

**Safeguarding and Early Help - Cost Improvement Plan 14/15**  
Position As At - 30/9/2014

A number of targets were set and included within the Council Budget Strategy for 14/15. The table below shows progress against these targets.									
No.	Description	Target No.	Forecast (Actual) No.	Variation on No.	Target Saving £k	Achieved £k	Variation on £k	Increase in demand £k	Comments
<b>Objective 1 - Recruitment &amp; Retention</b>									
1	Reduce no. of agency social workers (April 14 - Sept 14)	5	10	5					At the end of September 2014 there were 10 Agency SWs; The numbers have not reduced as hoped due to high demand for SW involvement and failure by some applicants to take up posts offered, and transfer in of services for care leavers in January. At that time there were 4 Agency workers across CIC and leaving care; this has been reduced to 3 and should reduce to 1 by the end of November. Telford is participating in regional work to cap Agency costs and improve quality
	Reduce no. of agency social workers (Oct 14 - Mar 15)	0	0	0	95	0	-95		The level of demand for SW services remains high; this is being tackled in a number of ways both Strategic and Operational; presentation to Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB) which achieved sign up to a change in partner behaviour at the frontline to avoid involvement of a SW where this is not necessary; Partnership meetings of senior managers to interrogate the data and identify and act on themes will commence in November; Children in Need Panels commenced in October to get cases closed or transferred to non- SW lead professionals in a more timely way; development of arrangements to monitor "step down" cases to ensure that non SW Lead Professional remains active.  New model of recruitment (assessment day) has proved very successful, although it is still very difficult to recruit experienced staff. Accordingly the strategy to "grow our own" continues to be strengthened in a number of ways eg more capacity to take final placement students, support for newly qualified staff including more Advanced SWs practitioner capacity - fast track pilot for SSWs, ensuring parity of salaries with other councils, introduction of accredited Systemic Practice training. In addition the council has recently introduced/retained a number of initiatives which will aid recruitment and retention (car leasing salary sacrifice, electronic devices to facilitate mobile working and continued payment of the HCPC registration fee for SWs). 9 appointments were made on the 1st of October and there are a number from July taking up post in the next few weeks.  Mobile working will also improve efficiency which helps with capacity  The forecast for the spend on permanent staffing vacancies across social work teams mostly offsets the non achievement of the Cost Improvement plan regarding use of Agency SWs
<b>Objective 2 - Placement Strategy</b>									
2	Reduce no. in residential placement (End of March 14)	45	40	-5					The role of the Edge of Care Manager is proving very successful in preventing residential admissions for reasons of behaviour. There has only been 3 new admissions (excluding remands) and only one transfer from external fostering for this reason since December 2013. One of the YP newly admitted moved to the contract carer and went home after a few weeks. One was planned as (successful) respite weeks placement.
	Reduce no. in residential placement (November 14)	42	40	-2	550	484	-66		Until this month the budget position forecasted that the savings would be met, however this is a volatile budget line due to the level of unit cost and the impact that any full year effect for any new admission would have at this stage of the financial year - recent reduction in savings is due to new admission
	Reduce no. in residential placement (March 15)	40	40	0					
3	Actual no. in External Fostering placement (End of April 14)	71	73	2					Achieving a reduction in external fostering will get progressively harder and the target for this year has reduced from 15 to 10 to reflect this. Good progress to date - 3 fewer carers and £209K saving achieved
	Reduce no. in External Fostering placement (November 14)	65	68	3	285	196	-89		The Family Placements team continue to achieve good enquiry to assessment to approval conversion rates for internal foster carers, and have arrangements in place to identify and address any avoidable delays in the process The Placement Stability Panel is being used to good effect by some teams - activity is underway to make sure referrals are consistently made. Work has begun to proactively identify and support children who have been fixed term excluded from school as we know this is a risk factor for admission to care and foster care breakdowns
	Reduce no. in External Fostering placement (March 15)	61	61	0					
4	Reduce unit cost for Care Leavers	£620	£669	£49	110	0	-110		The budget (and overspend) for care leavers transferred to Safeguarding this financial year. The minimum intention for this year is to get the spend back to budget, and the current forecast outturn is £95k less than 2013-14  Activity is underway to "join things up better" eg add to the elements relating to care leavers in the Cost improvement plan, and apply the same robust methodology to forecasting and tracking progress of individual care plans through RAMP. Since beginning of financial year there have been monthly reductions in the forecast but not yet at level to reduce unit cost.  The recent restructure identified a post with lead responsibility for ensuring young people are better prepared for adulthood from an early age as possible and supporting the development of appropriate care packages ("stage not age")  The Staying Put Policy has been approved - this will improve support for care leavers with minimal additional costs this financial year
5	Contract Carer (Apr 14 - Sep 14)				11.5	9	-3		The Contract Carer is subject to Annual Review just like other foster carers and this and an analysis of use has identified the types of needs best met by the carer.
	Contract Carer (Oct 14 - Mar 15)	639 nights	441 nights based on current usage	(198) days	12	0	-12		When she is not fully occupied by the YPs she is caring for she offers support to other carers - this activity is not included in the savings figures
<b>Objective 3 - Review Approach/Strategy for Reducing CiC</b>									
6	Parenting Assessments - reduce use of external providers, in particular residential				106	97	-9		External Parenting Assessments require the approval of RAMP or the AD CSSS (emergencies) Work is underway to develop the market in this area including being part of a current tender our for preferred provider list for non- accommodation services This is a prudent estimate of savings as costs beyond xmas are less predictable.
7	Reduce transport contact costs and implement Fostering to Adopt (target of 2 children)				18	-26	-44		Family Placement service have started a review of transport costs.  Changing Futures Project is up and running, it is very early days but there have already been a number of referrals of parents who have previously been judged unable to parent a previous child, and there is very promising anecdotal evidence about benefits in terms of problem reduction and delayed pregnancies  Arrangements are in place for consideration of Foster to Adopt, both during the assessment and approval of adopters and at Legal Planning Meetings involving subsequent siblings
<b>Objective 4. Utilise Commissioning Approach</b>									
8	Queensway Block & spot bed utilisation - Target Saving 13/14 for 75% Occupancy of all bed nights available (2,920 nights = 100%)	2,190	2,190	-	35	35	0		Achieved but could alter if there are unexpected changes in individual childrens care plans
9	Care Leavers - further review the CiC strategy to ensure appropriate and sufficient placement mix	£620	£669	£49	50	0	-50		CiC placement strategy is being reviewed
10	Commission residential care & support for Disabled children, as an alternative to residential educational placements				35	0	-35		Options for local provision are being considered with local providers Needs analysis is due to commence via consideration of the circumstances of children with the most complex needs
	Total Saving by 31/3/15				1,307	795	-512		
	figures as at July 2014				1,307	807	-500		