



Corporate Parenting Board 5 February 2019

Placement Review Update

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Background

1. The aim of the Placement Review is to develop placement options that better meet the current and future need, offer value for money and improve outcomes for children in care.
2. The review is focusing on 1. Foster Care –training, support and remuneration, 2. Residential provision and other sufficiency options.
3. Placement sufficiency is at a critical stage in York. Despite the number of children in care remaining relatively stable over the previous 3 years, the diversity and complexity of placement requirement is changing. York's specific and unique sufficiency profile means, increasingly Children's Social Care are in a position where they are unable to place children and young people in existing Council provision and are having to spot purchase, often at short notice, external / IFA or residential placements that are expensive and may not be value for money in the context of the individual child.

Foster Carers

4. We undertook a consultation process on our foster care proposals towards the end of 2018. Proposals in Annex B.
5. A number of different consultation approaches were used to ensure that a diverse range of feedback was obtained from Foster Carers. The diversity and level of engagement from Foster Carers was positive and higher than other previous, similar exercises. Feedback from Foster Carers focused on the following themes

- **Values** – Foster carers stressed the importance of a value based approach to Foster Care
- **Training and support** – Foster Carers welcomed the increased new training opportunities, requested consideration given to foster carers co delivering training and agreed greater clarity is needed around expectation of attendance
- **Normalising /equity** – Foster Carers recognised the importance of managing budgets and being equitable and transparent across fees, in order to normalise the experience for children in Foster Care

‘We need to manage budgets and expectations for children in care, this helps for setting them up for independence’

- **Delegated Authority payment** – Foster carers were positive about the delegated Authority budget, but raised valid questions about how this would be paid and what it should be used for.

‘Guidance of what to spend allowances on is really helpful for new foster carers’

- **Foster Carer levels** – Foster carer identified that the simplification of the different levels has resulted in more clarity. Implementation of this needs to consider how carers move up and down
‘The different foster Carer levels are clear. This helps me understand what I can do and offer and where I want to be’

- **Mileage** – Foster carers fed back that our proposal were unclear, could adversely impact carers who live outside of York and could increase the request for use of taxis for transporting children in care.

‘I know it is important to cover costs, but the real focus needs to be children's needs in a family and how we can best support them’

6. Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) have been consulted on the broad themes of the placement review. The clearest message was

‘Training and support for foster carers is the most important’

Next Steps

Our final offer, taking into account feedback, will go through the appropriate authorisation channels in early 2019. We will then share the agreed changes and implementation plan, likely to commence post April 2019, with all foster carers.

Residential and Other Placement Options

7. In addition to Foster Care, York’s sufficiency duty is currently met through:

- A contract for residential services provided by Hexagon at Wenlock Terrace. This is a contract for 4 beds, preferential rate for the 2 additional beds at Wenlock Terrace and 2 additional beds outside of York in other Hexagon residential provision.
- Spot purchase of residential and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) provision predominately through the Yorkshire and Humber White Rose Framework.

8. This arrangement is not currently meeting the range of sufficiency needs or delivering the right outcomes for our children and young people and is contributing to a financial overspend.

9. There will always be a cohort of children and young people whose complex care, education and health needs can only be met through spot purchased residential or IFA provision. However, there are children and young people whose needs can be better met with a different approach to sufficiency provision in York.

16+ years

- There is a cohort of young people aged 16 plus, who have ‘out grown’ foster placements or residential provision and are ready to be supported into independence with a flexible and individual package. However, due to the lack of such provision they are currently ‘stuck’ at out of area residential provision, Wenlock Terrace or Howe Hill Resettlement Hostel.

9 to 12 years

- There is a cohort of children aged between 9 and 12 years who have experienced trauma, struggle with behaviours, attachment and outcomes at school. They have experienced significant placement moves and disruption, which has compounded the trauma. These children are often placed outside of area in expensive IFA and residential placements.

13 to 16 years

- There is a cohort of young people aged 13 to 16 years who have experienced a number of placement breakdowns and who experience significant challenges living in a family setting and achieving positive outcomes. These young people are resident at Wenlock Terrace and in other out of area residential placements.

Step Down

- There is a cohort of young people placed in residential provision who currently cannot access a responsive and intensive step down foster placement. This means some young people remain in residential longer than they need to at significant cost to the Local Authority.

10. Initial market engagement has taken place with external providers to explore options, delivery approaches and the ability and capacity of the market to respond to what York requires. This engagement involved an information event and structured conversations with individual providers.

Next steps

11. Options of how best to meet the sufficiency needs of these cohorts of children and young people are being explored and will form the basis of future proposals. It is anticipated that the procurement process will be begin in summer 2019.