



Children's Placements Overview Report

SUMMARY

1.1 Children in Care Council Summary:

It is really important for Derby City Council to have in place safe accommodation and support for children and young people. To help us do this, we use lists of providers who have been able to show us that they can offer safe accommodation and good support.

We use lists for different providers who offer fostering, children's homes and provisions for young people who are 16-17 years to live in a property (either shared or on their own) with support from social care or others.

This report explains the different types of placements that Derby City Council make for children and young people, what the providers offer and how we make sure everyone feels safe and supported.

1.2 This report details the different types of placements commissioned with external providers for Children in Care and Children in Need.

1.3 The three frameworks used to source these placements are:

- East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF) – for Fostering and Children's Homes,
- Accommodation and Support Framework for 16-17 year olds – for semi-independent placements and support accommodation, and
- Nottinghamshire DPS – for semi-independent placements for 16-17 year olds with complex needs.

1.4 The following report gives detail of the type/range of placements, numbers of children and young people placed, quality and cost of placements along with developmental work being undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To note the contents of the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To understand the use of external provision for Derby City's Children in Care and the work undertaken to secure sufficient, safe and quality placements.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The 'One Stop Shop' Commissioning service supports operational teams within Childrens Social Care and Early Help to find the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of the children and young people. Operational since November 2017, the service liaises with the internal fostering team and internal Childrens homes management for placement availability before contacting external providers. Placements for children and young people can be sourced from both internal and external provisions.

- 4.2 The range of placements made by the service are:
- Internal Fostering and internal Childrens Homes,
 - External Fostering (through Independent Fostering Agencies),
 - External Mother and Baby (fostering),
 - External Childrens Homes,
 - External Semi-Independent, and
 - Secure Welfare placements.

- 4.3 The number of each of these different types of placement, as of 31 August 2018, are as follows:

Type of placement:	Number
External Fostering (including Mother/Baby placements)	257
External Childrens homes (including Disabled)	29
External Semi-Independent	59
Secure Welfare Placements	3
Total	348

- 4.4 External Fostering placements are made via the East Midlands Regional Childrens Framework. These placements are made through a matching process, working in partnership with social care to ensure the right placement match. A quality assurance process ensures that the carers offered by providers meet the needs of the children.
- 4.5 At present there is a shortage of foster carers available to Derby, which is a national issue. Consequently, we are working hard to build and maintain relationships with our local external providers in order to better secure the provision needed for Derby, in Derby.
- 4.6 The East Midlands Regional Framework also provides 'Mother/Father & Baby' placements. These are made within a foster home with carers who are able to support Mother/Father as well as baby.

- 4.7 External Childrens Homes placements are also made via the East Midlands Regional Childrens Framework, where young people are not placed in Local Authority maintained homes.
- 4.8 Semi-independent placements are sourced via the Accommodation and Support Framework for 16-17 year olds. This framework offers accommodation and support with over nine different providers within and around Derby City.
- 4.9 The framework supports placements for Children in Care, Children in Need, Care Leavers and young homeless 16-17 year olds, offering support packages of up to 25 hours per week with the opportunity to create bespoke individual packages for children and young people who have higher needs.
- 4.10 In addition we are able to access five emergency beds for any young person who presents at risk of homelessness, ensuring access to a safe place for the young person on the same night, alongside a single assessment being undertaken with the young person to ascertain the plan for them moving forward, for example, going home to parents/carers or moving into semi-independent accommodation.
- 4.11 As of 31 August 2018 there were 59 young people in semi-independent placements. The number of young people accessing this type of placement has increased in recent years due to an increase in young people 'stepping down' from residential care; more young people in this age becoming Looked After, and an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) claiming to be between 16 – 18 years.
- In 2014 when the framework was established, it supported 20 young people.
- 4.12 Secure Welfare placements are specialist placements authorised to care for children in a secure setting. These are sourced from a Hub in Hampshire who acts as the point of contact for the secure units in England. These placements are often for a shorter period, before stepdown to an appropriate placement as per the young person's care plan.
- 4.13 In order to ensure quality provision, for all placements, there is a focus on working positively with social care and providers. Most settings are inspected by Ofsted. Semi-independent settings, which are non-regulated, are subject to a specific quality assurance programme which ensures that the properties offered are safe, good quality and offer appropriate support for the young person's individual needs. Providers that don't meet the required standards will not be maintained on the framework.
- 4.14 The Local Authority is undertaking a considerable amount of development work which aims to increase local sufficiency and improve the accommodation offer to our children in care. New initiatives commencing over the next six months which will support placement matching and stability includes exploring providers who may be able to offer different types of placements, and working across with D2N2 (Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council) developing the local provider market to deliver placements nearer to Derby.
- 4.15 Additionally, in partnership with Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council and using social finance, the Council is commissioning a number of evidence based interventions supporting young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs who are on the edge of care, and/or in care.

- 4.16 The interventions will be holistic, wrap-around tailored packages of flexible support for foster carers and the young person, and/or therapeutic, holistic interventions which focus on building stronger family relationships.
- 4.17 The desired outcome is to achieve better social outcomes through achieving stable family-type placements and, where possible, enabling children and young people to remain at home with their families.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 N/A

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Karen Griffin, Corporate Lawyer Alison Parkin, Head of Finance, People Services Gurmail Nizzer, Service Director, Integrated Commissioning (CYP) Lisa Melrose, Head of Integrated Commissioning (CYP)
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There has been an increase in the number of all types of external placements made over the last 5 years, which has had a significant impact on the overall cost of placements. This has primarily been due to increasing numbers and increasing complexity of young people coupled with shortages of local foster carers.
- 1.2 For example, there has been an increase in external Foster and Childrens homes placements from 205 placements costing c£12.4m in March 2016, to 278 placements costing £14.7m in March 2018.
- 1.3 Similarly, the number of semi-independent placements has increased from 44 placements costing £0.6m in March 2016, to currently 59 placements costing over £1m.
- 1.4 The average costs of external placements are:
 - Foster placement: £800 - £1,060 per week
 - Children's Home placement: £3,500 - £4,000 per week, however if the young person's needs are high this can be up to £7,000 per week.
 - Secure placement: c£6,000 per week.
- 1.5 Spend on external placements is a priority area for People's services and being monitored closely to ensure it meets need and gives best value for money. Frameworks generally have capped costs which mean there will not be significant increases in the price of individual placements until the framework is reviewed.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty¹ to ensure there is sufficient accommodation within the Authority's area which meets the needs of children that the Local Authority is looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the Local Authority's area (Sufficiency Duty).
- 2.2 The Lead Authority for the East Midlands Regional Childrens Framework is Northamptonshire County Council. The Framework commenced in 1st February 2016 and has a maximum term of 4 years, expiring 1st February 2020
- 2.3 The Accommodation and Support Framework is procured locally by Derby City Council as per Public Contract Regulations. This commenced on 1st March 2017 and has a term of a maximum of 3 years.

¹ Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, together with applicable guidance issued.

Personnel

3.1 None noted.

IT

4.1 None noted.

Equalities Impact

5.1 The frameworks allow the Council access to provision for the most vulnerable young people and cater for a range of needs for Children in Care, Children in Need and vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness.

Health and Safety

6.1 All providers who are accepted onto the frameworks will have been assessed to ensure they can provide appropriate quality of care in full compliance with relevant legislation. This is monitored on an ongoing basis by the regional team and at a local level by Commissioning and Operational officers.

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 None noted.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None noted.

Risk Management and Safeguarding

9.1 The frameworks facilitate comprehensive safeguarding processes and providers are expected to deliver services that are safe and of sound quality. The regional consortia work closely with Ofsted as the regulatory body to ensure providers are meeting standards, and where concerns are raised they are dealt with locally and regionally.

9.2 The Accommodation and Support Framework has a quality assurance programme which is led by Derby City. These providers are classed as unregulated and therefore not assessed by Ofsted.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1
- Protecting vulnerable children and adults
 - Promoting Health and Wellbeing
 - Delivering services differently
 - Meeting our Sufficiency Duty for Children in care