

Agenda Item	7
Report No	HCW-16-21

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

**Date:** 11 August 2021

**Report Title:** Revenue Budget Monitoring – Out-turn for 2020/21 and Quarter 1 for 2021/22

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with an out-turn monitoring statement for the 2020/21 financial year, as well as the first reported position for the new 2021/22 financial year, for the Quarter to end June 2021.
- 1.2 In relation to the 2020/21 out-turn, as recently reported to the June Council meeting, the Service had an underspend of £1.163m (0.8% of the budget).
- 1.3 In relation to Quarter 1 of the 2021/22 financial year, the forecast is an underspend of £2.183m (1.4% of the budget).
- 1.4 The ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the Health and Social Care budget, including residual risks and uncertainties in relation to the pandemic and impact on services, continues to be a key factor in estimating financial forecasts. In particular the risk that demand for service rises, and also there is a degree of time-lag before the full impact and extent of pandemic impact on service demand is known. The Service, as noted in the report, is also continuing to undertake a pro-active approach to staff recruitment, the full year costs of which will not fully be reflected in the current year.
- 1.5 The report also provides a more detailed update on progress of the Placement Services Change Programme (PSCP), and information on the current status and risk assessment of agreed budget savings for the year.

### 2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i. Note the revenue out-turn position for the 2020/21 financial year.

- ii. Note the forecast revenue position for the 2021/22 financial year, including the management action being taken and the risks and uncertainties set out within the report.
- iii. Note the progress update provided in relation to budget savings delivery.
- iv. Note the progress update provided in relation to the Placement Services Change Programme.

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource (Budget and Staffing) – the report and appendices provide an up to date forecast of the financial position, including progress with delivery of savings. There are no specific recommendations at this time with particular implications to highlight. As noted below in the risk section, there remains ongoing uncertainty and challenge in financial forecasting as a result of the pandemic.
- 3.2 Legal – no particular implications to highlight.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – the Service continues to respond to service need across our communities, and redesign of staffing structures and re-alignment of budgets as a result will consider these impacts.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – no implications to highlight.
- 3.5 Risk – this report and appendix reflects best available information and assessment of expected service impacts, including those related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the easing of restrictions, there remains the risk of changes in circumstance that may have an adverse variance on financial forecasts. In a Health and Social Care context a further consideration is the potential ‘time lag’ effect with demand for service and impact on individuals and families perhaps only emerging sometime after the pandemic and easing of restrictions has taken place.
- 3.6 Gaelic – no implications to highlight.

### **4. Out-turn 2020/21**

- 4.1 The Council meeting on 24 June included information on the near-final out-turn for the 2020/21 financial year, and the position for each Council Service. This report now provides the out-turn report and with some additional commentary and explanation in relation to the year end position.
- 4.2 The out-turn for the year was an underspend of £1.163m (0.8% of the budget) and this is as per the figures reported to the June Council meeting. **Appendix 1a and b** sets out the analysis of the outturn across the Service budget headings.
- 4.3 This is an improvement of £2.253m on the previously forecast position, being an overspend of £1.090m. The overall movement and improvement is principally due to an underspend in the provision of children’s services offset by unbudgeted Covid expenditure and delays in the redesign of the new service, again as a consequence of Covid.

4.4 The main areas of service with more significant variance are as described below and reflect the main areas of variance reported throughout the year.

- Management Team – this budget was overspent by £0.392m pending service re-design and implementation of a new service staffing structure, with that now progressing in 2021.
- Covid-19 response – while the final level of spend against this heading was lower than had been forecast at earlier points in the year, the Service nonetheless had £1.3m of unbudgeted costs specifically attributable to Covid-19, which included additional residential placements (both Council and independent providers), additional PPE and other Covid-19 costs associated with placements and facilities, additional respite care provision, additional fostering and adoption costs, additional staff costs across a range of Covid-19 responses including out of hours social work service, family teams and mental health officers.
- Family Teams – an underspend of £3.365m, consisting of £2.503m across the area Family Team budgets and £0.862m in Self Directed Support (SDS) budgets. As previously reported, significant underspends had been reported against these headings throughout the year, with a combination of legacy staffing vacancy and recruitment challenges, plus the Covid-19 impact on SDS being key factors. The pandemic impact on staff working arrangements, and in particular reduced staff travel and related costs was also a factor.

4.5 As members will note from section 5 below, the levels of underspend, in particular against the Family Teams and SDS budgets, are now forecast to be at a significantly lower level in 2021/22. This is reflective of the management action being taken, including recruitment activity and review of SDS arrangements, both of which are explained in further detail in the next section.

## **5. Quarter 1 Monitoring 2021/22**

5.1 **Appendix 2a and 2b** set out the first reported monitoring position for the new financial year, based on the position for the first Quarter to end June 2021.

5.2 As can be seen from the appendices, against a budget for the year of £158.493m, an underspend of £2.183m (or 1.4% of the budget) is forecast.

5.3 As noted in the Executive Summary, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to give rise to services pressures and risks and uncertainties in relation to service demand and delivery which has a bearing across the budget information presented. The Service is also progressing transformation activity and redesign of service structures, the outcome of which (once complete) will be a realignment of service budgets during the course of this year. Early intervention is and will continue to be a key focus for the service.

5.4 The following sections describe the main variances, the causes and actions being taken. Members will note recurring themes in relation to the prior financial year, and past reports to this Committee. As noted in section 4, while there remain some underspends which continue from past years into this, due to management and other action, the levels of underspend, particularly in relation to Family Teams and SDS, and significantly lower than had been the case in 2020/21.

5.5 Covid-19 – in the March 2021 budget, the Council agreed to the provision of £2.6m of funding into the Service budget in recognition of the following expected Covid-19 pressures.

- £2.200m Increased numbers of out of authority placements as increasing numbers of children go into these placement and delays in returning children to alternative local settings
- £0.400m Increased demand for foster placements

As can be seen from the monitoring statement, to date there is an underspend being forecast against this line. This is reflective of the current assessment of pressures arising, and those which can be attributed against the Covid-19 funding line (rather than managed against the core service budget for these service areas). As members will be aware, there has always been an expectation of some time lag between the pandemic and in turn the impact on these particular service areas, and therefore this will require close monitoring as the year progresses.

- 5.6 Commissioned Adult Services – the Quarter 1 position reflects a NIL variance. Members will however be aware from other reports to this Committee of the significant joint transformation programme activity with NHS Highland, which carries a number of financial risks to both organisations in terms of delivery.
- 5.7 Looked After Children – a more detailed progress update in relation to the Placement Services Change Programme is included as **appendix 3** and provides further useful context and explanation which is also relevant to the financial information as set out below. Overall, significant positive progress has been made and in turn reflected within the financial forecasts compared to previous financial years.

Across the LAC budget as a whole, there is a forecast underspend of £0.465m. Within this, as shown within the appendices, the main areas of variance and explanation relating to each are as follows:-

- Fostering and Adoption (£0.511m overspent) – The projected overspend in the Fostering and Adoption service is mainly in relation to purchased placements provided by the Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). Currently we have 49 children and young people placed with foster carers provided by the IFA's. Some of these young people are placed with foster carers as an alternative to residential care. There have been no further placements purchased during this first quarter. We anticipate that one child will move to Kinship in the next few weeks and that the adoption plans for a further four children will progress in the next few months. There are plans for a further eight children to move to adoption from their Independent Fostering Placements during the financial year 2021/22. If no further placements are made with IFP's and plans proceed as anticipated for the aforementioned children, the number of children placed with IFP's will have reduced by 13 by the end of the financial year. The impact of Covid on the fostering service has been quite significant. Early on in the pandemic in 2020, Foster Carers were naturally anxious about taking further placements however as the situation has progressed they have become more confident and as an example we have accommodated 16 children and young people with foster carers approved by Highland Council in the first quarter of this financial year. The Covid pandemic has also impacted on assessments progressing timeously for foster carers and prospective adopters, as well as causing significant delays with permanence planning and decision making and lengthy delays in the legal and court process to secure permanence for children and young people.
- Looked After Children (Residential) In house (£0.495m under). The underspend in children's residential units can be attributed to Covid-19 in part as activities have been impacted due to the pandemic. There are also issues of working at

lower capacity and there were some recruitment issues. This occurred in our core residential services as well as respite services for children with disabilities.

- Looked After Children (Alternatives to Out of Authority - OOA) (£0.300m under) – this underspend is as a result of the impact of the pandemic on the pace of developing and utilising alternatives to OOA. Albeit as noted in the separate PSCP progress report appended to this report, the pandemic impact is much reduced from that seen in 2020, and in turn this variance needs seen against a backdrop of a year on year increase in spend on Alternatives to Out of Authority.

5.8 Family Teams – members will be aware from past reports of the management action being taken to address staff vacancy levels and budget underspends, through pro-active recruitment to vacant posts and in turn the taking forward of the redesign of service structures. With the challenges faced not unique to Highland and some national challenges around recruitment. As reflected within the appendices, there does remain an underspend forecast across the four areas totalling £0.550m, which is a much lower level of underspend than in recent years. For comparison, the equivalent out-turn figure for 2020/21 was an underspend of £2.5m. Our recruitment campaign to qualified social work posts remained open throughout the pandemic. We were able to utilise the desire of professionals to explore new lifestyle choices in Highland and had a successful intake of both experienced and newly qualified social workers. Over the past year we have recruited approximately 15-20 qualified social worker and practice lead posts. We are now successfully recruiting to a number of unqualified positions, creating opportunities for local people to seek or develop their career in the care sector. While the number of vacancies has reduced and recruitment remains a priority there will be a lag around the staff group ‘catching up’ with the demands of work created by the pandemic and new work coming into the service as a direct consequence of the experience of families during the pandemic.

The other factor shown, is further underspend against the Self Directed Support budget, and as per previous reports to Committee, the pandemic has and continues to have an impact on the range of options and support available to families with SDS in place. Given the impact this had on almost all of the plans for children that the Scottish Government’s criteria on “*what should be considered as exceptional circumstances*” was met, the Council therefore encouraged families to look at alternative spends to offer support during the lockdown when the originally agreed plan could not be implemented because of the impact of Covid 19. This included agreeing spends the family asked for which would not normally be agreed such as employment of family members, one off purchases for cycles etc or paying additional transport costs incurred due to the impact of Covid 19.

We planned for and opened one respite unit in The Orchard as a standalone respite unit in early July 2021. This was signed off by the Care Inspectorate and Health & Safety and means we can now offer respite to the most vulnerable families. We have also increased the hourly rate for personal assistants via direct payments from £12.99 to £14.25 per hour to bring the hourly rate into line with the living wage as adopted by Highland Council.

5.9 Other Services – the following section outlines some of the more significant variances, over and under, within this section of the budget.

Allied Health Professionals - Highland have continued to attempt to recruit to all allied health professional posts. The national shortage of qualified allied professionals such as speech and language therapists and dieticians, has made this recruitment problematic. Recruiting qualified and experienced staff to remote and rural areas has posed a particular challenge. There are currently 7.21 vacancies across Allied Health

Professionals, excluding vacancies within external funding for the national Child Healthy Weight Programme within dietetics.

Youth Action Services – The Youth Action Service has also suffered difficulties in filling vacant posts where they have been located in rural areas. The recent recruitment drive has been successful in filling some of these key posts. Therefore the underspend in staffing that was caused by long term vacancies will be less, but reflects an increased capacity.

The service has offered critical support to a small number of young people in Secure Care, either due to significant concerns around safety, and also due to being sentenced by the Court system. There are close links with Drug and Alcohol services, and targeted work is developing, including support to the Special nurse provision. There continue to be close links with Criminal Justice staff, and there is commitment to developing the service through the Whole Systems Approach. Monies to implement this are being used in terms of training for staff, as an ongoing process. This will be reflected through the financial year, as activities and resources are spent. Along with review of other parts of the Service, Youth Action teams will also be reviewed in terms of how we organise this service in order to ensure consistency across all areas, while meeting local needs.

Unallocated Savings – as was the case during the 2020/21 financial year, this budget heading contains any service savings or corporate savings allocated against the service, pending their re-allocation against relevant budget headings. Often that subsequent allocation can only be finalised once the implementation of savings, and the work associated with that, has been concluded. The main residual elements within this line are pre-existing saving targets associated with management and service re-structure, and children’s commissioned services re-design. Following decisions by the Council in relation to Senior Management Structures, Service re-design is progressing and once complete will allow re-alignment of the staffing budgets across the Service, including the incorporation of these savings. Similarly, the conclusion of work around commissioned services will allow allocation of savings against individual budget lines.

## **6. Budget Savings Delivery**

- 6.1 Also enclosed with this report is an updated assessment of progress with delivery of budget savings. **Appendix 4** sets out a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) assessment of those savings.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Health and Social Care

Date: 29 July 2021

Author: Brian Porter Head of Resources

Background Papers:

**ALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE REVENUE MONITORING REPORT- 2020-**

<b>1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021</b>	<b>£'000 Annual Budget</b>	<b>£'000 Actual YTD</b>	<b>£'000 Year End Variance</b>
<b>BY ACTIVITY</b>			
<b>Service Management and Support</b>			
Management Team	173	565	392
Business Support	830	785	-45
COVID-19 Response	0	1,298	1,298
	<b>1,003</b>	<b>2,648</b>	<b>1,645</b>
<b>Adult Services</b>			
Commissioned Adult Services	100,904	100,904	0
Mental Health Teams	1,201	1,091	-110
Criminal Justice Service	58	60	2
Other Services for Vulnerable Adults	1,315	1,368	53
	<b>103,478</b>	<b>103,423</b>	<b>-55</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>			
Looked After Children	25,041	25,254	213
Family Teams	18,419	15,054	-3,365
Other Services for Children	7,006	6,919	-87
Commissioned Children's Services Income from NHS	-10,886	-10,400	486
	<b>39,580</b>	<b>36,827</b>	<b>-2,753</b>
<b>TOTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE</b>	<b>144,061</b>	<b>142,898</b>	<b>-1,163</b>
	<b>£'000 Annual Budget</b>	<b>£'000 Actual YTD</b>	<b>£'000 Year End Variance</b>
<b>BY SUBJECTIVE</b>			
Staff Costs	37,038	34,258	-2,780
Other Costs	123,193	125,011	1,818
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>160,231</b>	<b>159,269</b>	<b>-962</b>
Grants	-16,147	-16,337	-190
Other Income	-23	-34	-11
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-16,170</b>	<b>-16,371</b>	<b>-201</b>
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>144,061</b>	<b>142,898</b>	<b>-1,163</b>

## HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SERVICES BUDGET 2020/21 - YEAR END POSITION

April 2020 to March 2021	GROSS EXPENDITURE			GROSS INCOME			NET TOTAL		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Year End Variance	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Year End Variance	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Year End Variance
<b>BY ACTIVITY</b>									
<b>Service Management and Support</b>									
Management Team	173	565	392	0	0	0	173	565	392
Business Support	830	785	-45	0	0	0	830	785	-45
COVID-19 Response	0	2,102	2,102	0	-804	-804	0	1,298	1,298
<b>Adult Services</b>									
Commissioned Adult Services	100,904	100,904	0	0	0	0	100,904	100,904	0
Mental Health Teams	1,201	1,091	-110	0	0	0	1,201	1,091	-110
Criminal Justice Service	4,261	4,028	-233	-4,204	-3,968	236	57	60	3
Other Services for Vulnerable Adults	1,339	1,384	45	-23	-16	7	1,316	1,368	52
<b>Looked After Children</b>									
Fostering & Adoption	5,433	5,808	375	0	0	0	5,433	5,808	375
Looked After Children (Residential) In house	3,400	2,897	-503	0	0	0	3,400	2,897	-503
Looked After Children (Respite) In house	1,549	1,380	-169	0	0	0	1,549	1,380	-169
Looked After Children (Residential) Independent / 3rd Sector	7,245	9,158	1,913	0	-24	-24	7,245	9,134	1,889
Looked After Children (Through care & aftercare)	1,530	1,585	55	0	-106	-106	1,530	1,479	-51
Looked After Children (Alternatives to OOA)	5,492	4,257	-1,235	-281	-301	-20	5,211	3,956	-1,255
Looked After Children Management and Support	673	600	-73	0	0	0	673	600	-73
<b>Family Teams</b>									
Family Teams - North	2,726	2,299	-427	0	-7	-7	2,726	2,292	-434
Family Teams - Mid	3,390	3,280	-110	0	-2	-2	3,390	3,278	-112
Family Teams - West	2,891	2,644	-247	0	0	0	2,891	2,644	-247
Family Teams - South	8,565	6,876	-1,689	-15	-36	-21	8,550	6,840	-1,710
Self Directed Support (Direct Payments)	862	15	-847	0	-15	-15	862	0	-862
<b>Other Services for Children</b>									
Child Protection	543	406	-137	-31	-8	23	512	398	-114
Health and Health Improvement	1,377	1,109	-268	-708	-614	94	669	495	-174
Allied Health Professionals	3,616	3,281	-335	-11	-56	-45	3,605	3,225	-380
Primary Mental Health Workers	652	438	-214	0	0	0	652	438	-214
Early Years Change Fund	139	84	-55	0	0	0	139	84	-55
Specialist Services	405	404	-1	0	0	0	405	404	-1
Youth Action Services	1,628	1,253	-375	0	-7	-7	1,628	1,246	-382
Other Services for Children	725	527	-198	-11	-6	5	714	521	-193
Staff Training	173	108	-65	0	0	0	173	108	-65
Independent Funds	0	1	1	0	-1	-1	0	0	0
Unallocated Savings	-1,491	0	1,491	0	0	0	-1,491	0	1,491
<b>Commissioned Children's Services income from NHS</b>	0	0	0	-10,886	-10,400	486	-10,886	-10,400	486
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>160,231</b>	<b>159,269</b>	<b>-962</b>	<b>-16,170</b>	<b>-16,371</b>	<b>-201</b>	<b>144,061</b>	<b>142,898</b>	<b>-1,163</b>

## HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE REVENUE MONITORING 2021-22

	£'000 Annual Budget	£'000 Actual YTD	£'000 Projected Outturn	£'000 Year End Variance
<b>1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022</b>				
<b>Quarter 1 April 2021 to June 2021</b>				
<b>BY ACTIVITY</b>				
<b>Service Management and Support</b>				
Management Team	359	129	691	332
Business Support	830	209	830	0
COVID-19 Response	2,600	577	1,196	-1,404
	<b>3,789</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>2,717</b>	<b>-1,072</b>
<b>Adult Services</b>				
Commissioned Adult Services	112,104	131	112,104	0
Mental Health Teams	1,178	176	1,134	-44
Criminal Justice Service	62	89	62	0
Other Services for Vulnerable Adults	1,314	546	1,362	48
	<b>114,658</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>114,662</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>				
Looked After Children	26,035	5,103	25,570	-465
Family Teams	17,369	3,873	16,250	-1,119
Other Services for Children	7,528	1,788	7,997	469
Commissioned Children's Services Income from NHS	-10,886	2,813	-10,886	0
	<b>40,046</b>	<b>13,577</b>	<b>38,931</b>	<b>-1,115</b>
<b>TOTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE</b>	<b>158,493</b>	<b>15,434</b>	<b>156,310</b>	<b>-2,183</b>
	£'000 Annual Budget	£'000 Actual YTD	£'000 Projected Outturn	£'000 Year End Variance
<b>BY SUBJECTIVE</b>				
Staff Costs	37,568	8,481	37,365	-203
Other Costs	137,163	5,579	135,179	-1,984
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>174,731</b>	<b>14,060</b>	<b>172,544</b>	<b>-2,187</b>
Grants	-16,190	1,390	-16,190	0
Other Income	-48	-16	-44	4
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-16,238</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>-16,234</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>158,493</b>	<b>15,434</b>	<b>156,310</b>	<b>-2,183</b>



## Placement Services Change Programme Progress Report

1.1 This interim report summarises progress on the Placement Services Change Programme (PSCP), designed to return Looked After Children from Out of Area placements by redirecting resources to develop Highland services and to improve education outcomes.

### 2. Placement Programme progress in enabling young people to return to Highland

2.1 The current number of Out of Area Residential Placements (OOA), is at the lowest level in over 8 years at 18 young people. In April 2018 (pre-Placement Programme), 41 children were in residential placements OOA.

2.2 This is due to concerted effort by the Placement Services Change Programme (PSCP) team and family teams over the last year and despite the pandemic increasing OOA placements, significantly stalling returns and delaying the development of new provisions in Highland. In addition, the young people remaining OOA were significantly complex and return packages were more difficult to plan, taking substantial time to execute.

2.3 Since the enhanced placement programme began in June 2018, 53 young people have been enabled to return to Highland avoiding costs of over £11m as compared with these young people remaining out of area for a further year. This demonstrates the traction of the programme against the original Business Case agreed by this committee in March 2018. This return figure does not include the children enabled to remain in-area due to new services developed.

2.4 Children returned went to the following destinations:

- Residential Units: 14 26%
- Supported flats: 14 26%
- Home or Kinship: 13 25%
- Adult Services: 5 9%
- College accommodation 4 7%
- Foster care: 3 6%

2.5 A key aim of the PSCP was to reduce the spend on OOA placements in order to utilise the money to develop services in Highland. Pre-placement programme in 2018/19, just over £1.4M of the allocated budget was spent on new services in-area whilst £13.1M was spent on OOA placements, by 2019/20 this figure had increased to £2.7M on Alternatives and OOA placements had reduced to £10.6M. Last financial year, new services spend again increased to almost £4M and OOA spend reduced once more to £9.1M. This shift in the balance of spend indicates that the programme is achieving another of its key aims.

Budget Name	2018/19 Actual Spend	2019/20 Actual Spend	2020/21 Actual Spend
Residential - Independent/3rd Sector (OOA Placements)	£13,159,422	£10,640,582	£9,134,198
Alternatives to OOA (New Services In Highland Area)	£1,427,122	£2,689,337	£3,956,323
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,586,544</b>	<b>£13,329,919</b>	<b>£ 13,090,521</b>

### **3. Development of Highland Resources**

- 3.1 As detailed in the original Business Case, new Highland services have been developed by the Programme to accommodate children in-area at significantly reduced cost to OOA placements. In April 2018 (pre-Placement Programme), 17 children were in provisions in Highland developed as alternatives to OOA placements. In March 2020 (pre-Covid), 35 children were in alternatives to OOA placements. Currently there are 45 children in our alternatives to OOA provisions, these are a mix of children returned through the programme and young people who have avoided going OOA as these new services are available in Highland.
- 3.2 In March 2021, a property on the Black Isle opened as a residential house for 3 young children to return from OOA. The house replicates the highly successful Killen model where youngsters are cared for in a nurturing environment with the highest Care Inspectorate grades and bespoke education packages developed with link schools and dedicated support staff.
- 3.3 In May 2021, a house close to the Orchard opened as a small linked residential. The acquisition of the house (at no capital cost) extends the Orchard by 2 beds allowing 2 very young children with complex disabilities to live safely, close to their families rather than go OOA for expensive specialist care.
- 3.4 A further property, south of Inverness has been redeveloped as another small residential for 3 young people to return from OOA or avoid leaving the area. The service will soon recruit the Manager and residential staffing for this provision.

### **4. LAC Education**

- 4.1 The suite of services to supplement school placements and enable the return of young people is progressing well led by the teacher within the PSCP team, underpinned by the new Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding for Care Experienced Young People. Flexible individualised packages have been developed for each young person returning to Highland using mainstream schools, nurture bases, off-site provisions such as the Bridge, Family Firm and third sector organisations.

### **5. Young People Transitioning to Adult Services with NHS**

- 5.1 The issue of adults remaining in Children's units who should transition to Adult Services at 18 years old has significantly improved. NHS, the PSCP and the Transition Team have been consistently working on packages of support to transition these individuals around their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **6. ~~Young People~~ Young People Transitioning to Adult Services with NHS**

#### **6.1 Resources**

Considerable effort has been focussed on returning young people to Highland with the current number of Out of Area Residential Placements, at the lowest level in over 8 years at 18 young people. 53 young people have returned since the extended programme began in June 2018 and total costs avoided estimated at over £11M as compared with the young people remaining in their OOA placement for a further year. Further services have also been developed in Highland to enable children to return and to avoid children leaving the area. However, whilst this model has been successful in returning children to

the Highlands, we need to improve practice and support services, so that children can remain in the family home – when safe to do so – rather than be removed. This shift in the balance of care is one that we are committed to and aligns completely with The Promise.

## 6.2 Legal

In order to meet responsibilities detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, effort has been focussed on developing properties and services to meet the needs of Looked after young people in the Highland area.

## 6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

The ethos driving the Placement Programme is to provide alternative services which enable young people to remain as close to their communities in Highland as possible. Where there are sufficient numbers of children in a rural location to enable a service to be financially viable, this will be investigated.

## 6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

The proposals for accommodation and services in Highland will marginally increase the Council's overall carbon footprint through increased energy usage and waste disposal. However, these proposals will significantly reduce travel and associated costs relating to transport to and from provisions out-with Highland.

## 6.5 Risk

There is the continued risk (seen across the UK) that the number of children requiring to be looked after continues to increase which has significant cost implications. Spot purchased residential placements have an average cost to Highland Council of £240,000 per child per year. However, as stated above, focus is now on supporting children to remain at home or with extended family members rather than removing them from there. Staff training, developing different practice (ie Family Group Decision Making), developing and building kinship placements and working with partners to provide wrap around services, will all contribute to the shift in the balance of care. This will be a priority focus in the coming years.

## 6.6 Gaelic

No issues have been identified.

Designation: Head of Children's Services

Date: 22 June 2021

Author: Malina MacDonald-Dawson,  
Programme Manager – Alternatives to OOA Placements

Background Papers: n/a

**Appendix 4 - Savings RAG Assessment**

**ONLY  
ENTER G,  
A or R**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Savings Description</b>	<b>2021/22 Savings £m</b>	<b>2022/23 Savings £m</b>	<b>2023/24 Savings £m</b>	<b>Total Savings £m</b>	<b>Status R A G</b>
4.04	Children's Services Redesign	Re-align early intervention posts across Children's Services, schools and Early Learning and Childcare, linked to a re-structure of services and a review of health services funded by the Council.	0.250			0.250	<b>G</b>
2.15	Third Sector Contracts	Review of priorities and delivery and reduction in payment - subject to negotiation and member agreement		0.150	0.150	0.300	<b>G</b>
3.14	Family Teams	Redesign of family teams	0.483			0.483	<b>G</b>
3.15	Infant feeding support	Cessation of Council funding to NHS Highland for this Service	0.060			0.060	<b>G</b>
3.16	Play strategy budget	Removal of budget which has not been spent in recent times (non statutory function)	0.012			0.012	<b>G</b>
1.13	Service Staffing Budget	Reduce relief staffing budget based on underspend	0.011			0.011	<b>G</b>
			<b>0.816</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>1.116</b>	