

**19 May 2014**

**Agenda Item: 7**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENTS COMMISSIONING PLAN AND BLOCK PURCHASE OF RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the Nottinghamshire Looked After Children Placements Commissioning Plan.
2. To seek agreement to progress a Block Purchase of 25 externally commissioned Residential Placements for Looked After Children to reduce cost and improve quality.

#### **Information and Advice**

3. Nottinghamshire County Council's Children's Social Care Placements Team has produced a proposed Placements Commissioning Plan, attached as **Appendix 1**, for the financial year 2014-15, which addresses the need to reduce costs and improve the quality of children's placements.
4. The Plan contains the Local Authority's analysis of the numbers of Looked After Children and the consequent associated costs of providing accommodation.
5. The Plan proposes to increase the Local Authority's use of internal Foster Carers; it also proposes a review of Commissioning arrangements for young people aged between 16 and 18 years and a review of the arrangements to purchase Residential Placements.
6. A proposal to undertake a Block Purchase of Residential Placements for Looked After Children is attached as **Appendix 2** which aims to ensure that the majority of Looked After Children and Young People are placed within Nottinghamshire. A block purchase of residential care placements will also reduce cost to the local authority.

#### **Other Options Considered**

7. Continued use of existing Residential Placement Procurement Framework - this has not led to any increased provision in Nottinghamshire and placement costs continue to rise.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

8. To increase the numbers of Looked After Children with complex needs placed within Nottinghamshire, primarily within internal foster care but also where appropriate in residential provision; to reduce overall placement costs; and to improve outcomes for Looked After Children.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, 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.

## **Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications**

10. Research evidence and recent Serious Case Reviews into Child Sexual Exploitation suggest that children and young people are better safeguarded when placed nearer to home.

## **Implications for Service Users**

11. The Block Purchase agreement will lead to a closer commissioning arrangement with external providers and will lead to better outcomes for Looked after Children. The 'No Labels' Children in Care Council will be actively involved in the tendering process.

## **Financial Implications**

12. The proposal to block purchase 25 beds is still being developed in consultation with external providers and as such any potential savings have not yet been quantified. Any identified savings will contribute to the target of £6.59m set out in the LAC Placements Outline Business Case as part of the Council wide savings.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That:

- 1) the Nottinghamshire Looked After Children Placements Commissioning Plan be approved.
- 2) the proposal to Block Purchase 25 additional Residential Placements for Looked After Children be approved.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Children's Social Care**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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**Constitutional Comments (LM 07/05/14)**

13. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

**Financial Comments (KLA 07/05/14)**

14. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 12 above.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Fostering Service Current Position Statement – June 2013  
Residential Care Current Position Statement – December 2013  
Nottinghamshire Pledge to Looked After Children

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.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C0416