

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	26 March 2020
Title:	Modernising Placement Programme
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Amber James, Head of Resource & Partnerships

Tel: 01962 845973

Email: Amber.james@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Board about the Modernising Placements Programme

Recommendation

2. That the Corporate Parenting Board note the report on the Modernising Placements Programme

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to...
 - set out the background to the project
 - briefly consider the future direction of the project (next steps)

Contextual Information

4. The Modernising Placements Programme (MPP) is a Children & Families transformational programme which commenced in October 2019. It will build on the foundations achieved by Transforming Social Care (TSC) and both programmes will work together to ensure high quality services for children and families across the social care pathway.
5. The vision of the programme is to develop a continuum of care that works across Children's Services and is able to provide the right accommodation and support at the right time for our looked after children in Hampshire. To

achieve this, the programme has been divided into two primary strands; in house fostering and rethinking sufficiency.

6. The placements that this programme is focusing on are depicted below in figure 1

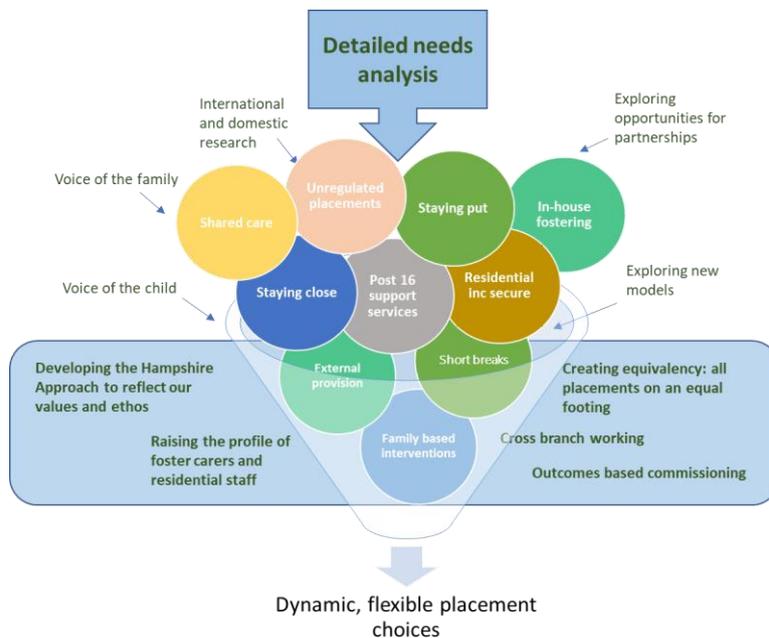


Figure 1 Modernising Placement Programme

7. The programme's objectives are:

- I. To increase our capacity to provide in-house placements
- II. To increase our staff and foster carers' capability to manage children with more challenging behaviours
- III. Creating a culture of equivalency across our placement types, and our Children's Services pathway

8. **Increasing our capacity to provide in-house placements**

9. This relates to our capacity to provide placements to children in both our in-house fostering placements and in-house children's homes.

10. Our in-house foster carer numbers have steadily declined leading to higher costs through the commissioning of independent fostering placements and children often placed further away from Hampshire, decreasing the potential impact of work with them and sometimes increasing the risks they face.

11. The in-house fostering strand has several workstreams that are well embedded and cover the journey of a foster carer. These are outlined below with the questions that we are seeking to answer within each of the streams:

a) Enquiry

- How do we increase enquiries?
- How do we increase transition from enquiry to assessment?
- Who do we need to be marketing to?
- What is our marketing strategy?

b) Assessment

- Is the process lean and efficient?
- Can we speed it up?
- Are we too risk averse?

c) Placement

- What do carers need to look after Hampshire's CIC?
- How do we improve levels of satisfaction between carers' social workers and children's social workers?
- Do we pay enough and what is the best approach to utilizing skills fees?
- What does our in-house recruitment strategy mean for external commissioning?
- What are the potential commissioning models including buying an IFA and joint ventures?

d) Retention

- How do we support carers during a placement?
- What is our support offer and what does it need to be?
- Why are we losing carers and what can we do anything to mitigate?
- How do we improve and simplify our payment processes?

12. **Progress**

13. To date, significant progress has been made within the enquiry and assessment workstreams with a new marketing strategy drafted informed by focus groups and research undertaken by the Insight & Engagement Unit. In addition, a LEAN review has been carried out around the assessment process with a number of actions being progressed in the action plan.

14. The first phase of the programme has considered evidence and learning from international and UK approaches and models and in consultation with foster carers, a support network model based on the Mockingbird Family Model has

been agreed as being of benefit to foster carer support in Hampshire and work is now underway to plan and cost how this would be achieved. Alongside this, benchmarking has been completed about the support offered to foster carers in Hampshire and how this compares to that offered by other local authorities and independent fostering agencies

15. **Increasing our staff and foster carers' capability to manage children with more challenging behaviours**
16. The in-house fostering and rethinking sufficiency strands are both focussed on the approaches required to support children in our care. As children's needs have become more complex, and our focus on having the right children in our care has increased, the skills required of those caring for the most vulnerable children have shifted. A needs analysis has been completed of 1259 children placed within a 12-month period providing extensive insight into the needs young people have. It is clear from this data that our in house foster carers are struggling to manage children who present with physical aggression and that our residential children's homes are managing children with a high level of complex needs including mental health and self-harming.
17. The programme has established that the foundation of the Hampshire Approach is a key ingredient, as is the Pillars of Parenting Emotional Warmth model used in our children's homes. However, these approaches need to be underpinned by a trauma informed approach across the whole Children's Services workforce, including in education, and psychological support for staff, carers, children and families. The programme is working further on designing and costing this service for consideration alongside other support mechanisms which will be outlined in detail in a future report. These supports are critical to optimising the placement capacity that we have through more robust and resilient environments.
18. Other areas of work in supporting optimisation and resilience are:
 - a) Cypress Lodge Extended Support Hub Model – consideration of a multi-disciplinary model that provides residential and outreach to children in care and utilises the residential beds for a period of assessment to stabilise children and plan move on to longer term placements or home. Linked to the hub will potentially be hub foster carers. This is based on a model developed by North Yorkshire County Council, 'No Wrong Door'. Early engagement with partners has been positive with a common identification of the cohort and a shared understanding of the benefits from such a model.
 - b) Pop-Ups – work is in development around how to support young people in crisis who have historically been placed in unregulated placements. Our capacity to manage these young people is minimal and currently often

disrupts the placements of other young people whilst not delivering positive outcomes for young people.

18. Creating a culture of equivalency across our placement types, and our Children's Services pathway

19. The approach to children who need to be looked after continues to follow a traditional approach which is to explore fostering first before looking to residential placements. This hierarchical method can pose identity issues for children and, in addition, foster carers and residential staff often feel undervalued as members of the team around the child.

20. Progress has already been made in addressing this and through creating a pathway for children that places all accommodation types on an equal footing.

21. Underpinning all our work in the programme will be an Experts by Experience research project. Five children in care/ care leavers have been recruited to co-produce and interview other children and young people in care to inform what is important to them about the care we provide. This is a paid role for the young people and the outcome of the research is being supported by the Oxford University's Rees Centre who will help the researchers with their analysis.

22. The intended aims for the programme are within five years we will:

- Increase capacity in our in-house fostering from 67% of all fostering placements to 85%;
- Increase utilisation of residential beds from 71% to 91%;
- Decrease the use of NCPs from 9% to 5% of all placements;
- Increase placement stability from 61% to 80%;
- Reduce the number of children with more than 3 placements from 18% to 13%
- Improve educational outcomes (target to be confirmed)
- Improve the experiences of foster carers (target to be confirmed)
- Improve the experiences of children in our care (target to be confirmed)
- Provide a wider range of flexible, adaptable provision that supports different pathways through care.

23. Next Steps

- Develop foster carer hubs (potentially alongside IOW)
- Develop the Cypress Lodge Extended Support model

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

This programme will have no impact on groups with protected characteristics. The proposals seek to further improve the outcomes for vulnerable children in Hampshire.