

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 25 October 2016

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT High Costs Placements Monitoring Update

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer, Corporate Director of People

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Nil

Section 1 – Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of progress made in monitoring high cost placements.

INFORMATION REPORT

Section 2 – Report

The Councils saving plans for 2016/17 include £500k to be saved through children's placements and £200k to be saved through Leaving Care placements.

Challenge panels in February, June and September have been reviewing the highest cost placements with representatives from children's social care, finance, procurement, commissioning and health commissioning.

A further two panels have been scheduled for October 2016 to specifically review high cost placements and options for care leavers and children with disabilities. The panel focusing on care leavers considered the need for young people to claim housing benefit as soon as they are eligible which then contributes to the cost of their placement and how we prepare young people to live more independently. The CWD panel takes place later in October.

The actions taken after placements have been reviewed at panel include planned moves to alternative provision, letters sent to providers to gain more detail in the support being provided and using this information to make applications for health funding to pay for therapeutic interventions, and a reduction in additional support services that is no longer required as young people have become more settled in their placements and education.

Financial Implications

In response to the 2016/17 MTFs savings targets for placements three placement challenge panels have already taken place, reviewing the top 20 high cost placements. As a result of these panels savings of around £437k have already been achieved with a further 3 placements earmarked for likely cost reductions. A notional target of £30k against these placements has been allocated as a management action which would further reduce this pressure.

However there remains significant pressures on the placement budget which at Q1 was reporting an overspend of £673k. The overspend mainly results from an increase in the number of children in high cost residential placements. A number of these placements have been needed in response to significant risks relating to child sexual exploitation and gangs involvement. The duration of these placements will be tightly managed.

Equalities implications

Looked After Children come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of needs. A range of placements are needed to ensure providers are able to respond to the level of support children and young people present with. The discussions regarding value for money ensure that each individual young person's placement has clearly defined objectives and desired outcomes which reflect their needs. Reviewing the progress of these outcomes also means we can hold the placement providers to account to ensure these outcomes are realised.

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The review of placements for children in care contribute to the Council priority

- Making a difference for the vulnerable

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 13/10/16.		
Name: Matthew Dobkin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 17/10/16		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Claire Kentish, Access to Resources Team Manager
Tel: 020 8424 1485 Email: claire.kentish@harrow.gov.uk