

<b>Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:</b>	The Nook
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### **Evidence based equality analysis**

*(Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation):*

Cheshire West and Chester Children's Social Care is facing significant and escalating pressures resulting from growing demand for residential care and increasing levels of need for children in care. The Children in Care and Care Leavers Accommodation Strategy 2020-2024, approved by Cabinet in January 2022, aims to ensure sufficient good quality, value for money provision and placements in Borough to meet needs effectively with the aim to stop need and costs escalating and deliver the financial benefits that have been agreed in the Council budget.

Children's Social Care have identified that an element of the growth in volumes of young people presenting with significant needs is linked to young people experiencing entry into care following discharge from Tier 4 Mental Health services. This growth has been observed following the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenges have been identified around supporting both young people and families to feel confident and safe around Tier 4 discharge, leading to children entering care as there is no targeted intensive support, aiming to prevent admission to care and support timely discharge, available.

Tier 4 is the highest tier of support offered by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) for young people up to the age of 18 living in the Cheshire West footprint. Tier 4 offers specialist outreach, community support or informal (voluntary)/formal (detainment under the Mental Health Act) inpatient mental health assessment and treatment services for those young people with the highest and most complex needs.

The Nook is a proposed collaboration project between Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) and Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority (CWAC) with the following aims:

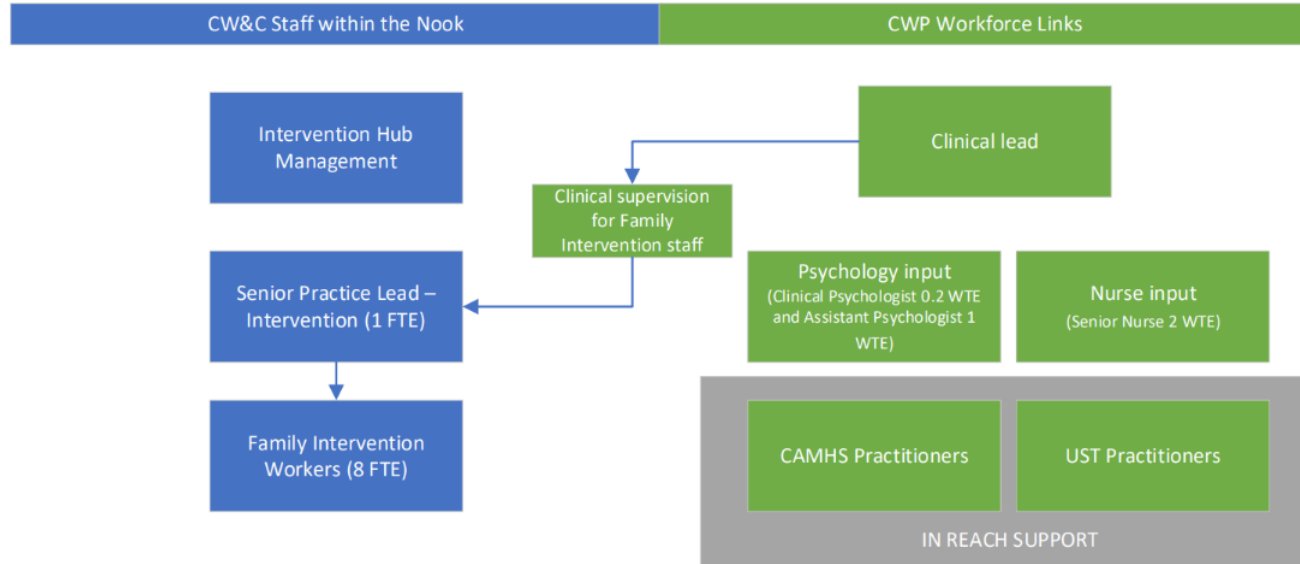
- Supporting young people and their families to transition out of Tier 4 provision,
- Preventing admission and readmission into Tier 4, or presentation within an acute hospital,
- Preventing young people experiencing entry into care.

The Nook will act as a gradual step down from a Tier 4 Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services provision and a point of stabilisation to prevent escalation of needs and entry into local authority care/re-presentation at hospital trusts by

providing:

- An overnight support and intervention setting in a domestic property for a young person aged 12-17 and their family unit to utilise together, either after discharge from Tier 4 or to prevent admission into Tier 4, for a 10-day period.
- Evidence led interventions from a wrap-around support team composed of CWAC and CWP staff to support young people and their caregiver(s) to build skills, resilience, and confidence within the family unit during the 10-day period.
- Outreach services for 6-8 weeks in the family home to the young person and caregiver(s) from the wraparound team following discharge from The Nook.

The 10 day period of inreach support has been chosen based on professional judgement however it is recognised flexibility will be needed as this is an innovation project and all families have differing needs. The service is also voluntary so if a family did not want to access inreach support, outreach would be offered. It is expected that the facility will have capacity to support up to 22 young people per year, and that 2 of these instances will be aimed at preventing entry into care, the remaining 20 will be aimed primarily at reducing levels of need (preventing admission to Tier 4 and avoiding presentations within an acute trust). Support will be provided to one family at a time in the residential setting, although there could be ongoing outreach intervention and support provided to multiple young people and their families at once. The staffing structure is outlined below:



Family Intervention Workers will aim to build confidence of parent/carers in how to offer support to young people. Clinical staff within the Nook will assess the mental health of the young person, deliver interventions as required and assist with the risk assessment and management of the case. This intervention plan will look different for each family and the Family Intervention Worker will work closely with the family and health teams to determine what this plan looks like. The Family Intervention Worker will remain allocated to the family throughout the inreach and outreach service to allow for continuity. The team within the Nook will work collaboratively to provide support to the family, including supporting periods where young person and parents/siblings may have short periods of individual engagement (although noting at no point overnight care provision will be provided in line with remit of the project).

Expected benefits:

- Provide earlier intervention and support to families to prevent family breakdown, young people entering care and/or prolonged stay in Acute Trusts.
- Support parent/carers to build skills and resilience within the family unit through child focused family time.

- Build confidence within the family unit to support young people.
- Provide a more gradual step down from Tier 4 setting through targeted support in family home following discharge from The Nook.
- Provide support to reduce avoidable admissions to Tier 4 and/or support on discharge from Tier 4 setting.
- Reduce use of placements where care is disproportionate to the presenting need.
- Avoid entrance to care where targeted collaborative family intervention could prevent this level of statutory intervention.

In scope:

- Children and Young People within CWAC footprint or a CWAC young person currently in an out of area placement where plan to rehabilitate with caregiver(s) only.
- Young person and their family currently known to Children's Social Care, Tier 4 or CWP services.
- Intervention to support young people with transition home from Tier 4 inpatient setting or admission avoidance to Tier 4 services.
- The provision will support a whole family in a supportive domestic setting for 10 days and through outreach for up to 8 weeks, not just a young person in isolation.
- The Nook will be available for young people subject to Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order or previously adopted. This will be with the same circumstances as listed above.

Out of scope:

- The Nook is not a residential placement for young people alone, it is designed for a family as an intervention not a care provision.
- The Nook is not a Tier 4 inpatient provision.
- The Nook is not a residential respite unit for young people.
- The Nook is not a placement option for Children Looked After.
- The Nook will not be providing care (regulator perspective). No overnight care will be provided without a parent/carer.
- The Nook is not in any way an emergency care provision.

**The recommended changes align to the following Council missions:**

- Starting well - The best possible start for our children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.

**Lead officer:** Gemma Gerrish, Programme SRO/Director of Children’s Social Care

**Stakeholders:** CWAC and CWP

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Target group / area	Neutral	Positive	Negative
<p><b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)</p>	<p>The new service will support people regardless of this protected characteristic, as required by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Translation and interpreting services are</p>	<p>Wraparound staff will encourage young people to develop respect for themselves and for others. Staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and</p>	

	<p>available and will be provided for young people and families that require the support.</p> <p>Both CWAC and CWP will continue to track people accessing support and report on this where it is deemed beneficial.</p>	<p>discriminatory, in a positive way.</p>	
<p><b>Disability</b> (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>	<p>The service will support children and young people regardless of this protected characteristic, as required by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Disability data will continue to be tracked by the Council. Monthly reports are produced breaking down this characteristic within the cohort of young people open to Children's Services.</p>	<p>The service should see a positive impact on young people receiving treatment for mental health difficulties.</p> <p>For young people admitted to Tier 4, the service will improve the experience of discharge as support will continue to be provided both during the stay at the Nook and through the outreach function.</p> <p>Where possible, the home will avoid physical features that make it difficult to access and use for people with a disability.</p>	<p><b>Low Impact:</b> There is a risk that children with some physical disabilities may be unable to access the domestic property.</p> <p>A Disability Access Audit will be completed with an Access Officer to ensure reasonable adjustments are made as appropriate and the building is as accessible as possible</p> <p>If a child with a physical disability is going to access The Nook, an assessment of needs will be completed to ensure the home suits requirements.</p> <p>If a young person cannot access the domestic</p>

			property due to disability, they will remain eligible to access outreach services.
<b>Sex</b> (male or female)	<p>The service should support children and young people regardless of this protected characteristic, as required by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Data on sex will continue to be tracked by the Council. Monthly reports are produced breaking down this characteristic within the cohort of young people open to Children's Services.</p>	<p>Wraparound staff will encourage children to develop respect for themselves and for others. Staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way.</p>	
<b>Gender identity</b> (gender reassignment)	<p>The service will support children and young people regardless of this protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>All wraparound staff are provided with practice guidance and a range of</p>	<p>Wraparound staff will encourage children to develop respect for themselves and for others. Staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way.</p>	

	training for trans awareness.		
<b>Religion and belief</b> (including lack of belief)	The service will support children and young people regardless of this protected characteristic, as required by the Equality Act 2010.	The right of a child and family members to practice a particular religion, or no religion, will be respected and supported by wraparound staff.	
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)	The service will support children and young people regardless of this protected characteristic, as required by the Equality Act 2010.  Wraparound staff are provided practice guidance and a range of training related to sexual orientation.	Wraparound staff will encourage children to develop respect for themselves and for others. Staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way.	
<b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)	The service will be available exclusively to young people aged 12 to 17.  This banding was identified based on a review of historic admissions data, demonstrating that from 2020-2022 there were		



	<p>no young people aged under 14 admitted to Tier 4. It is not expected that young people falling below this banding will be suitable for this provision.</p> <p>The upper limit of 17 has been selected as beyond this age a young person would receive support from adult services in both the NHS and social care.</p> <p>Age data will continue to be tracked by the Council. Monthly reports are produced breaking down this characteristic within the cohort of young people open to Children's Services.</p>		
<p><b>Care Experienced</b> (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council - for a period of 13 weeks or more - from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council</p>		<p>Care experienced children who have been adopted or who are subject to special guardianship orders or child arrangement order will be able to benefit from the provision with the aim of preventing the young</p>	<p><b>Low impact:</b> Children who are currently care experienced will be unable to access this provision as the provision will support children and families together with a view to</p>

<p>currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)</p>		<p>person returning to local authority care.</p>	<p>avoiding children becoming looked after.</p> <p>It will not be possible to place looked after children in the Nook as that would require the facility to be Ofsted registered provision, requiring a wholly different staffing model that would divert from the provision's core purpose.</p> <p>Care experienced children can access alternative provision to support their mental health depending on their assessed need.</p>
<p><b>Carers</b> (people who care for others, informally or formally)</p>	<p>The Nook is not a residential placement and the day-to-day care of young people living there will be attended to by their family carers.</p>	<p>Wraparound staff will support children and young people accessing the scheme to maintain relationships with their family unit including primary caregivers.</p>	<p><b>Low impact:</b> There is a risk that caregivers with caring responsibilities beyond the young person will struggle to access the domestic support element of the scheme.</p> <p>The service will endeavour to support parents with caring responsibilities beyond the young person discharged from or at risk of admission into Tier 4. For example, The Nook will</p>

			<p>be able to accommodate up to 2 more children and Adults services would be contacted regarding caring responsibilities for other adults.</p>
<p><b>Rural communities</b></p>		<p>The outreach service will be available to families across the borough regardless of location and will therefore provide support for all eligible young people discharged from Tier 4 to continue living with their families.</p>	<p><b>Low impact:</b> Due to the service's connection to the Ancora House facility in Chester, from which CWP staff delivering interventions and support will be based, the residential aspect of this service can only be delivered within a 1 mile radius of this site.</p> <p>It is not thought there is sufficient demand to develop an additional service elsewhere in the borough. Of six young people from Cheshire West who entered care after admission into Tier 4 2020-2023, five were admitted to facilities in Chester, one in Crewe.</p> <p>Families in remote areas may find it harder to benefit from the domestic element</p>

			of the service due to poor transport connections. Transport will be factored into service design and costs supported by Children's Services if the family are unable to meet these.
<b>Areas of deprivation</b> (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)		<p>The service will be based in Chester and therefore near to several areas of deprivation and accessible by public transport from most such areas in the borough.</p> <p>A light touch location assessment will be completed during property purchase to ensure there is access to key local amenities such as public transport, health, and education facilities.</p>	<p><b>Low impact:</b> At present there is no comprehensive data available on service users' characteristics, therefore there is a risk of unforeseen negative impacts.</p> <p>The Chester location of the scheme may mean the provision is difficult for families living in poverty to access due to transport costs from more rural or distant areas. Children's services would support to meet transport costs in these circumstances and transport will be factored into service design.</p>
<b>Human rights</b> (see guidance note for key areas to consider)	There will be no change from the current model in terms of human rights and the service will		

	<p>continue to operate under the relevant legislation and local policies.</p> <p>All staff will be provided with practice guidance on key legal duties.</p>		
<p><b>Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities</b> (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)</p>		<p>A key driver of the new service will be improving outcomes for young people with acute mental health needs. The scheme aims to allow them to remain with their families and support parents to feel more confident and better able to manage the young person's needs.</p> <p>The provision will allow young people to maintain family relationships therefore reducing isolation.</p> <p>The service will also strive to identify further ongoing opportunities and networks of support in the wider community.</p>	

		Supporting the transition out of Tier 4 is likely to have benefits in terms of school attendance.	
<b>Procurement/partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	<p>The scheme will be delivered in partnership with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Foundation Trust.</p> <p>As a public body, CWP will be equally responsible for ensuring the service adheres to the Equality Act.</p> <p>Within the project, the Council will ensure CWP have completed their own equality analysis.</p>		

**Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):**

**Methodology to assess demand and findings**

A review of historic cases where there were opportunities to support discharge from Tier 4 has been undertaken by a CWP Programme Manager, CW&C Director of Children’s Social Care, CW&C Access to Resources Team Manager and CW&C Children’s Social Care Finance Manager. The team assessed all admissions into Tier 4 in the years 2021-2023 where a young person entered care following discharge from Tier 4, to consider the impact the Nook could make. A total of six instances were identified where a young person could have benefitted from the Nook.

It is worth pointing out that, whilst best efforts were made to obtain comprehensive data on historic admissions, the cohort entering care upon discharge is very small. However, there is a larger potential cohort of children the Nook could support through the prevention of admission to Tier 4 and therefore support the prevention of family breakdown where potential to enter Tier 4 or care is indicated, specifically linked to escalation in emotional health response to trauma.

Analysis has also been performed to review admissions into Tier 4 more broadly, considering age, whether the young people were being readmitted and whether they were known to social care before admission, to determine both the impact the Nook could have on admissions and to generate a profile of the cohort expected to use the Nook. Recent trends in Tier 4 admission (2020-22) also indicate that an average of 2 young people experience readmission each year, of an average 36 yearly admissions. These young people are typically over 14 years old, with the most common age at admission being 16. In the period studied 15% of young people admitted were already known to children's social care.

Desk-based and on-the-ground research has been completed to understand opportunities to reduce demand for high-cost residential placements and smooth transitions out of Tier 4. The model for the Nook has been crafted considering best practice and learning from a visit to Sweden by CWP representatives; considering the Self Selected Admission model to avoid separation of child from the family and focusing on intensive wraparound support to either prevent admission or presentation at an acute trust; or as an option for step down from an inpatient stay and allow the testing of periods of independence as a step to returning to the family's own home (see appendix 7 of full business case).

### **Options appraisal**

- Stay 'as is'
- Review existing services to see if an offer could be put in place to fill the market gap
- Purchase of a space to develop a provision including distinct staffing provision and mental health reach in

### **Key findings**

- There is a gap in the market for a provision that supports prevention into Tier 4 or step down from Tier 4 inpatient,
- The scheme will take pressure away from health and social care services,
- Delivery of significant annual savings could be achieved through avoidance of 1 care placement per annum,
- Joint initiative between mental health and social care to bring wrap around support is innovation and, if successful, would bring reputational benefit and potential for scale and spread.

## Recommendations

Based on information gained through research and analysis above, increased demand and a gap in provision, it was recommended the development of a house provision to support young people and families within the CWAC footprint. This provision, 'The Nook', would act as an intervention to avoid/stop admission into a Tier 4 setting but also offer a step-down provision following discharge from a Tier 4 setting. The scheme would support young people and families, potentially reduce pressures on pre-existing services and strengthen existing community services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable adolescents and families to improve overall outcomes and reduce reliance on acute services (both health and social care).

## Benefits and Investment Review

Within the mobilisation period both organisations will develop benefits tracking approaches with a view to demonstrating the benefits accrued. After one year of operation, the performance of the Nook will be reviewed to assess whether the expected savings are being delivered. At this stage the savings accrued to each investing organisation, and to the wider NHS where possible will be compared to the current levels of investment. If the savings accrued are not proportional to the investment, the levels of investment will be renegotiated. If no savings have been made, the scheme will be closed. Based on the proposed project timeline, a review should be presented to Place DMT in January 2026.

## Plan for future Participation and Engagement around The Nook

Participation and Engagement is being undertaken to understand the logistics around an initiative like The Nook and family's requirements/needs within a setting like this. This will build upon previous engagement work that has taken place within CWP and work with partners (e.g. Young Minds).

### Action plan:

<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcomes required</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Development of robust performance monitoring tools (reports and dashboard)	High	A robust performance monitoring tool	CWP	March 2025



including improved availability of equality data.				
Work with Access Officer to complete a Disability Access Audit and identify reasonable adjustments needed to improve accessibility to ensure facility is as accessible as possible.	High	Ensure reasonable adjustments of the domestic property where appropriate	-CWAC – Children’s Services	July/August 2025
Partnership agreement with CWP is aligned with CW&C equality and diversity policies, including recruitment, and all wraparound staff receive essential training including a focus on equality and diversity.	High	Compliant partnership agreement with CWP.	CWP and CWAC - Legal	June 2024
Agree process to support young people and families to access the scheme if barriers such as caring responsibilities outside of the young person and lack of transport/costly transport exist.	High	A pathway in place to support young people and families to access the scheme regardless of financial and extra caring barriers.	CWAC – Children’s Services	October 2024

<b>Sign off</b>	
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Lead officer:	Carmel Cameron
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Gemma Gerrish
<b>Moderation and/or Scrutiny</b>	
Date: Moderation Group 6 June 2024	
<b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	