

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
Date:	22 September 2023
Title:	Statements of Purpose for Hampshire's Children's Homes, Fostering, and Adoption Services
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the updated Statement of Purpose (SOP) of Hampshire's Children's Homes, Fostering, and Adoption Services (see Appendices B-M) for approval by the Executive Lead Member.
2. Significant changes are presented in this report, whilst Appendix A highlights the specific parts of the SOP's that have been revised since they were last presented for ease of reference.

Recommendation

3. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People approves the updated Statements of Purpose for Children's Homes, the Fostering Service, and the Adoption Service.

Executive Summary

4. The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Adoption Services require that the registered provider (in the case of a Local Authority, the Elected Members) formally approves the SOP of Services and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary.

Contextual Information

5. The Regulations and Guidance for the Children's Homes, Fostering Services, and Adoption Services state that the service provider (in this instance, Hampshire Children's Services Directorate) shall compile, in relation to the service, a written statement, referred to as The Statement of Purpose (SOP), which shall consist of:
 - a) A statement of the aims and objectives of the service; and
 - b) A statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the service.
6. The provider is responsible for providing a copy of the SOP to Ofsted, the body which inspects the services, and the following key stakeholders:
 - a) Any person working for the purposes of the service.
 - b) Any foster/adoptive parent or prospective foster/adoptive parent.
 - c) Any child placed within any of the services; and
 - d) The parent of any such child.
7. The proposals in this report are expected to support the County Council's Strategic Plan as follows:
 - a) Hampshire maintains strong and resilient economic growth and prosperity;
 - b) People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives;
 - c) People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment; and
 - d) People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive resilient communities.

Finance

8. There are no financial implications applicable to this report.

Performance

9. Ofsted assesses the extent to which each SOP is an accurate reflection of the service provided.

Consultation and Equalities

10. The proposal in this report does not require consultation and equality and diversity objectives are not considered to be adversely affected by the proposal. The SOP ensure that all needs are met and addresses the protected characteristics where relevant.

Children's Residential Care

11. Hampshire County Council provides eight Children’s Homes offering places to children and young people aged between 10 and 17 years old. Please see below for details of the Children’s Homes:-

Name of Home(s)	Location	Number of beds	Statement of Purpose
Abenrise	Winchester	4	Appendix B
Amani	Dibden Purlieu	4	Appendix C
Berry View	Andover	4	<i>Temporarily closed</i>
Candle Lodge	Chandlers Ford	4	Appendix D
Crofton House	Havant	4	Appendix E
Ferne Lodge	Fareham	4	Appendix F
The Mead	Odiham	4	Appendix G
Cypress Lodge	Basingstoke	2	Appendix H

12. Seven of the eight homes provide places for up to four children. One home (Cypress Lodge) has two places.
13. In addition, Hampshire provides a secure children’s home; Swanwick Lodge (Appendix I). This is a national resource for up to 10 young people aged 10¹ – 17 years who need to be placed in a secure setting to safeguard their welfare. Up to 10 placements can be occupied at Swanwick.
14. The information within the SOP is used to identify that the home is the right home for the child and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child’s needs.

Children’s Homes Update

15. Since the last report dated 17 May 2022 and following a staff and public consultation, on 19 October 2022 a decision was taken by the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services that the social care provision at Firvale Respite Unit should close permanently. Alternative provision was secured for the children and families who were either receiving a service from Firvale or who were on the waiting list.
16. The previous report referred to The Mead operating as a short term and emergency provision. Following a review, in common with all homes, The Mead now provides placements of a duration that are child specific to meet their individual needs, and the SOP has been updated accordingly.
17. In view of the higher staffing establishment required for a 5-bed rather than a 4-bed home, recruitment difficulties and placement matching considerations, in

¹ The Secretary of State must give prior authority to the placement of children aged under 13 years in Secure Accommodation.

May 2023 the registration of The Mead was also varied so that it functions as a 4-bed home. The feasibility of converting the 5th bedroom into a training flat with a view to matching young people with a plan for independence will be determined and implemented if appropriate.

18. The previous report also referred to a model of Urgent and Extended Care² utilising Cypress Lodge as a two rather than four bed home which was paused in November 2020 due to difficulties in rolling out the wrap around psychological service it required. The development of this model has ceased as the required additional support is now available to all homes via Specialist Intensive Worker Hubs.
19. Since January 2020, partly in readiness for the development of that model, Cypress Lodge has functioned as a 2-bed rather than 4-bed home for children whose needs are such that they cannot easily be accommodated in larger group settings. The home is now registered as such, and the SOP has been updated accordingly.
20. On 3 January 2023 Berry View was temporarily closed. This decision was taken in view of the absence of a permanent manager (and three additional vacancies) and to re-open Candle Lodge (which had remained closed since December 2021) following the appointment of a manager to that home. Berry View young people and staff effectively 'moved house'. Re-opening Berry View is dependent on recruiting a manager and staff, which is underway.
21. The total capacity of the 'open homes' is, therefore, 30 placements (previously 33) of which 4 beds are currently unavailable (Berry View).
22. At the time of writing, 20 of the 30 beds are occupied. The under-utilisation of this in-house resource reflects low recruitment of Residential Care Workers (a national issue) and the use, by a small number of children, of more than one bed due to the complexity of their needs, risks, and related staffing requirements.
23. Recruitment and retention are a service priority. Strategies include the introduction in September 2022 of market supplements and retention payments for 3 years' service and a subsequent 12 month return of service.
24. In April 2022 a new Operating Model was implemented at Swanwick Lodge. The model operates by defining placements in blocks where one block equals a core offer of 1:1 supervision and additional blocks are added where higher staffing ratios are required. The operating model is based on having a maximum of ten care units being provided at any time based on a 1:1 staffing

² Prompt 'same day' admissions for young people requiring assessment to inform onward Care arrangements with outreach to support transitions to foster or residential care or reunification.

ratio equating to 1 care unit, 2:1 being 2 care units and 3:1 being 3 care units. At the time of writing, 6 children occupy 10 care blocks which is 100% occupancy.

25. This new operating model has sustained and built upon the significant improvement in income recovery at the home. Over the past financial year Swanwick has demonstrated that the Operating Model has fulfilled its aims and provides further evidence that Swanwick can be a viable home which can cover its costs.
26. Hampshire County Council is re-developing an existing set of properties (previously used as offices) into accommodation for three young people with complex behavioural and mental health needs. The premises, known as Hockley House, is being developed so that it can flex between having three self-contained living areas and having shared accommodation as the needs of the young people change. The project's capital funding is jointly funded by the DfE and will be a collaboration across Children's Services and Health partners.
27. This new provision will meet the needs of an identified cohort of young people for whom placement stability has been a challenge due to group matching considerations. Such young people are likely to have significant mental health and behavioural needs which do not meet the criteria for detention and treatment in hospital, or the grounds for secure accommodation, but require a high level of support. Young people in this cohort tend to be placed in non-County high-cost solo residential provision - with additional support provided to maintain their placements.
28. Subject to registration by Ofsted, recruitment, and the completion of building works, this provision will be operable by January 2023. The SOP for Hockley House is being finalised and will be made available in due course.
29. At the time of writing, all homes are graded 'Good' by Ofsted apart from Abenrise which was judged as 'Requires Improvement to be Good' (May 2023) and The Mead which was judged as 'inadequate' (May 2023).
30. One of the underlying issues in respect of the inspection outcome for Abenrise is a high number of staff vacancies (now improving). The home was heavily reliant on agency staff which meant that continuity of relationships with the young people placed at the home and consistency of approach by staff was difficult to achieve. However, Ofsted noted that managers were addressing this, and this is reflected in their judgement that the 'Leadership and Management' of the home was 'Good'.
31. A key driver for the judgement reached about The Mead was the management of the young person living at the home (who was subject to a Deprivation of

Liberty Order³ due to risks to their safety). Providing the secure care that this young person needed, in an environment not specifically designed for the provision of such care, proved to be challenging. The young person is now placed in Swanwick Lodge under a Secure Accommodation Order.

32. Ofsted will carry out a further inspection of The Mead before the end of September 2023. Senior managers are providing the necessary direction and support to address the issues raised and an improvement in the grading is expected.

Changes to the Statements of Purpose

33. In addition to a change in the number of placements provided at The Mead (four rather than five) and Cypress Lodge (two rather than four – for children less suited to larger group settings), the following revisions to the SOPs have been made:
34. As well as increasing occupancy of the homes, (via recruitment and retention initiatives) there is clearly a need to maximise the use of this resource. The duration of placements in each of the Children's Homes is therefore now child specific rather than home specific ('long term', 'short term'). This requires regular reviews of each child's needs, progress and plans and ensures that the residential service is utilised effectively. This is now reflected in all SOPs.
35. To complement the Pillars of Parenting⁴ model of care, the SOPs now include the Hampshire Approach. The Hampshire Approach guides how we work with children, families, partners, and each other by working together to:
- Respond to risk and keep children safe.
 - Develop positive relationships.
 - Identify and build on strengths.
 - Grow and strengthen support networks.
36. Swanwick Lodge's SOP has been updated to reflect minor changes to the team roles and structure, the model of care and the Secure Stairs approach. The Secure Stairs approach is an integrated framework that supports staff to ensure the best outcomes for children. This is achieved through

³ The High Court can use the powers under its inherent jurisdiction to make a Deprivation of Liberty Order, which gives permission for a child to be deprived of their liberty for welfare (risks to their safety) reasons. In this case, this includes high levels of supervision within the home and in the community and restricted access to internet use/ a mobile phone. The Order is time limited and subject to review by the Court.

⁴ This model of parenting is designed to enable and empower carers to adopt a trauma informed, emotionally warm approach and ensure that the children can develop resilience, self-management, social confidence, and a sense of well-being.

multidisciplinary reviews to better understand the context of the child's formulation and determine how best to support their needs through psychologically informed interventions.

37. Further revisions to the SOPs reflect changes to the workforce. This includes new management appointments (The Mead, Candle Lodge and Cypress Lodge) and workforce development (training and qualifications achieved).
38. Detailed amendments to the SOP for each of the Children's Homes are listed in Appendix A.
39. Further revisions to the SOPs will be required this financial year to reflect a change of manager at Berry View and Crofton House (recruiting).

Fostering Services

40. The Fostering Service uses the SOP as a competitive positioning tool, which benchmarks Local Authority and independent services (see Appendix J).
41. Prospective carers can use the SOP to compare services more easily by reviewing the aims of the service, understanding the process, support and training we offer and reading Ofsted report highlights. This should put Hampshire County Council in a more favourable position within the marketplace.
42. An organisational chart of the Fostering Service and descriptions of the teams within the service are presented in a way that is appropriate to the audience, to better understand how the service operates.
43. The role of the fostering team has been clarified. It explains the support they provide; the purpose of the Placement Commissioning team and how annual household reviews are conducted.
44. An update is also provided on the Hampshire Approach to reinforce the message that Hampshire is, and has always been, child focused.

Adoption Service

45. The Adoption Service SOP sets out the core aims and objectives of Hampshire's Adoption Service (Appendix K). It explains the range of services that are provided to children, prospective adopters, adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth parents through the different strands of the adoption agency.
46. The principles and standards within the SOP apply to all agency placements.
47. The SOP reflects the emphasis that the Adoption Service places on the welfare of Hampshire's children who require adoptive placements and the

importance of minimising delay for children and meeting statutory timescales. In addition, the support services that are being offered to children and adoptive family's post-adoption, which continues to be a growing area in Hampshire's adoption agency, are described.

48. In addition to an updated organisational structure, there is a revision to this document to confirm the commencement of the new Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt South, in April 2019. From September 2022 Hampshire's Adoption Service has been managed under Adopt South, the regional adoption agency, as a pilot for a year. Therefore, children's adoption is currently being delivered under Adopt South management.

Conclusion

49. The SOP will drive the delivery of children's residential care and the Fostering and Adoption services during 2023-24. As required, they will be updated within 12 months to reflect the development of services and needs.

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
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
Statement of Purpose Executive Member Reports	<u>Date</u> 17/05/2022 20/09/2020 27/03/2019 09/05/2018 19/06/2017
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Care Standards Act	2000
Children's Act	1989/2004
Children's Home Regulations	2015
The Fostering Services (England) Regulations	2011
The Adoption and Children Act Register Regulations	2017

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations 2015	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulationsincluding-quality-standards-guide
Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-services-nationalminimum-standards
Adoption: National Minimum Standards	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-national-minimumstandards

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

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.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

The decision to approve the updated Statement of Purpose for Hampshire's Children's Homes, Fostering Service and Adoption Service will have no impact on groups with protected characteristics.