

# Practice guide

## Family Help & Children's Social Care Sufficiency - Complex Needs Hub, Warrington

### Background, purpose and rationale

There is a general lack of sufficiency for care provision locally, including foster care, which is driving up costs from private providers, and meaning children are accessing residential provision that does not always best meet their needs.

We have observed an increasing trend of young with complex, multifaceted needs who require simultaneous support from a wide range of different professionals and agencies. These increases are causing cost pressures, due to young people having to be externally placed. These are all young people that the local authority believe could have been supported by the Complex Needs Hub to secure more timely and proportionate support, potentially at a lower cost. In terms of its financial ambitions, the Complex Needs Hub aims reduce spend on external agency placements and internal placements via its Outreach programme that aims to support young people to remain at home in the care of their family.

### What we did to improve children's outcomes and experiences

We completed a review of the services we provide against the developing needs of our most vulnerable and decided to be bold and innovative. We committed to a robust and appropriate sufficiency plan that would see the creation of the Complex Needs Hub and other residential and edge of care provisions. We involved and collaborated with our partners, in particular the NHS, to ensure our operating model is effective and robust allowing us to provide joined up seamless care for families that would at times receive disjointed interventions when receiving support for both agencies.

We cut down wait times for assessment and intervention for children who most need them through our integrated roles. We invested in the senior management structure employing an additional service manager to ensure effective line management and support in the development and growth of our residential sector including the complex needs home.

We ensure that the homes team can take part in a detailed induction process that is then built upon through specialist training and developed delivered by both the NHS and Warrington Borough Council.

## What impact do you expect?

All seven of the young people with complex needs that spent time in complex residential care between April 2021 and August 2022 could potentially have been supported by the Complex Needs Hub and may have therefore avoided some or all of their stays in external residential care. We anticipate the greatest proportion of savings are likely to come from the success of the Outreach Service. We would hope our outreach service supports with de-escalation of crisis points that in turn lead to much shorter stays or indeed no stays at all. Additionally, the provision of the service is also about the quality of support and care we are providing for our complex young people in Warrington. We are constantly striving to work alongside partners to reduce costs but also to work innovatively to resolve sufficiency issues that are being felt nationally for all LA's and more importantly to provide the best care we can to our young people and families.

Children have now been referred to the service and we are currently working with two young people. Both young people have experienced significant trauma and multiple placements moves. At the point of referral both young people had active placements searches returning no results due to the complexities of their needs. As a result of the intervention and support from the hub one is being supported with a family member and the other is stable in their current placement with a planned move into the hub in the coming weeks where they will receive targeted intervention and support from the multi-agency hub team with a plan to move back home with family.

Both young people were at significant risk of experiencing an unplanned ending and placement breakdown due to not having the right support available to meet their needs. Each now receive targeted support and have a realistic plan of permanence. Their families feel supported and have greater capacity for engagement. Receiving the right support means that the risks are being managed in a better way meaning less time is spent by professionals trying to respond to the risks.

## Resources

[Rota example](#)  
[Referral Process](#)

## Find out more

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