

APPENDIX 1 – ASSISTED BOARDING SCHEME OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

1. Introduction

'Assisted boarding' is an approach that seeks to place vulnerable and disadvantaged children into boarding schools places. The concept is that, in families where there is a significant strain on the relationship between parent/carer and child, removing the child from the home during term time may reduce the strain on parents who are struggling to cope financially, physically or emotionally, thereby increasing the likelihood that the family will remain intact whilst also improving the child's opportunity to succeed academically. Many modern boarding schools have an excellent track record of providing not only high quality educational standards, but a holistic package of pastoral care and extra curricular activities that can provide a stable, supportive and inspiring environment for a vulnerable child to achieve their potential.

2. Context

2.1 The use of assisted boarding places for vulnerable and disadvantaged children has been quietly going on for many years in the UK, with a strong record of success (notably, Lord Adonis, former Schools Minister was an assisted boarder and is a firm advocate for the approach). Outcomes reported through the approach include marked improvement in educational attainment, but also wider measures of wellbeing such as increased resilience, improved social skills, and higher aspirations for their careers.

Until the 1970s, local authorities routinely supported several thousand vulnerable children in boarding schools, with only a handful of them in care. Boarding was viewed as a preventative measure and many local authorities ran their own boarding schools. However this picture has changed and the scheme fell out of favour. This is largely viewed as being down to a general perception of boarding schools as elitist and cold, and the growing emphasis placed on 'attachment theory' in social work which led to a preferential focus on the bonds between child and individual carer/parent figure as the key influencing factor on their development and wellbeing. In addition, there has been a widespread reduction in the number of boarding places for children in England as a whole, due to a lesser demand over the past thirty years. Meanwhile just 11.6% of looked after children achieved 5 GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths across the country in 2010, compared to 53% of all children.

2.2 A number of charities continue to support the placement of vulnerable children into state and independent boarding schools and there is a large body of evidence that supports the success of this approach. A five-year study from the Royal Wanstead Children's Foundation found that 85 per cent of children whose fees have been paid by charity under an assisted boarding system reached the same or better standards as fee-paying children at the

same schools.¹ It also found that boarding school is highly effective in helping the 'recovery' of vulnerable children by most achieving the social skills, self-esteem and coping ability of their peer groups within 2-3 years.

In November 2006, Labour launched 'Pathfinders', a scheme aimed at getting local authorities to consider boarding school as an option for children in or on the edge of care. However, whilst the scheme offered £10,000 in start up funding for each local authority, the resulting figures were seen as disappointing by some. The evaluation report, by the Thomas Coram Research Unit, was largely positive, concluding that boarding school can be an environment where some vulnerable children will flourish.² But uptake was slow: 76 young people were considered for a boarding school place by the Pathfinder authorities over the 2 year period, although just 17 actually began at a school and 11 were still there when the evaluation ended

One theory on why this has been the case is the scheme's eligibility criteria, which were seen as being due to the criteria developed by the DCSF being too restrictive (see appendix 1 for full list). For instance if it was believed that if a family was given enough support, that the child was not at serious risk of coming into care (this usually turned out to be over-optimistic).

The Pathfinder suggested that the children likely to benefit from a mainstream boarding school are unlikely to display intractable behaviour problems, be challenging or disruptive, or present the school with serious management problems either in or out of the classroom. They also suggested it is most likely the children selected will have strong education potential or talents in sport, art or music. However they do acknowledge that most children are likely to be poorly socialised, withdrawn and emotionally very vulnerable, with a high incidence of minor mental health problems.

Another suggested reason for the lack of take-up is that some social workers have an distrust of the private sector and a steadfast belief that children need to attach themselves either with family members or foster carers and that these factors, together with low expectations, has led to boarding school not being considered as an option by many professionals.

2.3 There are a number of key conclusions and recommendations as a result of these projects.

- Primarily, this approach will not work for all disadvantaged/ vulnerable young people. It is about "the right child, in the right school, at the right time". Therefore, this initiative will only ever be suitable for a small percentage of children and careful matching and preparation of the child are essential. Critically, it should also be down to the decision of the young person themselves.

¹ 'Breaking Through: How Boarding schools can transform the lives of vulnerable children.' Royal Wanstead Children's Foundation, Colin Morrison, 2007.
<http://www.royalwanstead.org.uk/images/BreakingThrough.pdf>

² 'Boarding School Provision for Vulnerable Children: Pathfinder Evaluation, Claire Maxwell, Elaine Chase', June Stratham and Sonia Jackson, Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL, 2009.
<http://education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR070.pdf>

- The evidence base suggests this approach works best with children aged 10-12 years old. Children this age are most adaptable to their new environment and typically, by the time they enter their teenage years, it is harder to change/influence behaviour in the same way.
- The approach is more suitable for children on the edge of the care system with an existing family relationship that can be repaired/built on rather than for those already in the system. There also needs to be a suitable place for the child to go during holiday periods and odd weekends based on a consistent relationship with a parent/carer/family member.
- Evidence suggests that there is a reasonably high level of engagement from suitable boarding schools in this approach, both in the independent and state sectors. The Royal National Children's Foundation currently work with over 90 different schools across the UK and a number of these are in Kent.
- Successful placements rely on good preparation before the child is placed, and clarity about expectations on both sides (school and local authority).

3. Business Need

Kent has a high number of Looked After Children (LAC) and some of our resources (school attendance, CAHMS) are stretched further by the huge number of out of county placements. We also have the long running problem of a high vacancy rate for social workers and large case loads.

The 2010 unannounced Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children highlighted the large gulf between the attainment of KCC LAC and the national average for LAC (which is still well below the average for children overall). Perhaps even more concerning, was the significant difference between the educational attainment of OLA LAC placed in Kent, compared to the LAC we are directly responsible for as corporate parents. The issues that this inspection result has uncovered not only highlight a huge challenge for Kent County Council, but also provides us with an opportunity to fundamentally challenge the way we support looked after children and seek out new opportunities to improve outcomes.

A Member-led group focused on improving outcomes for Looked After Children, was commissioned by Paul Carter following the Ofsted report. This is being led by Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services with support from Ann Allen and Keith Ferrin. Assisted Boarding was put forward as a potential option for Kent LAC and contact was made with the Royal National Children's Foundation to discuss the Assisted Boarding scheme they facilitate, and opportunities for KCC. The meeting was very positive and it was concluded that an Assisted Boarders scheme in Kent has the potential to radically improve outcomes for a number of children on the edge of care, reduce the number entering the care system and thereby also reduce the pressure on our services for children already care.

The group met with Paul Spencer Ellis, Head Teacher of the Royal Alexandria and Albert School (RAAS) in Reigate to discuss the scheme. RAAS is a Ofsted

Outstanding rated state-funded comprehensive boarding school that has 80% of children gaining five GCSEs at A*-C (63% including English and Maths) and also seeks to provide places for disadvantaged children who may benefit from the respite boarding school can offer. The school has about 60 children, known as Foundationers who attend the school free of charge, referred by primary school teachers and social workers, or by families directly. Initial conversations suggested there was enthusiasm to consider working in partnership to make arrangements for vulnerable children referred by KCC.

4. Kent's Looked After Children and Child at Risk: a profile

- We have around 1,400 Kent LAC in the county, and roughly an additional 1,400 placed by other local authorities.
- There are currently 208 10-12 year olds being looked after - around 15% of LAC (excluding UASC). It is estimated that between 10 and 15 children per quarter become looked after at these ages (40 to 60 per year).
- Around 50 new children enter the care system every month.
- In the care system, we currently have 56 children formally placed with their parents (under a care order as a shared responsibility with KCC) and 90 with other family and kinship carers. Around 25 of these have been identified as currently at a suitable age for this scheme (10-11 years).
- It is more difficult to establish the number of children on the edge of care, however around 8,600 children are currently considered a 'Child in Need'. Of these, around 840 are currently aged 10-11 (roughly 10%). The number of children subject to a CP Plan as at 28/02/2011 aged 10 and 11 was 137.
- There were 672 children referred to Family Group Conferencing over 09/10 following assessment by their Social Worker than at least one child in their family met Social Care referral criteria; that is; they were thought to be at risk of coming into public care system. 62 FGCs have taken place following referral from Attendance and Behavioural Service concerned that the 96 children involved had significantly low school attendance. 75% of children involved in Social Care referrals are 10 or under, whilst the age range profile is reversed for Education referrals where 71% of children are 12 and over, that is, secondary school age. A report in 09/10 suggested around 100 children aged 11-13 were referred for FGC overall.
- Around 280 children are supported through kinship care arrangements outside of the LAC system.

Associated Unit Costs (taken for 2009/10):

- Independent Fostering Agency placements on average cost £1086 per week

- The average weekly unit cost for LAC was £583
- The average gross weekly cost for a private sector children's home was £2,895

5. Benefits and Risks

This project has a number of clear and significant benefits accompanied by a low level of risk for the organisation so there is real potential to deliver a successful scheme. Key benefits, risks and the mitigating actions for these risks are detailed below.

Benefits:

- Significant improvement in educational attainment for Kent children—evidence suggests the majority of children placed in boarding school will achieve or exceed the average of the peer group within three years.
- Improved wellbeing and reduction in family breakdown for Kent children.
- Indirect implications for other existing LAC – a reduced pressure on their services through a reduction in children entering the system. Such as freeing up non-related foster care placements by enabling more children to be supported (during holidays) by their own family and increasing placement choice for other LAC and/or reduce the need to use more expensive IFAs for other LAC where a suitable in-house placement could not be found.
- Cost savings – use of boarding schools places for children at risk of care is cheaper than those children then entering the care system, particularly residential placements. There is also a longer term 'whole system' saving through the added contribution that these children will make to society through greater success in adulthood e.g. less reliance on public services and contributing to the country through paying more tax through greater employment opportunities.

Risks:

- Costs/demand– If the scheme is offered as a preventative measure, there is a small risk for KCC that families/carers in informal kinship care arrangements, who do not currently have a relationship with the local authority, will seek to engage with our services to access this scheme. This would increase costs for KCC – particularly in relation to kinship carer payments.
Mitigation: The use of strict criteria and signposting families we can't fund directly to charitable organisations such as the RNCF will counteract this.
- We will need specific criteria to ensure the successful placement of suitable children.
Mitigation: The scheme needs to be considered as part of a portfolio of options for vulnerable and looked-after children and must be fully embedded into the Council's Placement Strategy and Preventative

Strategy so it becomes part the overall approach to supporting vulnerable Kent children.

- Measuring improvements in outcomes will take several years to fully evidence, and associated cost avoidance is difficult to evidence. There needs to be awareness that a preventative model will not impact on the NI related to educational attainment of LAC directly – so performance measures will not improve as a result of simply placing children on the edge of care initiative.

Mitigation: It is important to consider the approach as part of a longer term preventative strategy that seeks to achieve the best outcomes for Kent children rather than a quick fix. This should include proactive identification of children who may be suitable in the future as well as those currently at age 10-11. Investigations should also be made into placing children already in the care system, as well as a preventative measure, where this is appropriate for the child. A new Kent based indicator should also be developed to measure the improvement of this group of children so that the success can be specifically tracked.

- Political – There is a small risk that the media could choose to present this as a negative story related to costs of fees, use of the independent education sector, or the perception of boarding schools.

Mitigation: Careful management of the scheme and clear proactive communication of the benefits of this approach.

- There is a risk that placing LAC in boarding schools with foster support for holidays will require full time payment of foster carers.

Mitigation: Alternative approaches should be used to secure foster carer placements for those children for whom this scheme could be suitable. It is recognised that the type of carer who may be attracted to a weekends and holidays only foster arrangement may be different to those typically used by CSS. Consideration will need to be given to alternative models of provision such as offering a special foster payment rate for holidays only, and through targeting potential carers who may not be able to manage a full time commitment but could offer a part-time placement (such as working couples).

- The perception amongst the social work profession and other professionals towards boarding school leads to a resistance to placements.

Mitigation: Clear communication plans, and actions to embed the scheme into KCC's overall approach to LAC including our Placement Strategy and Preventative Strategy. Responsibility for the success of the scheme will be shared between professionals. Multi agency involvement in decisions about placements for Looked After Children. The Virtual School will act as a lead professional with the boarding schools we work with and build a trusted relationship.

7. Scope and Dependencies

Scope

- The project will be targeted at Kent LAC only, for whom we have Corporate Parenting responsibilities. It is also proposed that the scheme excludes Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who have a distinct set of needs.
- The project will be limited to working with children identified within a defined set of criteria for suitability and will not be appropriate for the most vulnerable children we work with, or those with special needs.
- Placing children already in the care system will be more complex because of the need for a consistent carer for holidays and odd weekends. So consideration will need to be given to the best way of doing this.

Dependencies

- Incorporation of the scheme as an option within the overall KCC Placement strategy for Looked After Children, and through existing preventative service provisions such as using Family Group Conferencing as a vehicle to identifying suitable children/families for the scheme.
- Identification of schools willing to work with KCC on this scheme and agreement of a suitable funding arrangement for each child.

8. Options Appraisal

There are a number of approaches that could be used to implement this scheme:

A. Initiate the project with a small number of children with kinship care arrangements.

This would involve selected a small group of children (around 10) who have suitable kinship care circumstances. This would be a quick way of initiating the scheme, and increase the potential for evidencing success as an achievable quick win. However the impact would only be for a very small group, and waiting for outcomes to be evidenced would take 2-3 years, which would delay roll out if it is successful.

B. Roll out the approach for all suitable children on the edge of care

This had a more immediate impact for all eligible children and will increase the benefits we see as a result – less family breakdown and better outcomes for more children.

C. Seek to place all suitable vulnerable children – including any suitable children who are already 'looked after'.

Whilst it is recognised that there may not be a large number of children already in the care system that this scheme may suit, it should be available to those who are. This approach directly impacts the attainment of a small number of LAC and even for a small cohort it is highly likely this will significantly improve our current NI A*-C at GCSE attainment results. It also supports children for whom KCC is already a Corporate Parent (using the 'pushy

parent' mentality). It could also open up opportunities to consider revoking a care order in the future (in the right circumstances) for children currently in full care of the county, if the boarding placement can be used in conjunction with kinship care that may otherwise have not been viable such as grandparents who couldn't cope with providing year-round care.

9. The Proposal

To adopt a scheme for Assisting Boarding that is mainstreamed into the KCC Placement Strategy for Looked After Children and Preventative Services as part of the portfolio of options available to support vulnerable children. The scheme would identify children based on defined criteria as set out below, who are at risk of entering the care system or are 'looked after' with parent or kinship care arrangements.

9.1 Which Children?

Critical factors for the successful placement of children have been drafted with consideration of evidence from RNCF and the Royal Alexandria and Albert school. Following discussions with RAAS, we had an initial opportunity to present a number of potential cases for discussion with the school and discuss the characteristics of Foundationer boarders at the school who have successfully benefited from attendance. This initial discussion has informed the identified factors for further children that this option may suit so that this can be investigated further on a case-by-case basis. Appendix 3 presents some case studies from the school highlighting cases where the arrangement has worked, and where it hasn't.

As the scheme is embedded into KCC's overall Placement strategy, these criteria will help us to identify children who this may suit. The suggested list of factors is:

1) Age of child - ideal age for initial inclusion in boarding school would be 10 years to 12 years of age (but this could be younger for the right child).

2) Relationship with family. The ideal group that boarding schools would work best for would be children who are either on edge of care or those looked after where a relative/family friend is either already caring for the child, or would be prepared/able to do so during the holidays. Other groups of LAC could be included but there will be a need to identify stable care arrangements outside of term time. In addition, this may be appropriate for some LAC placed with parents.

3) Health needs - key issue is that any identified health issues need to be being addressed, especially issues around CAMHs. Issues around child's ability to form attachments and whether further work is needed to address this are relevant. However, attachment issues per se should not be over-riding factor for this age group of children. Research suggests that around a quarter of the population have what would be referred to as an insecure attachment - it makes them more common than left handers. Boarding school may well be more successful in addressing any unresolved attachment issues than placing

with non-related foster carers - if a boarding school proves more successful at holding on to the child.

4) Child's relationship with current school, including existing friend network. Some children will benefit from going to boarding school if this allows the child to separate from a peer network that is having a bad influence on them. Alternatively - some children may already have a positive relationship with their school and a strong group of friends. In some respects this latter point will be reflected in child's wishes and feelings

5) Education - criteria will need to include something on minimum levels of potential and achievement

6) Child's wishes and feelings

7) Families wishes and feelings

8) Alternative placement options - Boarding school option should be included amongst a list of possible alternatives and best option from this list should be chosen for a child regarding their placement plan.

9) Siblings - it may well be possible to use boarding school option to place siblings, as a means of preventing risks of placement breakdown if alternative option is non-related foster care.

10) As a means of avoiding high cost placements later on. While this project would work best for children in family/friends living arrangements, there will be times when we can predict from a child's previous LAC history, or from the issues in their lives, that they are destined for frequent placement changes. Research suggests that frequent placement changes increases likelihood that children will end up in an IFA or residential - this group would very much be justified on basis on invest to save.

Once children have been identified as suitable, the option of a boarding school place as an alternative or preventative measure to the child being placed in care can be incorporated into existing provisions such as Family Group Conferencing and embedded into our overall Placement Strategy and Preventative & early Intervention Strategy.

9.2 Which Schools?

Appropriate schools to approach should be selected through a process of discussion with the Royal National Children's Fund about which schools they are already working with in Kent, through directly approaching schools already known to KCC who seem suitable, and through approaching the Boarding Schools Association for assistance/signposting (the Boarding Schools Association were a facilitator for the national Path Finder pilot so already have an awareness of the scheme and potential interesting schools). We have already begun to develop a promising relationship with the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, who have a strong history of working with vulnerable children and the experience to make this work well.

In addition, a directory of Boarding Schools that supported the national Path Finders pilot included five Kent Boarding Schools, who may be worth approaching for this project.

- Kent Ashford School
- Bethany School
- St Edmund's School Canterbury
- St Lawrence College
- Wellesley House

Several other Kent Schools have been suggested as worth investigating including Kings and the Duke of York Military Academy. Consideration will need to be given to the suitability of each school on a case-by-case basis in terms of the ethos, make-up and character (for example if the student body is predominantly international it is unlikely to be suitable for most vulnerable children). A further consideration is the stability of the school as this needs to be a consistent arrangement available for a child from year 7 to 11 at the minimum.

It should be noted that independent schools may only be interested in offering places for students with a very strong academic record and this may be a barrier to finding places for some children who could benefit from the opportunity.

9.2 Partners

The Royal National Children's Foundation have expertise in successfully facilitating placements for children and assessing children/families for suitability. They have expressed enthusiasm for supporting KCC with developing a scheme, and should be able to offer advice from their long term experience. The charity has already begun to arrange meetings with potential Kent schools to discuss interest in the scheme as they already have a relationship with some. It is recommended that the charity is also used to facilitate matching schools with children.

9.3 Measuring outcomes

In order to assess the success of the scheme a Kent based indicator will be developed to measure the impact of the scheme as the Boarders progress through educational key stages.

Educational outcomes should be measured on a Key Stage basis (3 & 4) to allow time for the child's adjustment to boarding school and for the impact to filter through to attainment levels. Additional measures could also be used to track outcomes for the child in terms of emotional wellbeing. Interviews with the children involved could also provide a qualitative measure of their views of their own outcomes.

9.4 Funding arrangements

Boarding school places could be funded through packages including bursaries, discounts and charitable grants on a case-by-case basis in negotiation with individual schools depending on circumstances. It may be possible to arrange for schools to part fund places or offer reduced fees for vulnerable children as taking them on will support their charitable status - particularly where schools are already committed to the approach and have seen its success in practice.

For the national Path Finder pilot, the DCSF provided an illustrative example – the £20,000 annual cost of a place in an independent senior school, with a 40% bursary or discount and 20% paid by an education trust, would cost the Local Authority (schools and children services budgets) £8,000. Of this £8,000 around £3,500 might be covered by the DSG – so in this example the charge to CYP budgets would be £4,500 per annum. This would present excellent value if it prevented a child from coming into care.

Initial conversations with the Royal Alexandra and Albert school in Surrey suggest they would be willing to consider a funding arrangement based on a 25% contribution from the School, with KCC taking responsibility for building the overall funding package. They suggest that funding arrangements should plan for 110% of fees, to allow for incidental extras such as uniforms, transport and extra curricular activities.

Indicative fees for local Kent Boarding Schools are included as Appendix 2 .

9.5 Embedding the Scheme

A key factor in the small number of children placed in the national pilot was seen to be the cultural influence of attitudes towards boarding school amongst social workers. As a result, there is a need to consider the best way of ensuring the scheme is embedded into mainstream business and not sidelined. It is recommended that the scheme is considered as an option of first resort for suitable children and that a range of agencies are involved in placement decisions for LAC – particularly including the Virtual School team to give an educational perspective on the decisions made. A clear communication plan and explanation of the approach will need to be provided for lead professionals, particularly social workers so that the benefits can be fully understood. This will also help ensure the right children are put forward, and the option is presented as an educational opportunity and respite offer for the family rather than a form of residential placement.

It is recommended that Family Group Conferencing is used as a key platform for offering this option to families with vulnerable children on the edge of care. This will ensure the scheme is considered via mainstream interventions with families rather than in isolation, and allows the families to jointly consider it as an option and explore the potential to create joint family support for a child to complement the arrangement.

Tony Doran's Virtual School team will act as the lead professional when working in partnership with the schools involved and help develop a

relationship of trust so that key information is shared openly and any potential problems are resolved quickly.

10. Affordability

The proposed model has genuine potential to be either cost neutral through replacing existing provision or offer savings through either the avoidance of entry into the care system or the type of placement required (in-house foster, IFA or residential).

10.1 KCC Savings/cost avoidance

The potential savings for this resource might come from reduced costs of paying the boarding school fees , if the boarding school was to meet KCC half way (through bursaries) , plus savings in social work time (if this can be used as a means of avoiding the need for some children to become looked after).

- The estimated average gross expenditure in for a LAC in foster or residential care in England is over £50,000 a year (Family Recovery Project: From Pathfinder to Service Transformation 2010): over 45% more than the cost of sending a child to Eton.
- Court proceedings and costs for placing a child in care are around £24,000 (LB of Westminster's costs of child protection staff time, average Section 17 contribution.)
- Boarding school fees range from £5,000 (state) to £25,000 with an average of around £8,000 per term (£24k a year based on a three term year). The average annual cost of an in-house foster care placement is currently around £30k in Kent. Working on a principle of funding 50% of an average costed school would almost certainly be less than the cost of foster care.
- Savings would be even more significant if the child was placed in IFA (c. £56k p.a.) or was then placed in residential care (c. £150k p.a.)

This estimated saving excludes the wider costs of social work such as staffing, care planning etc and the reduction of the use of wider services due to better outcomes for the child in question. Related KCC services could include:

- Attendance and Behaviour - we have three dedicated Education Welfare Officers for LAC - estimated costs for one case are £2,810³ .
- Youth Offending Services - last year 15% of KCC's LAC were known to YOS.
- Home to School Transport, many LAC require Home to School transport arrangements.

There should also be knock on implications to service pressures - for example, freeing up non-related foster care placements by enabling more children to

³ Westminster council's average cost per case from their Family Recovery project report, Sept 2010.

be supported (during holidays) by their own family. Some relatives may not be prepared to offer full time care (thus requiring these children to be looked after in non-related foster care) but would be willing to support the child during the holidays. This would reduce the need to use more expensive IFAs for other LAC where a suitable in-house placement could not be found.

For children already in the care system, there is also the potential to reduce costs by increasing the stability of their situation so that their needs do not escalate (by remaining at boarding school with social worker support, there is less risk of them moving on to residential care).

10.2 Wider Cost benefits

It is also likely there would be an associated reduction in demand on services for other public sector agencies such as Police and CAHMS (child and adolescent mental health services). The 2010 Margate Task Force High Cost Cases review highlighted an estimated annual cost of £160,000 to support a young person in care who lives in residential facilities and has 'absconded from care'. The costs in this case included taking the child in to care (£36,653), care arrangements, Youth Offending Services, intervention and police involvement among other interactions.

11. **Outline Project plan**

11.1 Resources required

The resources required for a phased roll out should be deliverable through existing services without the need for additional staffing.

11.2 Project Roles

Key roles for the projects are suggested as follows:

Project Sponsor	Jenny Whittle
Project Manager	Liz Totman
Virtual Project Team	Tony Doran
	Paul Brightwell
	Sarah Skinner
	Malcolm Newsam
Key stakeholders	Paul Carter, Leader
	Corporate Parenting Board
	KCC Improvement Board
	The Royal National Children's Foundation – via David Howarth and Chris Hughes
	Royal Alexandria and Albert School – head Teacher Mr Spencer Ellis
	Family Group Conferencing workers
	All Children's Social Workers

Appendix 1.1

DCSF Pathfinder Pilot_Criteria/indicators recommended for placing children

The introduction for the 'Protocols and guidance for participating local authorities and boarding schools' stated that:

'The Pathfinder is looking at providing an alternative approach to family support services for children assessed as being in tier 3 or even tier 4 need (the Hardiker model of need, Every Child Matters, 2003). The needs of these children will vary depending upon each child's own situation and circumstances.

There is no single "type" of child that should be placed, or situation that should lead to a placement, in boarding school. There are, however, some indicators which might assist in considering if boarding schools might be the best way to meet their needs:

- a. *the child most likely to have the best outcomes if supported at boarding school will have no intractable behavioural problems. They will be able to manage in a mainstream school setting, and will usually have average or good educational potential;*
- b. *They may have special educational needs, and be assessed as having a level of need under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, but most are unlikely to have a full formal statement of special educational need;*
- c. *They will have experienced good attachment in their early life and have a significant adult figure with whom they can spend holidays and who has a good relationship with them;*
- d. *They may well have problems socialising, be withdrawn or isolated and have few friends. They may have minor mental health problems, and exhibit self-harming behaviours, anxiety or bereavement disorders. They may be over adult, taking on too much responsibility, or they may be age inappropriate in other ways. They may also have experienced instability, or a life lacking in structure, and be likely to flourish in a setting with clear routines and structures.*
- e. *The child's family may be dealing with complex situations such as severe mental illness, other chronic illness or disability, drug or alcohol problems, domestic violence, homelessness, astute financial hardship, and instability, and may be on the verge of breakdown.*
- f. *The child may be cared for by siblings, grandparents, aunts or uncles or other extended family members because of the death of their parents, or the inability of their own parents to care well and safely for them. Their carers may themselves be disabled, elderly or ill and unable to provide full-time care.*
- g. *A few children may be looked after, but it is unlikely significant numbers will be. For some, a school placement may be part of shared care arrangements with extended family members, foster carers or special guardians. They may also be adopted or have experienced an adoption breakdown; and*

- h. *Crucially, the child and their family or primary carers will be fully involved in the choice, will have high aspirations and will be committed to and want to go to a boarding school.'*

Appendix 1.2: Fees Survey of Local Boarding Schools
(Taken from online sources)

- Bethany Co-ed age 11-18 in Goudhurst, Cranbrook
 - £7639 per term (£33k p.a.)
 - St Lawrence College, Thanet. 330 pupils:
 - years 3-6 £6,384 (£19k p.a.)
 - Years 7-13 £8,495 (£26500 p.a)
 - St Edmunds Canterbury, 8 +, boarding 5/6 nights a week founded to provide free education for fatherless sons of clergy of C of E, now accept applications from boys and girls for Foundationer status.
 - 8 – 12 £6k per term (£18 k p.a. plus music fees)
 - Wellesley House, Broadstairs. Only for ages 7-13. 2/3rd of children are boys
 - £6,650 per term (£21 k p.a.)
 - Ashford School and Ashford Friars prep school – independent school of the year 2010-11. 130 boarders
Full boarding fees for years 6-13 £8400 or £26 k p.a.
- Royal Alexandra and Albert School 910 pupils including 425 boarders
- Age range 7-18
 - Boarding fees £4,121 per term (£12,363 pa)
as it is a state school.

Appendix 1.3 Case Studies from RAAS

Case Histories

The Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate is one of the larger state boarding schools, with almost four hundred boarders covering the age range 7 to 18. Unusually it is supported by a charitable foundation which funds boarding places for children whose home circumstances make boarding desirable. The following case studies are anonymised to protect identities of the young people involved.

Susan

Due to psychological problems, Susan's mother, who is a single parent, was taken into hospital and Susan became a looked-after child at the age of 9. The attached Social Worker believed that Susan's mother might recover enough to live at home and was concerned about Susan's education. After a number of visits and an interview, Susan started as a boarder within few weeks of the hospitalisation of her mother.

Susan is of above average ability and did well in boarding, being a member of various sports teams and generally, but not consistently, being in top sets.

Susan did reasonably well in her GCSEs, passing nine and with three at grade A. In addition, and very importantly she became a school prefect in and was an excellent role model for other girls. As she was allowed no social life at home and as her friends were, in the main, fellow boarders, Social Services funded a sixteenth birthday party for her in the school – the first time she had ever had a party.

In the Sixth Form she worked with great dedication and finally realised her real potential by achieving four grade As at A level. She is now in the third year of her Law degree.

Winston

Winston's mother is a single parent who had been unable to work for several years due to poor health. Winston began to get into trouble during his last years of primary education and it was clear that his mother could not cope.

He always found school work a struggle, but achieved five good GCSE passes and was an excellent sportsman, representing the County at both Rugby and Football. Perhaps due to the success that he felt he enjoyed at the school, he was excellent at showing visitors round, and one set of prospective parents made a point of telling the Headmaster that Winston was "a credit to the school".

He has kept in touch with the school and came back to see staff and pupils last term. He has a steady job, plays semi-professional football at the weekends and is studying at a college two evenings a week.

Anna

Anna's father left her mother and two other younger children and moved abroad. Severe epileptic attacks meant their mother had, on occasions, to be taken into hospital, and Anna became increasingly a "child carer", looking after the younger children. Anna came into boarding in Year 8 and spent four very successful years at the school, gaining excellent GCSE results.

The relationship with her mother grew more strained over the last couple of years and at the same time she re-established contact with her father. After GCSEs she went abroad to join her father and has resumed her education there. Her latest e-mail to the school talks enthusiastically about applying to university.

Chris

Chris was living with elderly grandparents who were increasingly unable to cope with him. There were several preliminary visits by attached Social Workers from the shire county where he lived.

The initial interview with Chris went well and he started boarding.

It then became apparent that Chris clearly had significant interpersonal skill difficulties, which was initially attributed to the fact that grandparents live in a rural setting and he was never allowed to bring friends home.

When consulted about this, the attached Social Worker eventually revealed that Chris was being seen by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team. This information had not been previously revealed to the school. In order to try to support Chris in boarding, Social Services eventually agreed to finance support for Chris in boarding. This support was swiftly put in place, with the equivalent of a Teaching Assistant to support him during some boarding hours.

After a full term of such support, the school reluctantly concluded that the placement was not working. Social Services were very reluctant to accept this judgement, despite only rarely visiting the school and having infrequent telephone contact with the school. Chris left boarding and returned to his grandparents and the local day school.