

21 March 2016**Agenda Item: 8**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

BLOCK PURCHASE OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS CONTRACTS

Purpose of the Report

1. To up-date Committee regarding the progress of the block purchase of children's residential placements contracts.

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire County Council has a block contract with Castle Care and G4S, trading as Homes 2 Inspire, to provide 24 beds with 20 beds expected to be in the County boundary, and at least 50% being in the north of the County.
3. The Council currently has seven young people placed with Castle Care, who have existing children's homes in Nottinghamshire. Castle Care have sufficient capacity to fulfil their contractual obligations to provide the required number of beds within Nottinghamshire.
4. Homes 2 Inspire at present only have one home in the County, Evans House (three bed home), and none in north Nottinghamshire. However, they are providing the Council with local beds at homes based in Nottingham City, and outside of Nottinghamshire which are paid for on the block rate.
5. Homes 2 Inspire had identified properties in Kirkby and Nuthall, but these are no longer options. A planning application for a property in Worksop has been granted and Homes 2 Inspire are now following up on the actions to exchange and complete on the property with a view to it being open in July 2016. Potential properties identified in Mansfield and Newark have subsequently been ruled out due to their actual location in the district, or due to them being prohibitive due to costs in being converted to children's homes. Homes 2 Inspire have purchased a property in Nottingham City, which is anticipated to be open in May 2016 and will be a five bed children's home.
6. An action plan is being developed for Homes 2 Inspire with clear timescales by which to open homes in the County and resolute action will be taken should they fail to comply. It has been recently announced that G4S are selling off their children's services and further information is being sought from them as to how this recent development may impact on the Council's contract with them.

7. Overall, the block contract is delivering budget savings, and demonstrates the strategic intention to place Nottinghamshire Looked After Children within County boundaries and it is envisaged that the contract will lead to savings of approximately £800,000 by 2017. However, Homes 2 Inspire are failing to provide sufficient provision in the County, which means they are in breach of the contract and they will be subject to a formal action plan to make required improvements to set timescales.

Other Options Considered

8. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. There are significant financial savings to the Council from this contract award as highlighted in paragraph 7.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

12. Young people will be better safeguarded via local placements with reductions associated in both Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing episodes.

Implications for Service Users

13. The County Council will deliver better outcomes for Looked After Children when they are placed in County.
14. There will be service user involvement via the Children in Care Council to monitor and evaluate this contract.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That progress on the block purchase of children's residential placement contracts be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

15. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (SS 04/02/16)

16. There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Block purchase of residential care for children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 21 September 2015 (previously published)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0788