that meeting. This is, therefore, the second progress report.

1.2 I have been in role for 12 months and the overall assessment of the work undertaken in 2022 is that it has laid the majority of the foundations for the programme to transition from 'getting ready' to 'getting going'. That is to say, the partnership between Dorset Council, NHS Dorset and the Dorset

Parent Carer Council is such that there was agreement at the start of 2023 that sufficient groundwork had been undertaken in the previous twelve months that the crucial activity of service redesign could commence.

1.3 This is an important milestone for the partnership as it represents the first significant point in the programme where parents, carers, children and young people, along with those who commission and deliver services, will start to formulate and see the shape of the future pathways and services.

1.4 There have been a number of important, positive developments that have enabled this point to be reached; and they are also conditions that the Committee may wish to re-examine at future meetings to assure itself that the rate of progress set out in the Programme Plan is maintained.

1.4.1 Firstly, whilst the programme has been ably supported by a combination of Project Officers since early 2022, between October 2022 and March 2023, a full-time, experienced Programme Director was in post. This brought to the programme a greater focus, drive and oversight that means there is a revised programme (agreed in the last quarter of 2022) with logical phasing, better defined activities and success criteria, clearer milestones and a target completion date. There is a commitment to provide further strategic capacity of this nature which will be essential in maintaining momentum.

1.4.2 Secondly, executive directors and their teams across Dorset Council and NHS Dorset organisations have invested further time in strengthening relationships, leading to a more deeply shared understanding of the programme's ambition and better mobilisation of human resources. Together, this creates a much greater confidence that there is a truly shared mission and that the capacity and capabilities will be in place to deliver on it.

There is a report (at paragraph 4) from the former Programme Director that advises the Committee of a Joint Declaration signed by Dorset Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Parent Carer Council that sets out shared principles to be adhered to in undertaking the service redesign work. This is a welcome and positive development and reflects the strengthening partnership that is delivering this programme.

1.4.3 Thirdly, there has been consistent, constructive executive political oversight, support and challenge throughout the first

year (and it continues into the second). This is ensuring, because there is a partnership delivering this programme, that there is strong democratic oversight holding partners to account for their commitment and the progress being made.

1.4.4 Fourthly, as Independent Chair, I am better equipped to assess progress, issues and risks because the former Programme Director, supported fully by the partnership, assembled an improved programme plan, reporting process and risk assessment framework. These came into place at the end of 2022 and the Board has received most positively its first report based on the new formats in January 2023.

2. As Chair, I am able to report, therefore, to this Committee that I have confidence that the partnership's ambition, plan and commitments are strongly indicative that the programme will progress within the timeframes set out. There are, though inevitably a small number of strategic risks to delivery and, as with the (positive) conditions referred to in the above paragraphs, I would like to draw attention to the potential challenges.
  - 2.1 Firstly, focus. This a major programme and it has, in total, a 30-month timeline (January 2022 to March 2024). It will be crucial to successful completion that attention, capacity and capabilities are maintained in a time when there are many competing (and, inevitably, unforeseen) demands on people's time.
  - 2.2 Secondly, funding. This is a multi-faceted risk (e.g., savings; inflation; rising demand; etc) and, as such, the programme will need to be clear on the available resource across the whole of 0 – 25 age range both now and into the medium term. As yet, not all resources have been mapped; nor, therefore, is there an indicative funding envelope for the redesigned service for its go live date in March 2024. This will need to be addressed sooner rather than later to ensure that the partnership resources available are sufficient to deliver the new model.
  - 2.3 Thirdly, workforce. A programme of this scale means that there are many staff across multiple organisations and service areas who need to be prepared effectively for the changes that lie ahead. Good work is underway to address this challenge. I have, for example, now participated in two staff webinars, the second of which targeted relevant staff across Dorset Council and NHS Dorset and was also supported by Dorset Parent Carer Council. There is much more underway, but this area of preparation

will become all the more important as the redesign work progresses and new pathways and service models come into focus.

2.4 Fourthly, communications and engagement. Throughout this programme it is vitally important that parents, carers, children and young people are effectively communicated with about the changes. They also need to be engaged and involved in a timely, rewarding, impactful manner when there is a need for co-production. A refreshed approach is being taken to these important issues and I will be ensuring that the Board monitors impact closely.

3. I have focused this report on some of the key conditions for success and the risks most needing close attention and mitigation.

3.1 The most important message in this report is that this major programme is, at the start of 2023, on track to deliver the much needed and long-awaited improvement and transformation to the experience and services available to support children and young people with a special educational need or disability. It is challenging work, but I see the commitment to making these changes across the whole of the partnership; and, perhaps, as important, a growing and positive collaborative effort that is making this partnership stronger month-by month.

3.2 The challenges, of course, are not inconsiderable – but they are manageable – and I look forward to making further positive reports to the Committee.

#### 4. **Update from the former Programme Director**

4.1 Dorset B2SA Partnership Joint Declaration (please see background papers).

4.1.1 The Dorset Local Area has an ambitious change programme to improve the quality of support provided to children and young people who have special educational needs or disability as they prepare for adult life.

4.1.2 To support this, the following joint declaration outlines and confirms the commitment made by Dorset Council's Children's and Adult Social Care, Dorset Council elected members, NHS Dorset, and Dorset Parent Carer Council to work in partnership towards delivering our plans and associated improved outcomes.

4.1.3 To achieve these, the partnership is committed to ensuring the following principles are applied as a minimum when considering the options available to us and when delivering the necessary improvements to our service offer:

- The partnership shares the vision for children and young people as stated in Dorset Council's SEND Strategy.  
*"We want our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to be healthy, happy and safe and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people."*  
**'Our vision for SEND in Dorset: SEND is everybody's business.'**  
**Dorset Council SEND strategy 2021 -2024.**
- Our service offer will be compliant with statutory requirements as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Equality Act 2010, Care Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2014, Children and Families Act 2014, Mental Health Act 1983 (2007) and the Health and Care Act 2022.
- The partnership is underpinned by an effective and equitable Joint Commissioning Strategy that enables us to come together in a place-based service.
- Our service offer will ensure that assessments and provision are agreed together.
- We will use inspection reports, user feedback and the 'As Is' analysis of the current pathway to resolve issues and concerns.
- Our service offer will ensure a seamless experience for Children, Young People until they reach a settled adulthood.
- Our service offer is led by our shared ambition for young people to achieve their outcomes, to have access to better life opportunities and to be the best they can be.
- Our service offer will ensure that information, advice, and guidance is accessible and available at the right time to everyone.
- Our service design will ensure that young people and parent carers know who to contact, to ensure early conversations happen in the key areas of Education & Employment, Independent Living, Health & Wellbeing and Community Inclusion.
- We will create our service offer by involving all stakeholders and partners.
- All safeguarding requirements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are fully understood and complied with.

4.1.4 To support this, the partnership has also agreed the high-level timeline and phasing for delivery of the in-scope service re design and pathways development leading to the 'go live' date of March 2024 (please see background papers).

## **5. Top Three Risks and Mitigation**

5.1 In paragraph 2 of this report, the Independent Chair has set out a set of potential challenges that the programme could face. As part of the programme architecture, there is a risk register and the top three risks recorded are set out below (with present mitigations)

- Risk of delay due to lack of capacity of service re-design leads

*Analysis is currently underway to identify the skill sets and numbers of resources needed to free up the required 40% capacity of the 14-25 and 0-25 workstream leads.*

- Risk to realisation of savings due to sources still to be confirmed.

*Detailed identification/confirmation of savings and their associated timelines is currently being worked on.*

- Reputational risk from out-of-scope deliverables being associated with B2SA.

*A robust communications strategy is in place to ensure clear messages are delivered confirming what will be delivered by the programme and to avoid confusion between those and current day to day service delivery.*

## **6. Financial Implications**

None arising specifically from this report. It is important to note, however, that there are financial risks associated with this programme, notably the need to establish the future funding envelope necessary to deliver to redesigned service model. It will also be important to ensure that resource continues to be available for further programme director capacity.

## **7. Environmental Implications**

None.

## **8. Well-being and Health Implications**

None.

**9. Other Implications**

None.

**10. Risk Assessment**

None required.

**11. Equalities Impact Assessment**

None required.

**12. Appendices**

None.

**13. Background Papers**

[Birth to Settled Adulthood Joint Declaration](#)

[Birth to Settled Adulthood Timeline](#)