



No Wrong Door Evaluation Summary

Background

The North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) No Wrong Door (NWD) innovation provides an integrated service for young people, aged 12 to 25, who either are in care, edging to or on the edge of care, or have recently moved to supported or independent accommodation whilst being supported under NWD. It operates from 2 hubs in Scarborough and Harrogate. Each hub has a team that consists of a manager, 2 deputy managers; NWD hub workers; a communications support worker; a life coach and a police liaison officer. The integrated team supports the young person to ensure that they are not passed from service to service. Some young people are placed in the residential hubs, and others are supported by outreach while either in foster care, or living with their families.

Aims and objectives

The NWD innovation aims to improve accommodation stability; engagement and achievements in education, employment and training (EET); relationships with others; planning of transitions from care to independent living; wellbeing; and support in a crisis. It also aims to reduce high risk behaviours, including criminal activity, self-harm, child sexual exploitation, missing incidents, drug and alcohol misuse; and to reduce costs to society.

Evaluation

A process, impact and economic evaluation was undertaken. The objectives of the evaluation were to examine the functions of NWD and identify any strengths and weaknesses, measure changes in outcomes for young people and value for money. Quantitative and qualitative data were utilised, this included baseline interviews with 60 young people that accessed NWD (32 follow-ups); 24 hub workers; 11 birth and adoptive parents; 12 foster carers; and 50 members of staff at baseline (27 at follow-up). In addition Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores for 472 young people were obtained. A child level data tracker was developed and was supplemented with data from the Management information System. Financial data including staff salaries, expenditure and placement costs were used to evaluate the value for money of the innovation.

Findings

The NWD innovation has successfully launched and made substantial progress towards achieving its aims:

- Compared to a matched cohort during the first 2 years of NWD the majority (86%) 191 of the 290 young people referred to NWD remained out of the care system.
- There has been a decrease in placement moves since NWD began, with 2 placement moves being the most common in the year prior to NWD; being experienced by 49% of those referred, but 1 placement move being the most common in the last year of NWD; being experienced by 41% of referrals.
- Out of area placements were lower in NYCC compared to national data and in comparison with their statistical neighbours. In addition, only 1 young person under NWD has been placed out of area.
- The majority (76%) of young people that entered NWD were in EET and remained involved in EET. There was also progress for those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) when they entered NWD, with a quarter (25%) going on to be engaged in EET.

- There is evidence of a reduction in criminal activity for young people that were supported by NWD. In March 2015, immediately prior to NWD commencing, there were 63 arrests of young people who would work with NWD. By the end of the evaluation period, September 2016, this had reduced to 39 arrests.
- Nearly a third (32%) of young people under NWD had either ceased or reduced their substance use.
- Incidents of NWD young people going missing halved (from 503 incidents to 253). In addition more involvement from the life coaches, communication support workers and police liaison officers resulted in lower levels of missing incidents for those placed at the hubs.
- When NWD started, the average SDQ score for young people receiving support under NWD was 19.5. At the end of the evaluation period, the average score had improved to 16.8 (lower SDQ scores indicating improvement).
- Evidence suggests positive relationships between young people and NWD staff. 18 out of 37 young people identified a NWD staff member as the person they would speak to if they had a problem.
- Whilst some young people reported being prepared and supported during their transition to independent living and adulthood, a few others described abrupt moves.

Cost benefits

- Costs avoided to the police as a result of a reduction in arrests and missing incidents were in the region of £200,000 during the first year of NWD.
- The estimated cost savings associated with cases being assessed by the life coaches within NWD rather than a referral to CAMHS was in the region of £160,000 per annum.
- The estimated cost savings associated with the work of the communication support workers was just over £300,000 per annum.
- The costs associated with out of area placements are estimated to be £8,500 per week, or in excess of £440,000 per annum. NWD reduced the use of out of area placements and generated cost savings.
- For the cohort of young people that accessed NWD, the total costs associated with placement change was in excess of £65,000 in the year prior to NWD. This figure reduced by approximately £20,000 for the NWD cohort as a consequence of increased placement stability.

Recommendations

- The evidence presented relates to a set of 10 distinguishing features of NWD (see p49 of the full report). These should form the basis of the development of NWD programmes in other LAs.
- Consistent and committed leadership at director and management level is required to facilitate effective implementation of the programme, and ensure the development and growth of NWD.
- Where teams or new and existing staff are employed as part of the development of a new service, it is important that they are supported to develop positive working relationships.
- The use of impact data to inform funding decisions is encouraged to support the sustainability of future NWD innovations.

Changes made in services in response to evaluation findings

- The police liaison officers are now permanently funded by North Yorkshire Police due to costs avoided to the police as a result of a reduction in arrests and missing incidents.
- Most NWD staff members have been given permanent contracts. These financial commitments have been secured through the use of emerging findings of the impact and value for money of NWD.
- The second NWD supported accommodation unit is currently under development.

The DFE's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme funded this project and its independent evaluation. Co-ordination of the evaluation was undertaken by the Rees Centre from the University of Oxford (www.reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk.) A full copy of this report can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications