

From Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services

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To: **Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee
9 July 2014**

Subject: **Update on progress on implementing an integrated Children in Care and Leaving Care Service, with specific regard to supported lodging accommodation arrangements**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: Kent County Council are undertaking transformational work to implement an integrated 0-18 Children in Care service, integrated 18+ Leaving Care service and suitable accommodation arrangements.

This report is to provide an update on progress and to provide Cabinet Committee with the opportunity to consider recommendations regarding the supported lodging accommodation arrangements.

Recommendations: Cabinet Committee are asked to:

- Note the progress since December 2013 on implementing service integration to improve service delivery and outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Consider the issues relating to the provision of supported lodging interim arrangements, which will inform a subsequent Cabinet Member decision.

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the transformation agenda, Kent County Council are changing the way services for young people aged 16 plus are designed and delivered. In the future services will give Kent's vulnerable children and young people greater opportunities to move to independence successfully. In addition, through redesign, KCC will be able to improve practice and deliver more efficient and coordinated services.

1.2 This report will provide Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee with an update on progress and highlights areas for additional consideration.

2. Policy Framework

2.1 Facing the Challenge, Whole Council Transformation:

There are a range of strategic developments and drivers that have informed this service change approach including:

- Whole-council transformation (specifically with regard to integration of services around client groups or functions, single-council approach to projects, programmes and review, active engagement of the market for solutions and embedding commissioning authority arrangements),
- Sufficiency Strategy 2013 and Action Plan
- The Children in Care Ofsted Inspection (2013)
- The needs analysis of Supporting People Programme
- The Children and Families Act 2013

3. Background

3.1 In December 2013, a report was submitted to Public Health and Social Care Cabinet Committee which detailed the planned changes to the Catch22 16+ and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) service (attached as embedded document). The report outlined the commitment by KCC to re-designing services to ensure the delivery of integrated and effective approaches that support our young people to successful independent living.

3.2 Accordingly, a work programme has been developed under the Children's Social Care Transformation work stream which is to deliver the following:

- A Children in Care Service which is integrated (i.e. provides a service for both indigenous and asylum seeking children aged 0 – 18 years)
- An 18+ Leaving Care Service which integrates indigenous and asylum seeking services
- Sufficient and suitable accommodation and support under Other Arrangements

4. Update on progress

4.1 *Integrated Children in Care Service (0-18)*: The implementation of the new service is in the process through the alignment and integration of the current Catch22 16+ service and UASC service. Consultation is underway with affected staff on potential structures which are aligned to the existing structures within the KCC Children in Care teams. By October 2015, all staff working within the integrated children in care service will hold caseloads of children from both Kent and asylum backgrounds aged 0 to 18. Training and development plans are in place accordingly.

- 4.2 *Integrated Leaving Care Service (18+)*: The new structures currently being consulted upon. The proposal is to have a distinct integrated 18+ Leaving Care Service which will work with all young people from Kent or asylum. Work is underway to ensure improvements in practice which include clarifying policy and entitlements in line with the Care Leavers Charter. Existing services across KCC that deliver services to this group of young people will be reviewed and recommendations made for further development of a multi-disciplinary service offer.
- 4.3 *“Other Arrangements” Accommodation and Support*: The accommodation element for this cohort of young people includes supported lodging, semi-independent and private accommodation. Some of these accommodation-types include varying levels of support. (To note, this does not include foster and residential care arrangements).
- 4.4 In February, planning for a detailed procurement exercise for an accommodation brokerage service was undertaken and a market engagement exercise held. However market engagement demonstrated that the proposed service was not aligned to provider capabilities. This, in addition to factors outlined below informed a decision to move towards a different model of provision detailed in (c) below.

5. Further detail on accommodation and support

- 5.1 **Original Intention**
The original options paper and report submitted to Cabinet Committee in December 2013, outlined the intention for KCC to procure a brokerage service to deliver supported lodgings, semi-independent and emergency accommodation across Kent.
- 5.2 **The supported lodging arrangements are managed through the existing Catch22 contract, which is due to expire on 30th September 2014. The other accommodation types are managed through KCC contracts with providers mainly through the UASC and Supporting People services. These contracts expire in March 2015.**
- 5.3 **Reasons for change**
It became apparent after the Meet the Market event in February that the model of brokerage would not be the most suitable model of service delivery at this time. SCS Divisional Management Team and Directorate Management Team reviewed options and agreed to suspend the planned procurement activity based on a range of market driven and strategic changes including:
- Facing the Challenge, Phase 2 includes proposals for Market Engagement and Service Review for Leaving Care in 2014-15 and will be driven by KCC’s Transformation Board
 - The Staying Put provisions in the Children & Families Act

- Supporting People – planned service commissioning in 2015 is an opportunity for joint commissioning and prioritising Kent Care Leavers within that work
- KCC Children in Care & Care Leavers Policy review (in progress) will clarify Care Leaving service support and entitlements (including accommodation)
- KCC - Care Leavers Charter (in progress) will respond to the voice of young people and be taken into account in entitlement setting
- KCC Sufficiency Strategy – the Action Plan is currently developing proposals for future children in care and care leaver accommodation needs and is due to make recommendations to SCS DMT in the near future.
- The Home Office and KCC are in negotiations about support costs for UASC and this impacts on what KCC can potentially afford for accommodation and support
- The utilisation and costs for Milbank are not seen as sustainable alternative accommodation solutions and costs need to be explored
- Recent Children in Care and Care Leaver Ofsted inspections (E.g. Essex and East Sussex) comment on the use of B&B for care leaver accommodation

5.4 Revised approach

The decision to suspend procurement of a brokerage service afforded KCC opportunities to align with planned Supporting People Vulnerable Young People's Service commissioning (2015) and align with separately held accommodation contracts held within UASC service.

5.5 The suspension of procurement activity affects 120 supported lodging providers and 193 young people who are currently managed through Catch22 until 30th September 2014. We are currently working to identify the most appropriate action to take in relation to these supported lodging arrangements:

- a) Extend the existing arrangements for the recruitment and management of supported lodging provision with the current provider (Catch22) for up to 12 months either through Single Tender Action process or contract variation of the existing Supporting People contract.
- b) Bring the management of the supporting lodging providers into KCC to be managed within the new Integrated Leaving Care service.

5.6 Our preferred option as an interim measure is to seek an extension to the existing supported lodgings arrangement with the external provider (Option a) above). This will minimise the level of change faced by this part of service during the autumn of 2014 as well as ensure that administrative arrangements for payments are maintained with the

supported lodging providers. This option is only viable however, if Catch22 are able to deliver the requirements within a reasonable financial envelope comparable with current arrangements.

- 5.8 Negotiations with Catch22 are underway. Within these discussions Officers are seeking opportunities to increase supported lodging provision by recruiting additional accommodators and to enhance levels of support available for more care leavers with more complex needs.
- 5.9 This programme for change has been reviewed by the council in partnership with Newton Europe as part of their assessment of children's services. This works has supported the decision to suspend procurement given the market response and other changes. The assessment supports the approach to investigate interim arrangements with Catch22 as an opportunity to appropriately consider longer-term arrangements once wider service transformation has progressed.

6. Financial & Legal Implications

- 6.1 The transformation of Children in Care and Leaving Care services continues to be legally and financially compliant. Early indications suggest that there are some savings to be made available through restructure; this is without reducing the number of full time equivalent staff or social work posts.
- 6.2 Options regarding the interim arrangements for supported lodging provision are being explored fully with both legal and finance teams. There are considerations to be made with regard to the mechanism by which temporary arrangements with Catch22 may be applied, depending on satisfactory financial and service negotiation. Any final decision to extend would be reviewed in full with KCC legal officers.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The integration of Children in Care 0-18 and Leaving Care service is progressing in line with the planned timetable. The activity is monitored through the Children's Social Care Transformation Board and is continuing well within a framework of legal and financial oversight.
- 7.2 The accommodation arrangements for semi-independent and independent provision will continue to operate through existing contracts until March 2015, to align with a wider procurement activity led by Supporting People.
- 7.3 The planned activity regarding supported lodging arrangement has been reconsidered and further proposals made, for consideration by Cabinet Committee to inform a future key decision by the Cabinet Member.

8. Recommendations

Cabinet Committee are asked to:

- Note the progress since December 2013 on implementing service integration to improve service delivery and outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Consider the issues relating to the provision of supported lodging interim arrangements, which will inform a subsequent Cabinet Member decision.

9. Background Documents

Update on Integrating Kent's Children in Care and Leaving Care Services - Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee, 5 Dec 2013

10. Contact details

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