

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	CLH 40/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 18 October 2018

Report Title: **Placement Services Change Programme update**

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises progress against the agreed plan for the Placement Services Change Programme, which is designed to redirect resources to develop services locally in Highland for Looked After Children and to address their education outcomes.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

1. Scrutinise and comment on the progress to date against the Programme Plan.
2. Note the revised spend profile for this financial year.

3. Development of Highland resources

- 3.1 The Placement Services Change Plan includes the development of a new model of emergency residential provision and multi-agency assessment. The first main hub for this new model will be at Fodderty in Mid Area, and the building is now ready for occupation. The recruitment of staff is underway and it is expected that the new facility will be fully operational in January.
- 3.2 Other buildings are being assessed for suitability for a similar, smaller scale, hub in Caithness and for additional residential provision in line with the plan.
- 3.3 Discussions with an existing provider of commissioned residential services have led to the ring-fencing of a 5 bed residential home for young people who need to return to Highland. This will be instrumental in enabling these plans to progress and is excellent news, particularly as efficiencies were achieved in the development of the new contract.
- 3.4 An innovative plan to complement NHS Highland CAMHS provision is reaching conclusion, with provisional agreement about a dedicated expanded CAMHS service for Looked After young people, to cover all placement types in Highland. This will enable swift access to assessment for newly accommodated young people, a facilitated transition to adult mental health services for young people aged 16+, and expert consultation and training to foster carers and residential staff caring for young people in Highland. The service is anticipated to be in place in 2 months, this lead-in time being necessary to recruit to the new service.
- 3.5 A suite of services to supplement school placements is being developed, with agreement expected shortly to commission specialist outdoor learning and support to re-integrate young people into school from a Highland provider. This particular service will be of value to young people in the South Area.

4. Appointment to the Programme Team

- 4.1 The final post in the Programme team is a 2 year fixed term appointment to lead on the educational attainment of Looked After Children. Successful interviews were held and an experienced teacher has been appointed. She has considerable relevant experience and will be influential in working with Highland schools to re-integrate children, and will also co-ordinate the delivery of alternative education resources and keep a focus on the educational attainment performance data for this group of young people. This work will be underpinned by the new Attainment Challenge Funding for Care Experienced Young people.

5. Progress on enabling young people to return to Highland

- 5.1 Since the beginning of the programme, 5 young people have been enabled to return and there are plans for 5 others to move over October/November. Some have returned to their families, whilst others require a residential placement. Work continues to develop the area plans for all the other young people who were identified by the Family Teams as likely to benefit from a supported transition.
- 5.2 One of the constraints has been access to residential provision in Highland, as other newly accommodated young people have required emergency placements during this period. Once the new hub provision is operational, the intention is to ring-fence all other long-term residential placements for young people in transition back to Highland, rather

than for newly accommodated young people.

6. Financial projection

- 6.1 Some new spending commitments have been reduced for this year to reflect challenges around unplanned requirements to fund several secure placements for young people at risk.
- 6.2 The current projected spend for 2018/19 for Looked After Children is £23,635k, which represents a projected overspend of £2,739k for the year, based on current information. That is a reduction of £242k on Quarter 1.
- 6.3 We are unable to factor in future return dates until plans are confirmed for individuals, but we are confident that this level of expenditure will reduce as the Programme plan gains traction. Where necessary, new spending commitments will be delayed. Measures are in place to reduce spend in other budgets to offset these costs.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Resource
This is covered in section 6 above.
- 7.2 Legal
No issues have been identified.
- 7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)
No issues have been identified
- 7.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever
No issues have been identified
- 7.5 Risk
One new risk has been identified, which relates to current external placement providers being unwilling to support plans for children to return to a Highland placement. This was encountered in earlier pilots, and is therefore not entirely unexpected, a small number of current providers are critical of the aims of the Programme and may endeavour to prevent moves away from their provision but this will be challenged.
- 7.6 Gaelic
No issues have been identified.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 4 October 2018

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