

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 18 January 2018

Report of the Head of Service - Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well)

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All

Extension of Supported Housing Contracts for Young People

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Executive Summary

In March 2017, Cabinet Member approval was obtained to pool the retained supporting people funding for supported accommodation for young people and children's social care funding, with a view to delivering a more cost effective accommodation and support service for care leavers and young people who are homeless.

Block contracts were initially extended until September 2018 as it was assumed that this would provide sufficient time to implement and review new access arrangements, which give priority to those young people to whom the county council owes a statutory duty. However, as the implementation has taken longer than was originally envisaged, approval is being sought to extend the contracts up to the maximum extension date allowed for under the contract provisions, thereby providing an additional 6 months to assess the impact of the new arrangements. The monitoring information collated will then inform the re-procurement of services in 2019.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No. 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the extension of the Supporting People contracts up to their maximum extension date, which ranges from 1 April 2019 until 9 August 2019.

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| <p>(ii) Authorise the Director of Children's Services to review the eligibility and prioritisation policy and, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, to amend the policy in respect of 22 to 25 year old care leavers as appropriate.</p> |
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Background and Advice

Historically, young people have accessed a range of supported accommodation across the country including:

- External leaving care/semi-independent living provision currently spot purchased individually or sourced via the North West Leaving Care Framework by Children's Social Care.
- Supported accommodation provided through the Supporting People block contracting arrangements (including semi-independent and independent supported accommodation schemes, foyers, supported lodgings, emergency accommodation).

In September 2016, Cabinet approved proposals to cease all Supporting People funding, with the exception of £1.35m which was to be retained for supported accommodation services for young people in order to meet our statutory duties. As the annual cost of contracts for supported accommodation for 16-25 year olds was £2.45m, savings of c£1m were required.

However, as there was a recognition that the County Council did not want to lose a valuable resource and that the spot purchased services were more expensive, it was agreed that options for pooling budgets and revising access arrangements to services would be explored with Children's Social Care.

In March 2017, the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools agreed the following recommendations:

- To pool £1.35m Supporting People funding with the £3.6m Children Social Care spend (as at time of report).
- To use this funding to extend the current Supporting People contracts until September 2018 and to pay for spot purchasing arrangements where the needs of young people are so high that they cannot be safely supported in Supporting People services.
- To review processes in relation to assessment, prioritisation and control of access to Supporting People services, with a view to ensuring that young people to whom the County Council owes a statutory responsibility are able to access services.
- To ensure that care leavers and young people who were homeless between the ages of 16 and 17, and were assessed as a child in need, are able to access services up to the age of 21, in line with government policy to reduce

the "cliff edge" facing care leavers at 18 and the County Council's commitment to fulfilling its role as corporate parent.

- To consider options for offering 18-21 year old who become homeless for the first time access to services on a very time limited basis where there are voids in a service, including that systems are put in place so that this arrangement would not preclude access to care leavers.

At that time it was anticipated that from April 2018 the proposal could be met within the existing revenue budget. The report outlined the risk that young people to whom the County Council owed a statutory duty could not access the block contracted arrangements and that additional spend could be incurred to spot purchase over and above the budgeted figure, and recognised the need for a task group to monitor practice, and feed into the financial revenue monitoring and MTFS processes.

Current position

The Housing Reference Group, comprising of representatives from District Councils, the County Council and providers, have developed the prioritisation scheme outlined below.

Owing to difficulties in determining the best approach to managing access to services, there has been a delay in implementation. The revised prioritisation policy below commenced from 1 October, whilst the duration of service (i.e. 56 days) for young people assessed as low priority was rolled out from 1 December 2017.

	Needs of Individuals	Duration of Service
High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 18 year olds who are homeless • Children looked after who are in transition to leaving care (16-17 year olds) <p>and have a connection with Lancashire (as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act)</p>	<p>Up to a maximum of 2 years; however the actual duration of the support received by people using the service will reflect individual needs.</p> <p>Providers are expected to move people on to independent living as soon as individuals have the skills to maintain a tenancy, or live with lower levels of support.</p>
Medium Priority	<p>18-21 year olds who are homeless and have previous involvement with social care and have a connection with Lancashire (as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former relevant care leaver • Qualifying care leaver • Historically looked after but not former relevant/qualifying care leaver • SEND(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) 	<p>Up to a maximum of 2 years; however the actual duration of the support received by people using the service will reflect individual needs*.</p> <p>Providers are expected to move people on to independent living as soon as individuals have the skills to maintain a tenancy or live with lower levels of support.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child in need Section 17 (linked to being homeless/ Joint Protocol) • 18-21 year olds who are homeless and are eligible for assistance under the Care Act • Young person who was homeless when aged 16 or 17 and accessed supported accommodation (prior to joint protocol being launched) 	
Low priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-21 years old who are homeless and have not been previously known to social care (i.e. don't fall into any of the above categories) • Children looked after or care leavers from other local authorities who are homeless and do not have a local connection with Lancashire as defined in the Homelessness Reduction Act (see section 3) 	Initially 56 days and then extend on a weekly basis if capacity available

As a result of changes to the duties owed to care leavers between the ages of 22 and 25 from April 2018, arising from the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Homelessness Reduction Act, it is recommended that the eligibility criteria and the above prioritisation policy are reviewed in respect of 22-25 year old care leavers and that the Director of Children's Services be authorised to undertake the review and make any amendments required.

Impact of new processes

As stated above, the cost of the Supporting People contracts was previously £2.45m, and savings of c£1m would need to be achieved to continue the service within a reduced budget envelope of £1.35m. The new access arrangements are being piloted in order to determine the demand for services and level of savings that could be generated from using block rather than spot purchased supported accommodation.

It was originally anticipated that the information would have been available in time to make commissioning decisions which could be implemented at the end of September 2018. However, owing to the delay in implementation, combined with the fact that these new priorities can only be put in place once existing young people who are aged 22 to 25 years old move out of services, the full impact of the changes will not be known until late 2018.

There has been a general rise in demand for support for looked after 16 and 17 year olds (care leavers and homeless young people), funded through agency leaving care

budget, with an increase of 62% reported between 31 March 2017 to 31 October 2017 (although the duration of Section 20 status may be shorter). This is partly due to the introduction of the Joint Protocol which has been developed in conjunction with district councils in order to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to meeting our legal duties to homeless 16 and 17 year olds. There has been increased utilisation of the block contract commissioned arrangements, with 17 looked after children supported through the contract at 31 October 2017 compared to 5 at the time of the previous report (March 2017).

Approval is, therefore, sought to extend the contracts up to their maximum extension period.

Monitoring

The number of young people who are able to access services and those who are refused access to services will be monitored by priority band. This will ensure that by early in 2019, we will be able to fully understand the impact of the new access arrangements.

Commissioning arrangements from 2019 will be based on an assessment of need which will include the information collated during the next 12 -18 months.

Consultations

Consultation has taken place with district councils and supported housing providers and amendments have been made as a result.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Legal/Procurement

Approval is sought to extend the existing Supporting People contracts up to the maximum extension date allowed for under the contract provisions (between 1 March 2019 and 9 August 2019); however initial extensions will be to 31 March 2019 in order to enable the re-procurement of services to align with the start of the financial year if this is required.

Financial

In the report agreed by Cabinet Members in March 2017 there was agreement that some one-off funding would be available from allocated reserves to support the trial process. However as this funding was one-off for 2017/18, the request to extend this contract and in effect extend the trial results is a budget pressure for 2018/19. Based on forecast expenditure (dependent upon the success of the trial) the anticipated pressure in 2018/19 is £0.286m. This additional funding would be provided from the Transitional Reserve.

It is also important to note that demand levels across agency leaving care placements have significantly increased since the report presented in March. The budget detailed within the report in March 2017 was c£3.6m, however this budget in 2017/18 is now c£6.7m due to increasing levels of demand. The demand levels and resultant cost pressures will be monitored as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, however this trial and movement towards block contracts rather than more individual placements should result in reduced placement costs even if demand is rising.

Equality and Cohesion

This report seeks approval to extend arrangements approved in March 2017. The report to Cabinet in September 2016 and in March 2017 addressed equality issues arising from this report.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Supporting People and the Prevention and Early Help Fund Report – Cabinet meeting	8 September 2016	Sarah McCarthy/07917 521919
Funding for Supported Housing for Care Leavers and Young People who are Homeless	7 March 2017	Sarah McCarthy/07917 521919

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A