

Childrens Services Commissioning Spring Report

Report of Commissioning Liaison Scrutiny Member Cllr Richard Hosking

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Commissioning Liaison member meets regularly with Officers to review the current and future childrens services commissioning activity. This is in line with the recommendations of the 2016 'Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Scrutiny Task Group. Cllr Hosking is the Commissioning Liaison champion for Childrens Services.
- 1.2 The opportunities for scrutiny will be greater when there is need for service redesign through changing need or issues with the current delivery model/service, than when a service which currently works well is being recommissioned. Scrutiny involvement in commissioning at the earliest stage will allow Members to help shape delivery models, services and outcomes.
- 1.3 The role for Commissioning Liaison is set out in the Protocol at Appendix A. Scrutiny have a key role in bringing the voice of the service user to commissioning. It has been agreed between Childrens Commissioning and Commissioning Liaison members that a briefing is made to Scrutiny twice a year, in the Spring and Autumn. Allowing opportunity in the Spring to signal progress on tenders and expected contract award dates, and in the Autumn to outline opportunities for pre-procurement activity ready for the following financial year.

2. Support for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability

- 2.1 A range of services are commissioned to support children with SEND. These are jointly funded between Education, Health and Care budgets and provide an integrated offer to children. There have been significant developments in several areas.
- 2.2 During 2018 we consulted on the current delivery of sensory services. This was to inform a sensory strategy. Since this time and in line with the principles determined through the consultation we have been developing collaboration between key services and several providers. These include the Sensory Teaching, Occupational Therapy, Enabling and support services and ROVIC's. All of which are highly regarded and well performing.
- 2.3 This has also involved several changes to providers with ROVIC's transferring to the direct delivery of the Local Authority and Multi-Sensory, Impairment and Enabling Services transferring from Virgin Care Ltd to Babcock LDP from 1st April 2019. Feedback from families is that this transfer has not disrupted services and continuity of care has been achieved.

- 2.4 Our offer of both community and residential short breaks is comprehensive but to ensure that we are keeping this support in line with family's requirements we continually review the available delivery. Following recent feedback and engagement through the SEND improvement process we have identified several areas to further develop, including how we work across boundaries and how we develop more capacity for support through Direct Payments.
- 2.5 To get this right we are planning further engagement with families, stakeholders and providers during the summer/ early autumn.
- 2.6 Four Residential Short Breaks homes were transferred successfully into the direct delivery of the Local Authority from 1st April 2019, this was following lack of market capacity to deliver this service. The future delivery approach is scheduled to be reviewed with children, families, Members and stakeholders engaged in this design during Summer/ Autumn 2019.

3. Sufficiency of Placements for Children in Care and Care Leavers

- 3.1 In our Autumn briefing the crisis in placement sufficiency was set out. The sufficiency strategy has since been published and delivery against the strategy is progressing.
- 3.2 Our significant pressure is in securing sufficient Children's Home placements to meet the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In January 2017 the number of beds in Devon under this registration stood at 67, increasing to 88 by November 2018, at May 2019 bed numbers in Devon are now 91 with plans to reach 100 by Autumn 2019. A market development plan and detailed provider by provider developments are in place to secure this capacity. However, this is a volatile market with many factors which affect investment.
- 3.3 Further actions to secure increased capacity include the conclusion of the Supported Living Options tender, contract live from the 1st June 2019, which has sought to drive up the quality of the provisions available for Children in Care aged over 16. With a focus on better placement stability for young people, improved outcomes for accessing Employment, Education and Training and transition into adulthood. We have increased the number of placements rigorously quality assured and available through the contract by 24%.
- 3.4 Re-Tender of Peninsula Residential Childrens Home Framework has been successful and went live on 1st February 2019. The framework is collaborative between Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay. This has seen a small increase in the number of placements in Devon.
- 3.5 To further increase our capacity to access this placement capacity and to ensure the best match and stability of placements we are using systems thinking to work through the back-office functions used to secure placements. An outcome of this work will be to improve placement sufficiency and identify, plan and undertake the return of children and young people currently placed outside of the local area, to return to Devon where this is suitable.
- 3.6 Devon County Council commissions health services into the Atkinson Secure Childrens Home, on behalf of NHS England, by way of a Section 10 agreement. This include CAMHS provision, as well as visiting GP and Nursing service provision into the Atkinson supporting the multi-disciplinary approach to trauma informed practice, supporting young people to reduce their risk and return to a positive lifestyle in the community. Longer term commissioning of these services is intended from April 2020. Work is currently underway to achieve this.

4 Commissioning Liaison Visits

- 4.1 In line with the recommendations of the previous report visits are being arranged for Members to shadow the services commissioned during 2018/19. There are plans in place to visit the advocacy service to see how young people are benefitting. The Advocacy service provides

independent advocates for children and young people in care, care leavers, children and young people who are subject to child protection proceedings, and children and young people who have been adopted and are at risk of placement breakdown.

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills: Councillor James McInnes

Chief Officer for Childrens Services: Jo Olsson

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact for Enquiries: Fiona Fleming Head of Commissioning

<u>BACKGROUND PAPER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>FILE REFERENCE</u>
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Commissioning Liaison Member Protocol

Summer 2017

This is a guidance document prepared by the scrutiny team to support the effective working of the nominated Commissioning Liaison Member/s from each scrutiny committee. The role was established following a recommendation made by the 'Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Task Group 2016. The full report and recommendations can be viewed [here](#).

Purpose:

The task group felt that nominating a member from each committee to develop positive relationships with Cabinet Members and Lead Officers to find out about commissioning activity would strengthen the effectiveness of scrutiny. The Commissioning Liaison Member will undertake to:

1. Understand the Council's commissioning processes and priorities;
2. Act as a link between Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee and bring to the attention of the Scrutiny Chair and Committee:
 - significant commissioning activity
 - performance or service delivery issues relating to services commissioned through external providers
3. Support the Scrutiny Committee to examine the commissioning of services within the wider context of the Council's strategic vision and purpose

This does not affect the legal duties around commissioning and provider relations particularly in relation to health scrutiny.

Approach:

To carry out this role in the most effective way the Commissioning Liaison Members from each committee have agreed to meet as a group on a regular basis to:

1. Receive commissioning training
2. Ensure a consistent approach is taken to the Scrutiny of commissioning
3. Champion the approach to Scrutiny's involvement in commissioning across the Council and Health

The group will also use receive details of forthcoming commissioning activity and individually take this back to each scrutiny committee to report at the work programme with suggestions about how the committee might be involved in commissioning activity.

Review and development

It is proposed that the effectiveness of this role could be reviewed in line with the task group recommendation after six months of operation.

In future there may be the opportunity to undertake specific scrutiny investigations relating to commissioning as directed by each relevant scrutiny committee.