

Residential Strategy

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What is it?

The strategy includes both the redesign of existing residential provision to cater for a wider breadth of complexity and need, alongside the establishment of an Adolescent Support Unit, Extended Outreach Service and the Development of Emergency/Crisis Provision to reduce the number of children becoming looked after.

Background

LCC's current children's home provision is based on a previous strategy of the Local Authority providing accommodation for mainstream Children and Young People (in 10 large six bed homes) and agency providers accommodating more complex young people who's needs are better met in smaller homes.

Significant changes has resulted in the need to rethink this strategy, including:

- the new Ofsted children's home inspection regime and providers becoming more risk averse at taking very complex cases in order to protect Ofsted ratings;

- increased numbers of CLA, a national shortage of foster carers and increased use of local provision by other Local Authorities resulting in providers being able to choose who they take;
- spiralling CLA placement costs, particularly in relation to agency children's home placements;
- significant concerns raised by Ofsted through the Annual Conversation regarding LCC's limited choice of residential provision.

Lancashire has experienced a significant increase in the numbers of Children Looked After (CLA) and in Children's Social Care agency placements spend since October 2015. Without action to address, numbers of CLA and placement spend are predicted to continue to rise.

What does the strategy aim to do?

Specifically it seeks to:

- Reduce numbers of CLA in residential placements
- Ensure that appropriate placements are available to best meet the needs of our CLA
- Ensure that best use is made of available resources and best value for money is achieved

What will we do?

Open an adolescent support unit to prevent young people coming into care;

Extend our Outreach offer;

Open a Crisis unit;

Open a small 2/3 bedded complex unit;

Use 2 existing homes as fewer bedded homes;

Work with the Access to Resources team to ensure young people who need to be in care are placed in the right placement the first time.

What difference will it make?

The anticipated benefits include:

Reducing the number of CLA through prevention and reunification via the provision of outreach support, and respite provision;

Ability to place more complex CYP in-house without impacting on settled mainstream CYP and therefore maximising the use of mainstream provision through the provision of complex needs units;

Ability to manage emergencies and prevent placement breakdown through the provision of a crisis unit

Increasing placement stability through improved placement choice and therefore improved outcomes for CYP

Increased Ofsted confidence in Lancashire's ability to manage residential provision.