

In-house hub for Placement and support services for children

Rationale for hub approach

The number of Looked After Children in Highland is growing; after a number of years of stability at around 450, the total is now around 510. This has put pressure on placement capacity, both in residential care and fostering. The spot purchase of residential placements had reduced but has grown again in the last year, with a resulting increased overspend. At the same time there has been increased use of Independent Fostering Agency placements (spot-purchased), mainly for sibling groups and older children.

This growth is in response to changes in society, such as substance misuse, domestic violence, and poverty, impacting on families and children and an increase in children diagnosed with autism.

A business case was approved by the Education, Care and Learning Committee in March 2018 (see link below) to address these issues, and this aims to reduce dependence on expensive purchased placements, and replace them with Highland-based placement resources but with significantly enhanced support services to prevent the need for external placements and to support young people to remain with their families. This plan is now underway but the changes outlined in this report for the Redesign Board workshop would supplement the plan and bring overall cohesion to the management of services.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/73287/item_9_business_case_for_placement_services_highland

Current structure managed by the Head of Children's Services

NB (only those posts/services relevant to this review are listed)

- Fostering and adoption
- Budget for purchased placements
- Programme manager for alternatives to Out of Authority Placements
- Resource manager for Residential care
- Resource manager for Looked After Children

- Some commissioned services
- Placement officer
- Small team to lead the plan to re-shape placement services.

Proposed hub

The in-house residential homes and residential respite centres would be brought together with the services described above, enabling an overview of placement services. It should be noted that residential homes were managed centrally until 3 years ago when the line management moved to the local areas where the resources are located.

In relation to commissioned services, the figures for savings and the grouping in the following tables are those presented at an earlier workshop. It is proposed that the services for Looked After Children and the highlighted service for kinship carers, currently provided through Children 1st, would be managed via the hub as they would form part of the development of services for Looked After Children and those on the edge of care.

The balance of commissioned services would remain with the individual Designated managers to take forward proposals and deliver savings although this may require co-ordination by another senior manager (to be identified) to ensure targets are met across the three years.

The target savings listed below are in relation to the commissioned services only which are services which the redesign group were originally to consider. The real benefit of the in-house Hub approach however is to provide a more co-ordinated, focused approach to minimise the amount of out of area placements providing a better service for Looked After Children and tackling the current budget overspend in this area.

Looked After Children

Providers	budget £'000's	In-Sourcing	Stop	reduce	reprocure	year 1	year 2	year 3
Aberlour Child Care Trust	1946							
Action For Children	285							
Barnardos (Northern Lights)	732							
Barnardos (Throughcare & Aftercare)	374							
Highland Homeless Trust	147							
Who Cares? Scotland	98							
Who Cares? Scotland - Life Changes Trust (grant funded)								
Y-People	220							
Budget/saving	3802						380	

The target Savings equate to circa 10% of the budget, this group having been identified as the highest priority.

Counselling and advice services

Providers	budget £'000's	In-Sourcing	Stop	reduce	reprocure	year 1	year 2	year 3
Carr Gomm	108							
CHIP+	87							
Crocus Group	21							
Highland Children's Forum	48							
Highland Community Care Forum (Connecting Carers)	100							
National Autistic Society	18							
Relationships Scotland - Counselling Highland Ltd	9							
Sight Action	0							
Budget/saving	391							130

Savings equate to circa 33% of the budget as it was felt that these were either a lower priority or it was possible to obtain better value for money by re-procurement.

Carers support; Childcare; Kinship; Awareness training

Providers	budget £'000's	In-Sourcing	Stop	reduce	reprocure	Year 1	Year2	Year3
Glachbeg Farm	18							
Skye & Lochalsh Young Carers	42							
Sutherland Young Carers Project (TYKES)	37							
CALA	923							
Direct Childcare	40							
Home-Start Caithness	40							
Home-Start East Highland Ltd	115							
Keeping Children Safe	26							
Safe, Strong & Free	56							
Children's Hospice Association Scotland		national						
Inverness Badenoch & Strathspey CAB		budget saving						
Children 1st	36							
call centre	15							
Budget/Saving	1348							269

Savings equate to circa 20% of the budget as it was felt that whilst there were some priority services, better value for money could be obtained through re-procurement.

Total savings

Budget	Savings 2018/19	Savings 2019/20	Saving 2020/21	Savings over 3 years
Looked After Children		380		380
Counselling and advice services		65*	65*	130
Carers support; Childcare; Kinship; Awareness training		134.5*	134.5*	269
Total budget £5,541k	0	579.5	199.5	£779K

* assumes savings spread over 2 years.

Conclusion

To maximise the impact of this significant redesign of services, leadership and focus will be required. A programme team is in the process of being established for new services but overall cohesion, bringing together the new services with those already in place is likely to enhance the overall success in reducing the number of Looked After Children, improving outcomes and reducing costs. This could deliver savings in 2019/20.

A secondary focus will be required to take forward the review of the other commissioned services where savings were proposed, through one of the four options (in-source, stop, reduce or re-procure). This could deliver savings across 2019/20 and 2020/21, giving the Third Sector the opportunity to engage in the process and plan for changes.

Further dialogue will be required with Third sector partners to ensure that the proposed savings can be made with minimum impact on the individual clients and families and to ensure a more consistent service delivery throughout the Highlands.

The changes required to create an in-house hub are minimal and align with the already approved plan to shift the balance of care from out of authority placements to Highland-based services.

Proposals/Options

Taking into account the information on the ALEO option provide separately the Board is asked to consider the options below and to agree the preferred option in order to develop a final report for the Board resulting from this review. Options:

1. Progress the proposals for the review of commissioned services as outlined and grouped in the tables above to secure savings (in-source, stop, reduce or re-procure);
2. Develop an ALEO model for service delivery (as outlined in previous workshops and separate paper to this workshop);
3. Develop an in-house hub approach as outlined above developing the already agreed review of children's services and by also integrating the review work on commissioned children's services into the overall approach to secure saving and focus the service on prevention.

In the Peer Review Team's opinion the strongest and most viable option is the development of the in-house hub approach.