

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
BRIEFING PAPER FOR IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**

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| 1. | Date of meeting: | 31st October 2017 |
| 2. | Title: | Outcomes from the PAUSE Rotherham Scoping Exercise |

1. Background

- 1.1 There is an emerging body of evidence about the number of women who have children removed from their care in a repeating pattern of care proceedings. Karen Broadhurst, Professor of Social Work at Lancaster University, has published a number of reports that demonstrate the scale of this issue. The link to all published reports is included within the scoping report.
- 1.2 This is an issue that affects families in all local authority areas and the experience of practitioners in Rotherham indicates that this pattern of recurrent care proceedings is present locally.
- 1.3 Whilst Children and Young People's Services will intervene to protect the child and seek the best long-term outcomes, there is often little or no cohesive support for the women who are affected.
- 1.4 Research shows that after a child had been removed from her care, a mother was unlikely to get the required level of help to bring about the changes needed because agencies were not under any statutory obligation to provide comprehensive post removal support. Many of the women had experienced very difficult childhoods themselves and were then severely emotionally damaged by the removal of their baby.
- 1.5 Pause is a national charity that supports a network of local Pause Practices across the country. The purpose of Pause is to prevent the damaging consequences of thousands more children being taken into care each year. Pause works with women who have experienced - or are at risk of - repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. The programme gives women the chance to pause and take control over their lives with the aim of preventing repeated unwanted pregnancy.
- 1.5 In November 2016, Cabinet asked for Pause to be commissioned to carry out a scoping exercise to provide detailed data and analysis of repeat removals of children from their mother's care. This scoping report provides robust information upon which to base decisions about how to respond locally to this issue.
- 1.6 The full scoping report is attached, supplemented with a local cost benefit analysis.

2. Key Findings

- 2.1 Between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2017, 130 women in Rotherham had 434 children removed. Two of these women had 9 children removed and one woman had 8 children removed;
- 2.2 The average number of children removed per woman is 3.3. In other scoping exercises nationally, the number of children removed per woman ranges from 3.0 to 3.6;
- 2.3 These women have many complex and often inter-linking needs. In Rotherham, 60% of the cohort was identified in social care records as having experienced domestic abuse. 45% had issues with drug or alcohol abuse. 32% had a diagnosable mental health problem. 25% are recorded as having been in care as children themselves. Many women experienced multiple issues;
- 2.4 The Pause analysis indicates that without intervention, 20 women within this cohort would be likely to give birth to 5 children each year. Over the duration of the programme this equates to 7.5 children;
- 2.5 Based on this information and local practice and associated costs, a cost benefit analysis has been prepared by Children and Young People's Services. This information provides an indication of the impact of implementing a Pause practice.
- 2.6 The cost benefit analysis shows a gross saving of £1.09m based on an intervention with twenty women. The cost of delivering a Pause practice for this cohort is estimated to be £450,000. Therefore a conservative estimate of the net cost saving (to Children's Services alone) is £0.64m.
- 2.7 The cost benefit analysis does not include costs incurred by the National Health Service, public health, housing, adult social care, South Yorkshire Police or the criminal justice system.
- 2.8 There are also wider human costs to be considered. The mother is likely to have already experienced significant trauma in her life, and is then further damaged by the removal of a child from her care. Services would seek permanency for child as soon as possible following removal however, some level of disruption is inevitable. Children who do not experience the best start in life may struggle to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.

3. Recommendations to Improving Lives Select Commission

Improving Lives Select Commission is asked to:

- 3.1 Comment on the findings of the Pause scoping exercise and forward these comments to the Commissioners / Cabinet for their consideration

4. Name and contact details

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