

PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – SIX MONTH UPDATE

To: **Children and Young People's Committee**

Meeting Date: **12 March 2019**

From: **Wendi Ogle-Welbourn: Executive Director, People and Communities**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To provide an update on progress following the consideration and approval of the placement Sufficiency Strategy and delivery of the HUB model.**

Recommendation: **To note progress against the priorities of the Placement Sufficiency Statement.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local areas. This is delivered through the Sufficiency Statement.
- 1.2 In November 2017 the Children and Young People Committee considered and approved the People & Communities Sufficiency Statement for Looked After Children & Care Leavers 2017 – 2020 [see appendix 1] and requested updates on progress in achieving the identified improvements.
- 1.3 Each priority area has a designated lead officer accountable for delivering the required changes/outcomes/improvements.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 *Numbers of children in care [CiC]*

- 2.1.1 During the period from September 2017 (686 CiC) until end of October 2018 (753 CiC) the total number of children in currently care grew by 67.
- 2.1.2 Children in care are made up of two groups. Those children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) increased by 24 (increase of 36%). Those children who are not UASC increased by 43 (circa 7% increase) during this period.
- 2.1.3 Actual number of children entering care in that period is 379. This is made up of 303 Non UASC and 76 UASC children
- 2.1.4 Actual number of children leaving care during the same period is 312 children. This is made up of 260 Non UASC and 52 UASC leaving care.
- 2.1.5 The metrics indicate that 1065 Children had a status of being “in Care” for that period. 87% of those were Non UASC (925).

2.2 **Key Changes since last year’s report.**

- 2.2.1 The Oxford Brookes research programme has concluded, and the findings and recommendations have been key drivers for the Change for Children restructure, specifically the expansion of the Corporate Parenting Service. This has resulted in a more specialised Children in Care and Care Leaver service which will result in more focussed and timely care planning. The new structure is currently bedding in.
- 2.2.2 As part of the Change for Children restructure, the outreach team previously within the HUB model has been retained to support young people in care to return to the care of their family using aspects of the NSPCC Reunification Framework, and to support placement stability, specifically for children in foster care with the aim of reducing escalations to residential care or higher cost placements. At this stage in

the year, the service is reporting that the savings target for 2018- 2019 has been met in relation to reunification

- 2.2.4 There has been an increased in number of Special Guardianship Orders awarded through 2018. This is directly linked to the embedding of Family Network Meetings and associated practice which focuses on ensuring full consideration of extended family options for children in care. The initial programme impacted on existing in-house provision and as yet is not reflected in placement budget savings.

External Placements

- 2.2.5 In regard to children's external placements, a tender exercise is underway to deliver a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework for:
1. Independent Fostering Agency Placements [IFAs]
 2. Children's homes
 3. Independent Special Schools [non-maintained]
 4. Out of School Tuition.
- 2.2.6 The DPS is drawing the four aspects of children's externally commissioned placements/services together to stimulate the market to deliver a range of services through a fair and transparent competitive process. This market stimulation will encourage existing and new providers to deliver their services locally to meet both existing and future need.
- 2.2.7 This tender is across Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to enable either council to place a child with providers on the relevant framework, having undertaken all due diligence checks. Services will be commissioned through each authority's Access to Resources Services and will enable far greater strategic management oversight than has previously been the case.
- 2.2.8 This tender also enables the Councils to draw upon the frameworks to enter mini-competitions to facilitate service developments and enable an approach whereby access to the market is compliant.

Fostering Provision

- 2.2.9 The target for in-house fostering recruitment each year is a net gain of 24 households per year for the next three years. In order to achieve this net gain the service will have to recruit 40 households per year in order to allow for foster carers leaving the service throughout the year. The target is not expected to be achieved in 2018, but investment in fostering recruitment will see improvements in 2019. Recruitment in 2017/18 gained 24 households, with a net gain of 14. This was an improvement on the net gain position compared to previous years.
- 2.2.10 Additional funding has been secured over a three year period to increase the number of in-house fostering households' year on year. Using this investment money PS Media has been appointed to work with the Fostering Service and Cambridgeshire's Communications service to develop a recruitment strategy and design fostering recruitment campaigns.

Along with PS Media and Cambridgeshire's Communications Service the Fostering Service has;

- Established of a focus group consisting of an Elected Member, Foster Carers, PS Media and officers.
- Rebranded the in-house fostering service as Team Cambridgeshire
- Developed recruitment concepts
- Refreshed Cambridgeshire County Council fostering website pages
- Developed relationships with local organisations and businesses to become 'Campaign Partners'.
- Produced a range of recruitment materials, posters, leaflets, badges etc.
- Is developing a range of filmed material for social media publications
- Undertaken an advertising campaign which has included bus advertising, radio adverts, online advertising and a campaign in the Grafton Centre shopping centre.

The service launched the Team Cambridgeshire campaign on the 12 September 2018 which has resulted in;

- 145 enquiries to the service [September-December]. This compares to 107 in the same period last year. This is a 35% increase
- 62 initial visits [September-October], this compares to 26 in the same period last year. An increase of 138% in the same period last year
- 20 Households are currently in assessment

20 households (including 7 Independent Fostering Agency households transferring in to CCC) have been approved since April 2018.

The next phase of the Team Cambridgeshire fostering recruitment campaign using social media and regional radio and TV news bulletins has been launched in January 2019 and focussed on recruiting foster carers for teenagers.

Accommodation and Support Services

- 2.2.11 The Supported Accommodation (for Children in Care aged 16-18) has now been tendered. 52 providers bid for the framework in total, however only 15 were successful overall. The framework will be opened again in January 2019 to ensure more providers are able to offer services, thereby increasing capacity and pricing competition.

Preventative Innovation – Transformation Pilot

- 2.2.12 The Positive Behaviour Support is a pilot project delivered by the Clinical Team that aims to reduce 52 week out of county residential placements for children with autism. The team is dedicated to preventing children from both entering care, and being placed out of the local authority area.
- 2.2.13 The team is currently working with eight young people who were at high risk of becoming child/ren in care and moving to an out of county placement where

average costs are £4041/week+ . By successfully supporting children and young people to remain within their local communities, potential costs avoided amount to over £1million per year.

2.2.14 Funding for the Positive Behaviour Support Team has been secured until 2020.

2.3 **Next Steps**

2.3.1 Following the Change for Children programme staff and service structures now need a period of 'bedding in' before improvements can be measured.

2.3.2 *The Kinship Team*

The newly formed Kinship Team has activity planned to increase the number of children for whom a Special Guardianship Order arrangement is their care plan. These children then leave care through this legal route and secure permanency.

2.3.3 *Regional Adoption Agency*

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough secured approval from the DfE to form a Regional Adoption Agency [RAA] via a Voluntary Adoption Agency [VAA] hosted provision. In order to achieve this both authorities have worked collaboratively with LGSS procurement and legal teams to go out to tender for a VAA as of November 2018. Anticipated award is April 2019 with the service mobilising and going live as of August 2019. Both current service providers [Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption and Tact Permanency] have supplied the relevant TUPE information which has been included within the Invitation to Tender.

2.3.4 *The Corporate Parent Service*

In November 2018, following the Change for Children Consultation and subsequent restructure, the existing Hub Outreach Service transitioned into what is now known as the Rehabilitation and Placement Stability Service (RAPS) The drivers for this were to have a dedicated service focusing on reunification and placement stability. New processes to capture and establish costs for reunification and placement stability intervention are being developed.

The service now sits alongside the Supervised Contact Service, with one Service Manager overseeing the delivery and strategic planning of both services.

The partnership between the Supervised Contact Service and RAPS service strengthens the accessibility of resources, such as the availability of relief workers, the use of on call arrangements during weekends, a wider management team, as well as utilising the collaboration between the RAPS service and Contact Workers supporting the same families.

Focus of work

The service is targeted towards young people who are subject to Care Orders or who have been voluntarily accommodated by the Local Authority for some period of time.

The RAPS service will undertake reunification based work underpinned by the NSPCC Reunification Practice Framework. The framework provides an evidence

based structure, designed to improve assessment, decision making and support for children and families.

The RAPS service will also offer planned, time limited support to foster placements who are caring for children and young people with complex and challenging needs.

Young people identified as appropriate for the service are as follows;

- Children & Young people who have experienced three or more foster placement moves.
- A fragile placement, with foster carers identifying areas requiring additional support, in order to prevent the placement from breaking down.
- Where appropriate to do so, supporting the transition of our most vulnerable young people back into in-house and in county provision that better meets their needs.

Outcomes: November and December

The outcomes for the initial two months of work are positive, with Full NSPCC frameworks being commenced and bespoke reunifications taking place.

November 2018

- Placement Stability / transitions: nine children and young people supported and placements stabilised. These children and young people either remained within their existing care provision or moved to a more appropriate placement in a planned way.
- Reunification: - 5 children and young people as follows:
 - 1 young person returned home with ongoing support
 - 2 ongoing
 - 1 family handed over to MST
 - 1 alternative plan agreed

December 2018

- Placement Stability: nine children and young people supported
- Reunification:
 - 8 children and young people worked with
 - 2 young people returned home with ongoing support
 - 6 young people with reunification plans ongoing

2.3.5 Fostering Service

The Change4Children programme continues to progress resulting in:

- A review of fostering panel process ;
- Review of foster carer allowances;
- Development of additional training modules to include an improved managing behaviour Pro Act Script or Cambridgeshire Steps course;
- Training available for those individuals interested in being kinship/ Special Guardianship Order carers;
- Recruitment of additional Peer Mentors;

- Targeted recruitment of skills experienced Link carers – aimed at groups of people interested in working with disabled children/providing short breaks rather than traditional fostering recruitment
- Recruitment of two carer retained carer households to meet the needs of the most complex children
- Foster carer recruitment campaign will be launched in January 2019 focussed on recruiting placements specifically for teenagers. A further recruitment campaign is also being developed to be launched in March 2019 focussed on Foster Care as a career.

2.3.6 *Commissioning*

To improve timeliness and responsiveness in placement and contractual monitoring, a new Performance Management Framework is being designed to report on how providers are meeting the defined outcomes for each child placed with them, be this residential, 16+ accommodation and support placements or foster placements.

- i. Children's External Placement tender went live in December 2018 with the aim of the new DPS arrangement commencing 1st April 2019.
- ii. In order to support children and young people to learn about the new home they will be moving to, the introduction of child friendly and accessible profiles of fostering households will be made available to children once matched to a fostering family. This initiative applies to both in-house and externally commissioned fostering provision. The implementation and success of this initiative will be monitored and assessed by the Access to Resources Team [ART] and reported on in the Monthly ART Dashboard.
- iii. Initiate a Sufficiency Statement needs analysis in order to deliver a Sufficiency Statement in 2020.

2.3.7 *The Clinical Service*

The Clinical Team have been working with statutory partners around the development of a Standard Operating Procedure. This is to enable equitable access to additional funding for children who are looked after in county, whose needs are currently not met by existing commissioned services in collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) colleagues.

Any child open to Cambridgeshire Corporate Parenting Service has access to the clinical team. Although there is some overlap with the aims of a Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) service, the clinical team is not commissioned or designed to address mental health problems. The clinical team is responsible for improving placement quality and stability, addressing relational issues that cause fragility and vulnerability for children, identifying neurodevelopmental and mental health issues, and signposting to appropriate services.

The Clinical Team offer;

- Reflective Practice Groups – to support relationally focused practice across the Corporate Parenting Service

- Professional Consultation - Applying systemic and psychological theory to address care planning dilemmas, reduce risk and improve outcomes for children. Consultation topics may include the following:
 - Mental health concerns.
 - Sibling assessment
 - Placement fragility
 - Consideration of reunification
 - Conflict in professional network
 - Planning/reviewing contact with family members
 - Supporting transitions (placement, school, care leaving etc.)
- Foster Carer Training. - The clinical team has developed bespoke training for foster carers to address key challenges in caring for children who have experienced developmental trauma. This is offered as part of the annual service training for carers.
- Direct Work Clinical Offer. - The purpose of this work is to promote placement stability, support and promote therapeutic parenting, improve the emotional health and wellbeing of young people, reduce risk to self and others. The approach is fundamentally systemic and informed by Dyadic Development Practice. The following interventions form the core direct work offer:
 - Systemic Network Meeting
 - Video Interactive Guidance
 - Family Work
 - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (in a systemic frame)
 - Narrative and Therapeutic Life Story Work
 - Psychoeducation
- Therapeutic Parenting Groups. - Direct clinical work is only undertaken in the context of a clear assessment and formulation, with consent from the young person's social worker and the young person themselves. The work is goal focused and time limited, with regular reviews to ensure efficient and effective use of time. Goal based outcome measures are completed at the outset and conclusion to monitor effectiveness.

Service Priorities

Corporate parenting team social workers and service managers identify children and young people in need of clinical consultation and assessment. The clinical team work closely with Virtual School and the Independent Review Officer service who can also request clinical consultation as needed.

Current priorities for corporate parenting clinician involvement are as follows:

- Children with high vulnerability arising from developmental trauma, who require more complex assessment to support care planning
- Children and young people who have experienced multiple placement moves
- Reunification assessment and intervention work
- Placement fragility - including pre-order adoptive placements

2.3.8 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) CAMHS have introduced a 'Moderate Risk' Protocol in the Single Point of Access, and a clear operating procedure for access to funding for therapies for children placed Out-Of-County. Funding is currently available up to March 2020 and will be used to proactively provide evidence based, relational interventions to support children at risk of multiple placement breakdowns

2.3.9 The joint work has increased provision of services at 'getting advice' and 'getting help' areas of the Thrive Model that has increased opportunities for a more coherent response overall across the county.

2.3.10 CCC and CPFT have produced a joint paper outlining recommendations to the CCG in relation to closing current gaps in provision for direct therapies for children with complex needs not currently met by existing services.

2.4 **Conclusion**

2.4.1 This report highlights the improvements throughout services in delivering the priority findings from the Sufficiency Statement. Much has changed since the statement was published, the numbers of children in care has increased, the Change for Children programme implemented and a Commissioning restructure undertaken.

2.4.2 The mechanisms for monitoring improvement delivery and impact are established through a variety of reporting datasets, meetings/panels and oversight boards.

2.4.3 The needs analysis supporting the development and delivery of the Sufficiency Statement 2020 onwards, will be informed by the changes in structures, accountability and practice to ensure a sufficiency of sustainable, suitable and affordable placement options for children in care in Cambridgeshire.

3. **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

3.1 **A good quality of life for everyone**

3.1.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Providing a sufficient range of placements for children and young people has a significant impact on their health outcomes, including emotional well-being.

3.2 **Thriving place for people to live**

3.2.1

- There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children

- 3.3.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:
- Children in care and care leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups of children and research indicates they are more likely than the general population to experience adversity into adult life.
 - Providing good quality placements and permanence for children gives them the best opportunities for positive outcomes into adulthood

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

- 4.1.1. The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:
- The Strategy outlines the Council's priorities for commissioning and service development to ensure services are provided within the current allocated resources

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

- 4.2.1 The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:
- The Children's External Placement tender and the re-opening of the Supported Accommodation is being undertaken under the auspices of the Procurement Team and Council Contractual procedures

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- 4.3.1 The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:
- The Sufficiency Statement meets the Council's statutory duty in this area. Section 22G of the 1989 Act requires Local Authorities to strategic action in respect of those children they look after and for whom it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation within their local authority area. In those circumstances Section 22G requires Local Authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for those children

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no significant implications in this area.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

- 4.5.1 There are no significant implications in this area.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

4.6.1 There are no significant implications in this area.

4.7 Public Health Implications

4.7.1 There are no significant implications in this area.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Paul White
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Prity Patel
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Joanne Dickson
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman

Source Documents	Location
Appendix 1 People and Communities Sufficiency Statement Looked After children and Care Leavers - 2017-2020	https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/working-together-children-families-and-adults/Cambridgeshire%20County%20Council%20Sufficiency%20Statement%20LAC%20%26%20Care%20Leav

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