

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
Date:	16 September 2020
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 of Hampshire's Children's Homes, Fostering, and Adoption Services (see Appendices B-M) for approval by the Executive Lead Member.
- 2 The significant changes are presented in this report whilst Appendix A highlights the specific parts of the Statements 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 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 Statement of Purpose of Services and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary, at least annually.

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 Department) shall compile, in relation to the service, a written statement, referred to as The Statement of Purpose, 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 Statement of Purpose to Ofsted, the body which inspects the services, and the following key stakeholders:
- i) Any person working for the purposes of the service;
 - ii) Any foster/adoptive parent or prospective foster/adoptive parent;
 - iii) Any child placed within any of the services; and
 - iv) The parent of any such child.
- 7 A children's version of the Statement of Purpose is also available.
- 8 The proposals in this report are expected to support the County Council's Strategic Plan as follows:

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

Performance

- 9 Ofsted assesses the extent to which each Statement of Purpose 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 Statements of Purpose ensure that all needs are met and address the protected characteristics where relevant.

Revisions to the Statement of Purpose

Children's Residential Care

- 11 The information within the Statement of Purpose 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. Hampshire has eight mixed gender children's

homes offering between four and five places to children and young people aged between 10 and 17 years old.

12 Six of the homes listed below opened in 2017. They are purpose built and were designed in consultation with young people:

- Amani, (Appendix B)
- Abenrise, (Appendix C)
- Berry View, (Appendix D)
- Candle Lodge, (Appendix E)
- Crofton House, (Appendix F)
- Ferne Lodge, (Appendix G)

13 The remaining two established homes (below) have been maintained to a good standard.

- Cypress Lodge, (Appendix H)
- The Mead, (Appendix I)

14 Swanwick Lodge is a secure children's home, (Appendix J). It is a national resource for young people of either gender aged 10* – 17 years who need to be placed in a secure setting to safeguard their welfare. The home recently underwent an extensive building upgrade which resulted in a reduction of beds from 16 to eight. Following the completion of those works in October 2019, the service is now able to increase occupancy incrementally and is recruiting staff accordingly.

**the appropriate Minister of State must approve the placement of children aged under 13 years.*

15 As part of the continuum of overnight resources supporting children and young people with complex learning difficulties and their families, in conjunction with Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hampshire County Council also provides one residential respite unit (Firvale – Appendix K). Firvale provides five social care respite placements / beds and nine health beds.

16 Children's residential care is one of the five priorities underpinning Hampshire Children's Services' response to the pandemic (Covid-19). To consolidate staffing within the residential service and maximise the care of children and young people in light of the pandemic, the following Children's Homes/ Services were temporarily closed on the dates shown:

- Firvale – 6 April 2020
- Candle Lodge – 9 April 2020
- Abenrise – 15 April 2020

- 17 Children and young people who were living at Candle Lodge and Abenrise were placed in other Hampshire Children's Homes. This was managed in conjunction with the child's social work team and in accordance with each child's needs. Children and families who were receiving respite care at Firvale and who had not already withdrawn in response to social distancing guidance were supported to identify alternative support by the relevant Disabled Children's Team.
- 18 To enable the temporary closure of Candle Lodge and Abenrise, the number of placements available at Amani, Crofton House and Ferne Lodge Children's Homes was increased from four to five. This was achieved by temporarily converting a staff 'sleeping-in' room into a child's bedroom.
- 19 Given that these two Children's Homes and Firvale respite unit will re-open as soon as it is appropriate to do so, the Statements of Purpose for those services have been submitted for approval.
- 20 In addition to a temporary increase in placements at Amani, Crofton House and Ferne Lodge, the Statements of Purpose for the Children's Homes and Firvale respite unit have been updated to reflect changes to the workforce. This includes workforce development (training and qualifications achieved) and recruitment. New appointments include replacement managers for Berry View, Crofton House, Abenrise and Firvale and a change of 'Responsible Individual' (the senior manager responsible for the supervision and development of the homes).
- 21 The last Decision Report regarding the Statement of Purpose for the children's homes dated 27 March 2019 referred to a proposal to offer immediate / emergency placements at The Mead. Providing a limited number of emergency placements alongside long term placements within the same home proved to be problematic. Hence the Mead retains its original purpose as detailed in Appendix I.
- 22 An alternative model is, however, to be developed using Cypress Lodge as a hub providing some residential beds in addition to a range of other support services to children in care and on the edge of care delivered by an integrated, multi-disciplinary team. This service will be responsive to immediate/ urgent needs and will play an important part in identifying the right care plan for children, including the right placement type if long term accommodation is required. The model is being designed and will be implemented this calendar year. Full details of this new service will be provided to Elected Members via an updated Statement of Purpose in due course.

Fostering Services

- 23 The Fostering Service uses the Statement of Purpose as a competitive positioning tool, which benchmarks local authority and independent services (see Appendix L).

- 24 Prospective carers can use the Statement of Purpose 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.
- 25 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.
- 26 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.
- 27 An update is also provided on the Hampshire Approach to reinforce the message that Hampshire is, and has always been, child focused.

Adoption Service

- 28 The Adoption Service Statement of Purpose sets out the core aims and objectives of Hampshire's Adoption Service (Appendix M). 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.
- 29 The principles and standards within the Statement of Purpose apply to all agency placements.
- 30 The Statement of Purpose 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 families post-adoption, which continues to be a growing area in Hampshire's adoption agency, are described.
- 31 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. Adopt South provides some adoption services on behalf of Hampshire County Council, including the recruitment and assessment of new adopters, Family Finding, adoption panels and post adoption support services.

Conclusion

- 32 The Statements of Purpose will drive the delivery of children's residential care and the Fostering and Adoption services during 2020-21. As required, they will be updated in one year 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

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
Statement of Purpose Executive Lead Member Report	<u>Date</u> 27.3.19
Statement of Purpose Executive Lead Member Report	09.05.18
Statement of Purpose Executive Lead Member Report	19.6.17
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.)

Document

Location

Guide to the Children's Homes
Regulations 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide>

Fostering Services: National Minimum
Standards

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-services-national-minimum-standards>

Adoption: National Minimum Standards

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-national-minimum-standards>

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:

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.