

Safeguarding and Early Help – Cost Improvement Plan

December 2013

Agreed Aims

- To be in a position where there is no overspend in Safeguarding by the end of March 2014
- To make required level of contribution towards the overall Council savings target by the end of March 2015
- To make significant savings whilst improving the quality of service provided to children, young people and their families including satisfying requirements identified by OFSTED during our recent inspection of Safeguarding and Local After Children's services.
- To reduce the average cost of placing a child in care or reducing duration in care

Underlying Principles

- All available options will be reviewed before making a decision to accommodate child/children.
- More children will be looked after by their families.
- Culture change initiated by the previous phases of the children and families service review will be key to our success
- Joint ownership will be fostered through more detailed action plans which will sit behind our agreed aims and fed through senior managers to the entire Children's Service workforce (both LA and partners)
- These aims assume that the impact of benefit reforms can be met from existing resources and that there will no demographic impact from these changes.

Action Plan

Target (PI) And timescale	Target Saving 14/15 p.a. £k	Actions	Progress
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Objective 1: Recruit and retain SWs in permanent posts, reduce use of Agency staff;

Performance Indicator (PI) - number of agency social workers employed across children and family services.

5 Agency SWs until end Sept 2014, then 0 for remainder of year.	95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce generic selection days programmed in throughout the year (AW) • Maintain a competitive advantage (Unique Selling Point) and pay parity with other local authorities (EW/HR) • Maintain management reporting - vacancies, appointments and agency cover (HR) • Five 3rd phase Step Up students starting spring 2013 (AW) • Implement SW to SSW progression by Assessment (AW) • Consider career pathways for SSW, and Managers • Encourage 3rd year placements in CPT/ACM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development Strategy agreed by CFSLT. Detailed Action Plan in progress • Managers and PSW attended event at another LA to understand how they do Assessment days • Salary and recruitment activity in other LA closely monitored • Participation in regional survey on Agency SWs . • Online recruitment tracking sheet accessible to all key stakeholders • Number of Agency Staff reduced to 7 as at end Oct 2013 from 14 in September 2012. • Four out of five Step up to Social Work students placed in permanent posts • SSW progression scheme agreed
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Objective 2: Reduce the number of residential and external fostering placements

Performance Indicators - reducing number of Residential Placements (RP) and External Foster Placements, increasing number of Internal Foster Placements (IFP)

40 Residential Placements by the end of March 15.	550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Marketing approach to recruitment of internal foster carers • Develop Placement Stability Team in conjunction with CAMHS to improve support for carers and minimise placement breakdowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member approved as contract carer. • RAMP well established and providing challenge to admissions of pupils to independent day and residential providers
77 External Fostering Placements by the end of March 15.	285	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Placement Stability Panel – as above • Reducing no. of babies fostered through use of potential adoptive parents (<i>MW</i>) • Prioritising assessment of any prospective internal foster carers who show an interest in taking teenagers. (<i>AY</i>) • Revise Policy for Fostering Allowances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed initial scoping re placement stability team/panel; panel trialed in December 2013 for introduction in January 2014 – function to support social workers to keep placement at home or does not break down resulting in high cost placement • Initial Options for Foster to Adopt jointly scoped by Fostering and Joint Adoption Team Managers • Initial enquiries from potential foster carers managed via Family Connect
Care Leavers - Reduce Unit Cost	110	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of forward planning and acquisition of independent living skills for children in care to reduce cost of placements for post 16, leading to a reduced Unit cost for this provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for conducting Disruption Meetings (unexpected changes in placement) operational • Numbers of children placed with Internal carers increased to all time high of 130 at end of Sept 2013 (from 115 at the end of March 2013)
Contract Carer	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue use of Contract Carer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children placed with external foster

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- 60% usage			carers reduced to 84 as at Sept 2013 (from 92 at the end of March 2013)

Objective 3; Reduce numbers of Children in Care Performance Indicators – Reduce number of CiC, reduce number of child protection plans (CP) and reduce time spent in care			
310 CiC by April 15	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish model of working for Service Delivery Edge of Care Specialist • Review Special Guardian Order allowances policy • Provide Systemic Practice Training • Bid for Multi-Systemic Practice Social Impact Bonds (VMcY) • Implement “Changing Futures” model of practice to support families who have previously had young children removed from their care • Review and improve use of Family Group Conferencing • Implement Step Down procedures robustly. • Recruiting of a quality officer whose role includes tracking progress to ensure timely provision of support for families. • Support staff to use the Parenting Assessment manual and other approaches to reduce use of external providers, in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Allocation Management Panel in place preventing non emergency admissions to care, especially teenagers • Permanence Panel in place • Service Delivery Edge of Care Specialist in post • “Step down” procedures reviewed • Procedure for Viability Assessments of Kinship Carers reviewed – increased numbers of Special Guardian Orders and Residence Orders • Working with over 200 of our most vulnerable families through the Strengthening Families programme. • Revised thresholds and risk management policy approved by LSCB • Neglect pilot commenced in partnership with 3 other local authorities and Sheffield University • Family Connect Triage • Child Protection plans have reduced to a level which is now similar to national averages • Staff workshops across all children’s services
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	10	particular Residential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review contact costs for travel. 	taken place in March driving culture change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended pathway identified for use of Community Social work team to better support children and families before problems escalate. • Systemic Practice tender about to go out • Changing Futures post about to be advertised

Objective 4: Utilise commissioning approach to achieve better procurement and Service redesign			
Performance Indicators – The main aim will be to improve outcomes at a lower unit cost and this will be reflected in the monthly performance dashboard.			
Care leavers – Reducing Unit Cost.	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential to provide residential care in Telford for disabled children to avoid otherwise unnecessary residential school placements • Further review the children in care strategy to ensure appropriate and sufficient placement mix leading to a reduction in unit costs. • Ongoing review of regional fostering and residential framework contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations from Improvement Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM) re the Fostering Service implemented • CIC strategy to include prevention and leaving care • Potential use of Assisted boarding options well understood • Recommissioned Queensway @ HLC residential contract- lower cost
Queensway – utilisation at 75%	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of supported accommodation provision and new models and contracts (contract ends Nov 2014) • Non accommodation framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering contract – agreed to continue for a further year in light of savings it provided. Residential contract under review regionally. Plan to make Telford decision early in New Year. We would consider capping prices through tender
	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the option of how to re-provide for parenting assessments (by October 14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New spot placement provider available in the

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occupancy.	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore ways of more efficient procure of therapy services and other support to CIC or children on the edge of care (by June 2014)• More cost effective support for families via the council crisis fund	Borough providing cheaper placements
Total Savings	1,329		

Risk Matrix

Risk	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture change within our workforce and across agencies will be resisted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive engagement/communication strategy and plan put in place to support change • Detailed action plans to be shared and owned by workforce and agencies, starting with our own SDMs • Re-launch Telford Safeguarding and Integrated Services Early Help Training. • Invest in longer term “co-production” model with community through strengthening families and homelessness task forces. • Support and funding attracted from west midlands region to support this work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguration uncertainty – Safeguarding review underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive engagement/communication strategy and plan put in place • Ensuring social workers understand the need for change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capacity at SDM level – previous reviews have reduced substantially capacity at manager level across children and family service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Capacity Fund and existing balances to provide additional one off capacity where needed • SDM taken on to support transformation and to ensure practice quality is maintained during change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capacity in Commissioning & Family Placement teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some LA pay a premium or have concluded single status work resulting pay inequity across the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review inequity and make recommendations for addressing any inequity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impact of benefit change on demand for children and family services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact to be assessed by Strengthening Families and Homelessness Task Force. Not looking to drive savings out of this money. • Realistic targets regarding CiC numbers/CP plans and savings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of foster carers nationally – there is a shortage of foster carers across the region, particularly for older teenage children in care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review package and support offered • Review marketing strategy as above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perverse incentives to make children subject of CP plans for children’s workforce who are not SWs and some SW teams as we are currently structured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB develop and endorse Risk Model • More robust “Step Down” arrangements • Clear, well understood and endorsed models of alternatives to CP plans for (some) DA and Neglect cases • Reconfiguration of Safeguarding Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Family Law reform on capacity in ACM teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be short term and pending promised national simplifications of care plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Business Support Officer (BSO) capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review service requirements as part of the restructure