

New Concept Form – Children’s Residential Review (TBC)




Recommendations to TSCP Board:

1. Establish the Children’s Residential Provision Review Project as a corporate project under TCSP as it meets the following criteria:
 - Is considered transformational and above and beyond service improvements
 - Has a start and end date
 - Contributes to one or more of the TCSP outcomes
 - Would move forward within expected timescales with robust project management and oversight from TCSP
2. Resource this project as follows:
 - Contractor in the interim to complete specific works for options appraisal, business case and support the DfE application until either an internal Project Officer or Project Manager become available to support delivery.


| | |
|---|--|
| First Name | Alison |
| Surname | Hinds |
| Job Title | Deputy Director Children’s Social Care |
| Email Address | Alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Telephone Number | - |
| Service | Children’s |
| Project Title | Children’s Residential Review (TBC) |
| The Idea / Project including where this is originating from | <p>Originating from Children’s Service</p> <p>A review of Residential Care in Wolverhampton has been drafted by the Children’s Commissioning Team and has sought to take an overview of how CWC meets its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places available where Children and Young People in Care need residential placements.</p> <p>This internal review comes at a time of national concern from central government about the provision of residential care. The Children’s Commissioner has expressed concern about the growth of private providers, which led to the children’s social care review chair asking the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate the market for children in care placements. This led to an investigation of how a lack of availability and increasing costs could be leading to the needs of children in care not being met; does profit come at expense of quality in the children’s social care market</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>and what impact does this have on our ability to meet the needs of our Children and Young People in Care?</p> <p>Wolverhampton has access to a mixed economy of provision in procuring residential placements including internal provision, the Regional Flexible Contracting Arrangement (FCA) through the West Midlands Placements Portal, block contracts and spot purchase where necessary.</p> <p>A recent data exercise, carried out as part of the review of the effectiveness of the FCA, showed that the largest percentage of placements purchased are framework (52%) with 41% spot, 3% block and 4% internal.</p> <p>The data collected suggests that the big providers see no disadvantage in not being part of the FCA. This taken with the fact that 39% of providers reported that they only use the West Midlands Placements Portal to offer placements with 10% completely off portal, leaving just over 50% accessing the portal occasionally to make offers suggest that we be looking for a different approach to procuring residential placements. This is in contrast with the anecdotal evidence that around 85% of fostering placements are framework based through the portal.</p> <p>During 2020 to 2023, sufficiency will be required to provide suitable placements for children in care in the right place at the right time. The Council will continue to increase internal fostering capacity to ensure majority of children in foster care will be placed with internal foster carers. Generally, dependency on the external market of fostering, children’s home and supported accommodation would continue to reduce.</p> <p>Whilst the dependency on placing children in care with external providers is expected to reduce, placement sufficiency for the following cohorts of children must be considered in the Council’s Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024.</p> <p>Children in Care with complex needs and children in care with complex needs but not health needs will be the main cohorts of children in residential care.</p> |
| <p>What will this project deliver?</p> | <p>The project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new restorative practice, multi-agency Children’s Home for children and young people with complex needs (without health needs) as part of the overall priorities set out in the Sufficiency Strategy |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Please outline the project aims</p> | <p>To offer suitable, sufficient, and sustainable children’s residential provision that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meets demand 2. Promotes the safety of children and young people offers them the best quality support whilst in a placement and, 3. Most importantly, puts children at the centre of its design and delivery. |
| <p>What would happen if the project did not commence?</p> | <p>Recommendations from the Children’s Residential commissioning review ‘Home from home’ need to be implemented regardless of whether they are delivered within a project framework or not. This is to ensure that CWC are meeting their statutory duties and that children remain safe and are offered appropriate support in the most financially viable way. If this work did not commence using a project framework, the recommendations would take much longer to implement having only service capacity to drive it forward. This would have a knock-on effect to timescales and the service’s ability to make suitable placements for vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Without implementing the commissioning recommendations, the service would be forced to inappropriately place children in non-regulated placements that are not designed to offer them appropriate support for their needs or to continue using more costly out of city placements – out of city placements are also known to have a negative impact on outcomes for children as they are further away from their support/community network and school.</p> <p>Without sufficient residential provision on offer for target cohorts, children will continue to experience multiple placement breakdowns negatively impacting their stability and limiting the opportunities to improve individual outcomes without secure and appropriate residential support.</p> |
| <p>Please say who will benefit and why – be specific, try and profile your end users and use equalities data where available</p> | <p>The target cohort for this provision will be the main beneficiaries of this project. About that cohort, currently we only have data on age, gender and ethnicity. We do know though that this cohort of children is small in numbers so the challenge during this project will be if data we have or get access to will be meaningful and representative to inform decision making.</p> <p>As part of the project the team will continue to commit to exploring whether any particular profile of CYPiC are disproportionality affected by any changes in provision whilst acknowledging that the individual needs of this cohort of CYP might fall outside of the Equalities Act</p> |

| | <p>protected characteristics (ie Adverse Childhood Experience, previous placements etc) and this will need to be considered as a priority when designing the operating model for this service. This needs to link to the equalities workplan for children’s services and is reinforced in the review document – ‘residential staff need to have the right qualifications but also their understanding of and empathy with the individual and cultural needs of children (including food, self-care and religious observation)’</p> | | | | |
|---|--|------|------|---------------|--|
| <p>Are you aware of any barriers to delivery?</p> | <p>Financial – the level organisational support financially to ensure the right provision (possible capital and revenue).</p> <p>Operational – is there a skills gap in this area? There is potentially a lack of suitably qualified experienced staff to support children in care with complex need</p> <p>Options on physical location and environment – unsure at this point if there is sufficient choice within council assets or stock available from housing providers to ensure that a suitable residential home can be identified</p> | | | | |
| <p>What outcome from the Council Plan will this support?</p>  <p>CWC Our Council Plan 2019-2024.pdf</p> | <p>Children and young people get the best possible start in life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for a great start in life • Education that fulfils potential • Strengthening families where children and young people are at risk | | | | |
| <p>What primary outcomes from the TCSP Mandate will this support?</p>  <p>TCSP Refresh-Mandate-Oct</p> | <p>Increased number of children remaining in safe and stable homes, particularly those at higher risk</p> <p>Improved opportunities for target CYP cohorts (for example young offenders, care leavers, children with SEND and Looked After Children)</p> <p>Increased resilience and emotional wellbeing amongst children, young people and families</p> | | | | |
| <p>Please outline <i>how</i> this will support the Council Plan and TCSP outcomes</p> | <p>By taking a robust project approach to address gaps in residential provision with the ultimate aim of protecting the welfare of our most vulnerable children and improving their individual outcomes.</p> | | | | |
| <p>How will the co-production ladder be considered during the Lifecycle of this project?</p>  <p>Co-production Ladder.docx</p> | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="651 1805 874 1839">Step</th> <th data-bbox="874 1805 1382 1839">How?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="651 1839 874 2007">Co-production</td> <td data-bbox="874 1839 1382 2007">There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Step | How? | Co-production | There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for |
| Step | How? | | | | |
| Co-production | There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for | | | | |

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| | | this provision then work with service users on what provision could look like and how it will operate within those parameters. |
| | Co-design | There will also be elements of co-design within this project looking across the market, possibly working with partners and providers on the best possible provision |
| | Engagement | There will also be element of engagement gathering views and testimony on what has worked and what could have been done better with previous provision |
| | Consultation | - |
| | Educating | - |
| | Informing | - |
| | Coercion | <i>This should not be an approach used in TCSP projects</i> |
| Are you aware of any risks to delivery? (Legal, Reputational, Political etc.) | | <p>Risk of exit plans for children and young people in the current provision not being executed properly, particularly before any setting improvements are implemented</p> <p>Risk around not meeting statutory duties/corporate parenting responsibilities</p> <p>Risk of continuing to offer placements that do not meet need</p> <p>Risk around poor inspection outcomes for the wider service due to children being in unregulated provision</p> <p>Risk around not having the finance to deliver the recommendations from the commissioning review</p> <p>Risk of not having the right provision to meet future demand</p> <p>There is a risk that we might not recruit staff with the specialist skills required for this type of provision</p> |
| In your opinion does the idea have a commercial opportunity attached to it? (please seek advice from Commercial Team) | | No |
| If yes, please detail | | - |
| Is there budget available to cover the full duration of the project? Yes/No | | Dependent on options appraisal (possible diversion of external placement budget and possible de-commissioning of other similar services into this project) |

| | |
|--|--|
| If yes to the above, please specify if this is capital or revenue funded | Unknown at this point |
| How much will the project cost? | Unknown at this point |
| Please state whether funding will be sourced externally or internally | Unknown at this point (to be explored as part of options appraisal) however, the full costs of this project will need to be met by CWC regardless of the delivery model as part of our statutory duty. These costs might be partially mitigated by a funding application to DfE as part of a £19.5 million capital funding programme. CWC is confident it meets the criteria for these funding applications (innovation and residential provision for children with complex needs) but the outcome will not be known until November. |
| Will this project support MTFS savings (through the delivery of associated benefits) Yes/No | Unknown at this point – financial modelling will need to be part of the project to better understand the cost avoidance and cost saving potential. It is important to note that the main driver is improved outcomes for CYP. |
| What savings could be made in delivering this project? | Unknown at this point – as above, likely cost savings and avoidance if CWC has more control over the residential placements on offer. |
| What conversations have taken place with Finance regarding budget/funding? | None at this point |
| What resources will be required to successfully deliver this project? | Recommended a full time PM. There is no capacity within the current transformation team so a short-term contractor is likely. |
| Proposed project start date | |
| Proposed project end date | TBA |
| Next Steps to progress | Review recommendations considered at children's leadership and further project scoping to be completed. Consideration at TCSP and submission at PAG with a move to options and feasibility gateway. |
| Additional Information |  July 2021 Residential Review.pdf |