

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 5 MARCH 2020

REPORT ON: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE - CHILDREN'S HOUSES

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 105-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report follows Committee Report 374-2017 on Residential and Continuing Care Budgetary Pressures and follow up Committee Reports 340-2018 and 359-2019 on Corporate Parenting. It builds on developments outlined in these reports to propose the introduction of 2 waking nights in our 5 Children's Houses in order to further build local placement capacity for care experienced young people; strengthen child protection and health and safety arrangements in the houses; and also significantly reduce costs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee Members:

- i. Approve the introduction of 2 waking nights in the 5 Children's Houses as part of a broader, long-term strategy to increase local placement capacity for care experienced children and young people

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As the proposal will require an increase from 1 to 2 Social Care Officers working waking nights in the Children's Houses, requiring 10 extra SCOs, it will involve an investment of £401,000 in additional staffing costs. As it will also involve accommodating an extra young person in each of the houses, there will be further costs of £49,000 in supplies and services based on current expenditure in each of the 5 houses. The total additional recurring cost to the Council would therefore be £450,000 per year.
- 3.2 These costs will be offset by a corresponding reduction of 5 young people in external residential placements. The average cost of a young person in external residential placement ranges from £234,000 to £260,000 per young person per year which may result in a total reduction of costs from £1.17m to £1.3m per year. When balanced against the additional outlay, this would reduce full year costs up to £750,000. Given the volatility of demand for external residential placements which are based on emerging needs and a need to supportively transition suitable young people back to the city, there would be a requirement to have some flexibility and an estimated full year saving of £575,000.
- 3.3 It is anticipated given implementation timescales that this proposal would generate a saving in 2020/21 of £200,000 with a full year saving in financial year 2021/22 amounting to £575,000.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In Committee Report 374-2017 it was outlined how, in response to major financial pressures associated with the indirect impact of Continuing Care on a growing number of external residential placements, an action plan had been developed to build local placement capacity and simultaneously reduce costs. This plan consisted of a range of measures, including increased support to kinship carers, intensified work on the recruitment of internal foster carers, refurbishment of Children's Houses and the creation of satellite flats attached to the houses.

In the subsequent Committee Reports 340-2018 and 359-2019, it was noted how these measures had led to significant reductions in the number of external residential placements from 42 to 31. As returning some children and young people had required them to be provided with extra support in local placements at additional cost, this led to an overall saving of

£800,000. It was noted that, throughout this period, placements were becoming more stable and educational outcomes for care experienced young people were improving overall.

All these measures, designed to increase the proportion of local family based placements in particular, continue to be progressed. They have more recently been accompanied by the development of a new kinship carer hub to provide kinship carers with a network of familiar support. Work on the recruitment of internal foster carers will be intensified by targeting large local employers. Improved approaches towards permanency planning is also being progressed via a pilot with the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children (CELCIS).

5.0 PROPOSALS

Building on these developments, it is also now proposed that all 5 Children's Houses extend current waking night arrangements from 1 to 2 Social Care Officers. At present, a dedicated team of some SCOs cover night-shifts only and work from 10pm to 8am, alongside a sleeping SCO who is available in the event of emergencies. Following a night-shift, the sleeping SCO can then progress to working in the house during the day as part of an overall shift system involving other sleeping night shift SCOs and day shift SCOs of 37 hours per week per FTE.

Changing these arrangements to 2 waking nights would require 10 additional SCOs for full rota coverage when annual leave is taken into account. It would bring benefits of additional support to a very vulnerable group of teenagers whilst also releasing a bedroom to create additional capacity. In doing so, it would allow the service to return more young people from external residential placements, including the option for them to progress into Continuing Care up to the age of 21 years. It would provide extra support to young people whilst markedly reducing costs.

Proposals to also invest in the refurbishment of Drummond House and a re-build for Fairbairn Street are also outlined in a separate Committee Report as part of a major capital investment plan for our Children's Houses. If approved, these proposals would be implemented alongside these changes to working arrangements. To provide extra support to teenagers in the houses and with kinship and foster carers, discussions have also commenced on the possible implementation of Functional Family Therapy in placements for teenagers.

Functional Family Therapy is a therapeutic intervention designed for families with teenagers which aims to improve the way family members interact and behave towards each other. It has 5 components of engagement, motivation, relational assessment, behaviour change and generalisation, involving 12-14 sessions carried out over 5 months. It has been shown to promote positive family relationships and prevent family breakdown. It could help to further stabilise placements and enhance the quality of the care experience for young people.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness, poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council Management Team and Chief Social Work Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

Paul Clancy
Executive Director

Glyn Lloyd
Acting Head of Service

Committee Report No: 105-2020

Document Title: Children's Houses

Document Type: Service

New/Existing: Existing

Period Covered: 01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021

Document Description:

This report proposes changes to night-time shift arrangements within the 5 Children's Houses in order to strengthen child protection arrangements, enhance health and safety, release a bedroom for extra capacity and facilitate the return of young people from external residential placements, which will also reduce costs.

Intended Outcome:

The intended outcome of this report is to enhance capacity, care and support in the 5 Children's Houses so care experienced young people can live locally, in a way which will also significantly reduce costs.

How will the proposal be monitored?:

The proposal will be implemented and monitored by the Children and Families Service.

Author Responsible:

Name: glyn lloyd

Title: Acting Head of Service, Children's Service and Community Justice

Department: Children and Families Service

E-Mail: glyn.lloyd@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 01382 435017

Address: Dudhope Castle

Director Responsible:

Name: Paul Clancy

Title: Executive Director of Children and Families Service

Department: Children and Families Service

E-Mail: paul.clancy@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 01382 436001

Address: Dudhope Castle

A. Equality and Diversity Impacts:

Age:	Not Known
Disability:	Not Known
Gender Reassignment:	No Impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership:	No Impact
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No Impact
Race/Ethnicity:	Not Known
Religion or Belief:	No Impact
Sex:	Not Known
Sexual Orientation:	No Impact

Equality and diversity Implications:

The proposed change will allow more care experienced young people to remain in local placements instead of external residential care.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

Suitable young people will be identified and all of them will be properly supported through the transition and return to the city, including into Continuing Care.

Is the proposal subject to a full EQIA? : No

The proposed change will allow more care experienced young people to remain in local placements instead of external residential care.

B. Fairness and Poverty Impacts:

Geography

Strathmartine (Ardler, St Mary's and Kirkton):	No Impact
Lochee(Lochee/Beechwood, Charleston and Menzieshill):	No Impact
Coldside(Hilltown, Fairmuir and Coldside):	No Impact
Maryfield(Stobswell and City Centre):	No Impact
North East(Whitfield, Fintry and Mill O' Mains):	No Impact
East End(Mid Craigie, Linlathen and Douglas):	No Impact
The Ferry:	No Impact
West End:	No Impact

Household Group

Lone Parent Families:	No Impact
Greater Number of children and/or Young Children:	No Impact
Pensioners - Single/Couple:	No Impact
Single female households with children:	No Impact
Unskilled workers or unemployed:	No Impact
Serious and enduring mental health problems:	No Impact
Homeless:	No Impact
Drug and/or alcohol problems:	No Impact
Offenders and Ex-offenders:	No Impact
Looked after children and care leavers:	Positive
Carers:	No Impact

Significant Impact

Employment:	Positive
Education and Skills:	Positive
Benefit Advice/Income Maximisation:	No Impact
Childcare:	No Impact
Affordability and Accessibility of services:	No Impact

Fairness and Poverty Implications:

Where applicable depending on age, young people will be supported in local schools and will receive ongoing support into positive destinations.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

None.

C. Environmental Impacts

Climate Change

Mitigating greenhouse gases:	No Impact
Adapting to the effects of climate change:	No Impact

Resource Use

Energy efficiency and consumption:	No Impact
Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling waste:	No Impact
Sustainable Procurement:	No Impact

Transport

Accessible transport provision:	No Impact
Sustainable modes of transport:	No Impact

Natural Environment

Air, land and water quality:	No Impact
Biodiversity:	No Impact
Open and green spaces:	No Impact

Built Environment

Built Heritage:	No Impact
Housing:	No Impact

Is the proposal subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

None.

Environmental Implications:

None.

D. Corporate Risk Impacts

Corporate Risk Implications:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are 'business as normal' risks. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant loss. There is comfort that the risks inherent within the activity are either transferred to another party, shared equally and fairly between the Council and another party or are negligible.

Corporate Risk Mitigating Actions: