

Stepping Stones Update

March 2022

People Overview Committee



Purpose/Scope



The Project is based on the North Yorkshire No Wrong Door Project which successfully improved the safety and stability of children and young people by a right people, right place, right time approach

The purpose of the Stepping Stones project is to:

- Reduce the number of children requiring high cost residential placements - at start this was 65
- Total saving/avoidance targets of £6.285 million
- Increase the number of children being able to safely return to live with their family or a foster family
- Provide a holistic, psychologically informed approach which provides wrap around, individualised support to children, young people and adults in families
- Reframe the view and use of residential care, where essential to a short term intervention rather than long term solution
- Address issues of placement availability and quality – National issue.

Vision



The Stepping Stones project is based around a multi disciplinary hub with a residential setting attached to the project and with Family Group Conferencing model at its core.

Foster carers will be trained to enhance their skill-set to ensure children placed will be successful and sustainable.

The three main areas of focus will be

- Parenting support - with links to community support and an Early Help offer, stopping children becoming looked after.
- Edge of Care – multi disciplinary team will offer a whole family, systemic approach.
- Step down and out of high cost placements to foster care or home.

The project is an invest to save initiative, commenced April 2021, a year later than planned.

Investment is **£2,066 million** over 3 years plus **£150,000** capital for the therapeutic space.

Why do children end up in high cost residential?



Range of reasons:

- Complex disabilities, particularly those that result in physically and aggressive challenging behaviours, those that require very low sensory stimulation environments etc.
- Children who have experienced high levels of severe childhood trauma – who relationships are really difficult and they cannot manage the intensity of a family environment.
- Children whose needs have gone unmet over a number of years and have not had the right support at the right time to address the needs.
- Mental Health issues not identified and supported and children require high levels of support / supervision to keep them safe.

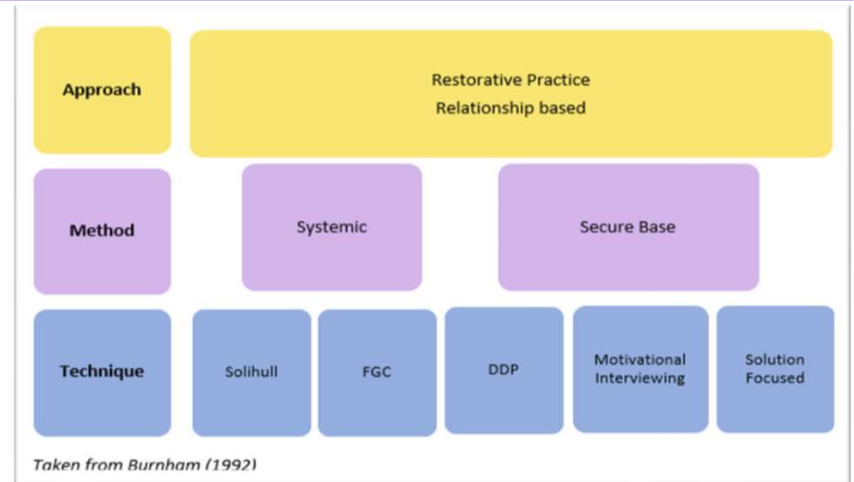
Therapeutic Approach

The Stepping Stones model is a holistic, psychologically informed approach which provides wrap around, customised support for children, young people and adults.

Skills and experience will be disseminated across the Stepping Stones community via training and skills sharing

The Team has so far attended training on: Restorative Practice, Systemic Training. Managing Challenging Behaviour, County Lines Awareness, Finding My Voice, Graded Care Profile 2, Motivational Interviewing, Supervision for Team Managers (Senior), SSCP Neglect, How to engage families, Team Teach Training, Solihull Approach and DDP training.

Clinical Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapists roles are yet to be recruited to.



Phased Approach – Original Project Plan

Project is managed by a Project Manager, with a Steering Group chaired by the Project Sponsor, and reports into Residential Children's Board.



Phase 1 – 2021-22

- Recruitment to specific key roles
- Development of pathways to access support
- Implementation of robust outreach therapeutic model, building on successful Havenbrook outreach model, including building work.
- Recruitment of therapeutic foster carers

Phase 2- 2022-24

- Development of physical hub (including use of a Residential care home to support the project- dependencies with the Residential Growth Project)
- Progress work to step children down and out of care
- Monitor outcomes for children and cost avoidance savings for the service

Phase 1 Milestones Achieved



Milestones - Phase 1		
Setting up the Stepping Stones Hub Team	Recruitment and employment of a range of posts to structure the team at the hub.	80% achieved
Training the Stepping Stones Hub Team	Training the recruited members of the team in a range of therapeutic approaches to facilitate an integrative model of working with children to address their traumas, needs and behaviours. And design a programme of training for new staff.	80% achieved
Facilitating pathways into the project	producing a clear process for the pathway for children at all stages of need – approaching care, on the edge of care and in care onto the project.	80% achieved
Formulating the Stepping Stones Therapeutic Approach	Designing an integrative therapeutic model which will provide wrap around support for young people, families and foster carers.	80% achieved
Conversion of buildings at Havenbrook	Conversion of buildings at Havenbrook for outreach work to be undertaken	50% achieved
Forging partnerships and collaboration working	Making links with professionals from a range of disciplines -health, education, career advice, mentoring etc. within the public, private and voluntary sector to provide a range of support and opportunities to young people on the project.	25% achieved
Monitoring the outcomes of the project	setting up a team to monitor the outcomes and success of the project and produce feedback to inform the project.	25% achieved
Recruitment of Stepping Stones Foster Carers	Marketing and recruitment of foster carers with specific skills and experience in supporting children with complex needs and challenging behaviour.	Not yet achieved
Training the Stepping Stones Foster Carers	Training foster carers in a range of therapeutic approaches to supplement their existing skillset and facilitate an integrative model of working with children to address their traumas, needs and behaviours	Not yet achieved

Project Targets 2021-2024



The project aims to support children and families through multi-disciplinary working and outreach support, to achieve at least:

- **15** total placements being avoided (children not needing to become looked after)
- **15** step down from residential to internal foster care or reunification home

Overall aim to save/avoid **£6.3 million** spend from placements budget

Year 1

The targets for 2021/22 were

- 3 avoidance, saving £358,100
- 3 step downs saving £340,300 (Total savings target of £698,400)

As at **28th February 2022** the team have exceeded targets:

£1.961m avoidance/savings reflecting the

- 26 cost avoidance cases,
- 6 successful step downs from residential or fostering placements to family and
- 2 short term, but ultimately unsuccessful step downs from residential or fostering placements to family

- Savings achieved in-year of **£1.961m** against a target of £0.698m means that the original savings target has been surpassed by **£1.263m**.
- The gross annual savings (full-year effect) would equal **£4.519m**.

This is against actual project revenue expenditure totalling **££608,863** (28th February 2022) with a forecast annual underspend of **£89,535** for year 1 (primarily due to delays in recruitment)

Average Weekly placement costs used to calculate avoidance figures 2021-22



Average Placement costs as at 31-3-21	Weekly
Average External Residential = £229,729 per annum	£4406
Average M&B External Residential = £48,852 (12 weeks assessment)	£4071
Average Internal Residential = £315,708 per annum	£6055
Average Internal Foster Care = £20,282 per annum	£389
Average External Foster Care = £42,390 per annum	£813
Average Supported Accommodation = £89,733 per annum	£1721

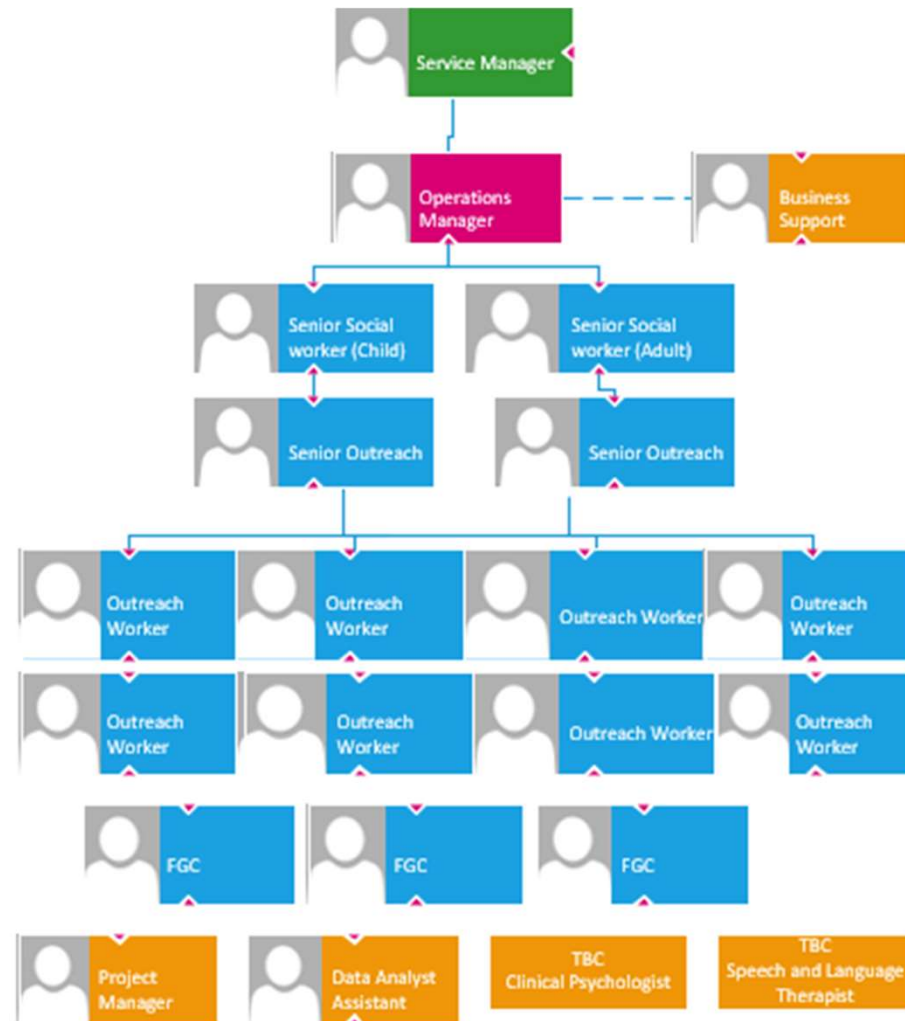
Stepping Stones Team Structure



- A Service Manager
- An Operations Manager
- 2 Senior Social Workers (adult and child focus)
- 2 Senior Outreach Workers
- 8 Outreach Workers
- 1 Data Analyst Assistant
- 1 Project Manager
- 1 Business Support

To be recruited

- 1 x 0.8 Clinical Psychologist
- 2 x 0.5 Speech and Language Therapist



Operations – (as at the 28th February 2022)



Achievement against Targets:

- 26 avoidance
- 6 Step down
- 220 children identified
- 220 consultations held
- 150 progressed for Stepping Stones support
- 66 children continuing to receive support
- 51 cases have closed without a cost saving
 - 14 = risk escalated
 - 17 = other 6 x CLA, 8 = CP, 1 = CIN, 2 = Assessment
 - 20 = non engagement

Challenges:

- To recruit and have in post dedicated staff from partner agencies, delays in progress to achieve the multi-disciplinary hub.
- Ensuring 'by-in' from partners is not just participation, but financial and dedicated staff contributions.

Multi Agency Working



- The Stepping Stones approach considers what is right for a child from a multi-agency perspective at the start of our involvement which is needs driven with the intention of removing exposure to additional trauma by having extensive placement moves through the system.
- Stepping Stones hold fortnightly hub meetings with partner agencies including, health, education, police and housing, the aim being, to share information in a timely manner about those families that have received consultations for Stepping Stones, and ensure that either via sign posting from our colleagues, or up-skilling of our outreach team we are able to access the right service and support at the right time for our families

Future Developments



- Build on the success of the Model – significantly upscale it.
- The Upscale of the project to enable more children and Families to be reached, **targeting those currently in residential care.**
- Ensure the upscale is across the multi-agency partnership, in particular Health - to ensure a Trauma Informed Practice Model that is supported by a clinical expertise.
- Focus on prevention of escalation – a joined up approach. Use of Data Intelligence to predict and target the right children & families.
- Be a Local Authority that delivers on the vision that children are best cared for at home, where safe to do so, or within an alternative family environment.
- Reduce the number of children from High Cost Residential Placement from 64 to 15 (aspirational) 20 – 25 (achievable) over 5 years.

Future Developments – What is needed....



- Council support for the Vision and Service Development from Members as well as Senior Officers.
- A system wide commitment to the Vision of children are best cared for in families. Requires system leaders to solution find to barriers eg: pathways for assessment and accessing services, recruitment etc
- The system to understand the financial impact of the current model in both childhood and adulthood and see the financial benefits of committing to the approach. Increased and wider breadth of financial modelling.
- A system wide commitment to the right support at the right time in a prevention culture of joined service delivery and in a Trauma Informed framework.
- Barriers of contribution of staff, skills, finance and pathways to be challenged and resolved.
- Agreement has been given to move to a Programme Management approach to develop and deliver an upscaled project.

Overview of what we do with families:



- Intensive work with families (up to 7 days a week dependent on need)
- On the first visit we check with the family what areas they want support with, and then review after 12 weeks to support them in their view of what needs to change
- When family is in crisis we provide a timely response
- Consultations – enable us to gather a brief overview and decide if right family
- Work is based on a Consent led and meaningful engagement approach
- We will close our involvement at the right time for the child and the family
- Group supervision allows input from the team to work through hypotheses and approaches
- Collaborative approach – working with the social worker