

Corporate Parenting Board 16th November 2015

Title of paper:	Children in Care Placements – Update	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Katy Ball Director of Childrens Commissioning & Procurement Candida Brudenell Assistant Chief Executive	Wards affected: All
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Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	n/a	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report provides an update from Nottingham City Council Placement Service, including children in care data, performance, commissioning priorities and developments with external providers.		
Recommendation(s):		
1	For the Corporate Parenting Board to note the contents of the report.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The report provides an update from Nottingham City Council Placement Service.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

Update On Placements

2.1 As of the 13th October 2015, there were 595 children in care, with 59% (382) of these being in external provision. The majority of these children (451) are placed with foster

carers, 256 with Independent Fostering Agencies and 195 with internal foster carers. The number of children in external residential and semi-independent provision has been reducing recently but currently stands at 62 and 64 respectively.

- 2.2 At this point, 83.6% of children were placed within 20 miles of Nottingham City. Analysis of this undertaken during September suggests that 60% of these are in foster placements and 32% in residential placements. A number of these will be specifically placed outside of the area due to safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 The Placement Service has had extensive staffing changes in the last year, with 3 new Placements Officers starting in the team. We are developing their areas of expertise, with one taking a lead for Fostering and one for residential, both linking with Nottingham City Council internal teams to develop and maintain positive working relationships and effective business processes.
- 2.4 The Lead Contract Officer role now includes responsibility for Market Development and work is planned to understand and shape developments in the market to meet current challenges. We are aiming to place children in foster care where possible, reducing the need for residential placements. We are also working closely with the Nottingham City Council Fostering Service to develop our use of internal fostering provision.

Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

- 2.5 In April 2014, Nottingham City Council published its first Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy to determine the way in which Children in Care (CiC) placements are commissioned, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market.
- 2.6 An update paper has been published one year into the Strategy to revisit the vision and commitments made and to provide an overview of the progress to date upon each of the agreed commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market. The paper also provides an update on the City's sufficiency requirements, providing detail on any change within the market strengths and weaknesses.
- 2.7 The strategy is included within Appendix 1.

Commissioning Priorities

- 2.8 The current priorities for development of placement services for children in care as follows:
 - Complex Fostering for children and young people who require intensive / specialist support within a fostering placement and could be suitable for children and young people transitioning from a residential care environment, foster care or new entries to the care system
 - Bridging Fostering to stabilise, assess, prepare and transition a young person to an appropriate long term placement which could be suitable for young people who

are new to the care system and professionals require further information before determining what placement would be of most benefit to the young person.

- Semi Independence Framework is being reviewed and recommissioned as the current framework is due to end on 31.10.15. It is acknowledged that the market has evolved significantly since its implementation and in addition to our own internal semi-independent estate, we intend to continue to commission these services from external providers as required.

2.9 We are currently exploring both the development of internal services and the commissioning opportunities in relation to these priorities.

East Midlands Regional Children's Framework

2.10 The East Midlands Regional Provider Framework for Looked After Children placed in Independent Foster Care and Residential Care was implemented in March 2011 for 4 years, with an extension agreed until December 2015. A full review has been undertaken during 2015, with 9 local authorities involved and committed to the development of a new framework from February 2016. The return deadline for tenders for the new East Midlands Regional Children's Framework was on 2.10.15, the evaluation period runs from 02.10.15 to 11.12.15, with the awards being issued on 30.12.15.

2.11 Over the last 4 years the number of residential and fostering placements made by Nottingham City on the framework has increased from 213 in 2011 / 12 to 482 in 2014 / 15, with only 46 placements being made off framework in 2014 / 15.

2.12 Northamptonshire County Council manage the regional framework on behalf of the other local authorities, currently providing both contract management and quality assurance support. The cost of this is shared between the local authorities who are part of the consortium and is based on the amount of placements made.

Residential Care Contract

2.13 As the result of a robust procurement process, an external provider of children's residential care was awarded a block contract for ten placements over a maximum length of ten years. The contract was implemented in April 2015 with an initial five placements, with a phased implementation up to full capacity of ten placements by November 2015.

2.14 At September 2015, eight young people had placements through the contract, all in children's homes that were judged by Ofsted to be either Good or Outstanding. Quality of provision is central to the contract and is monitored through an Outcomes Framework, regular performance management and contract monitoring meetings and positive partnership working.

2.15 The contract is also anticipated to achieve a significant reduction in local authority spend on residential care, as well as increase placement stability and the ability to place children within Nottinghamshire.

3. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

N/A

4. **FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

Savings identified from the Residential Care Contract and will be considered within the commissioning priorities. These are managed through the Big Ticket process.

5. **LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

Risk management processes will be undertaken prior to commencing any procurement or commissioning activity. There are no legal or Crime and Disorder Act implications at this stage. Any future procurement and commissioning activity will comply with EU Procurement Legislation and guidance will be sought through the relevant Legal and HR channels.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Children in Care Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy: One Year On. 2015/16.

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

Nottingham City Council's Children and Young People's Plan

Nottingham City Council Plan