

Commissioning for Supported Accommodation and Housing-related Support for 16/17 Year-Olds and Care Experienced Young People.

Report of the Head of Children's Health and Wellbeing

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.

Recommendations: It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- a) Provide approval for a tendering process to be undertaken during August – January 2023 for the provision of supported accommodation and housing-related support to:
 - (i) young people aged 16/17 years at risk of homelessness, who do not need to come into care under section 20 of the Children Act; and
 - (ii) care experienced young people aged 18-25 years.
- b) Delegate authority to the Chief Officer for Children's Services and Lead Member to agree non-material changes within the overarching strategy detailed in section 4 (proposal).
- c) Delegate authority to the Chief Officer for Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services & Schools, to approve contract award recommendations for supported accommodation and housing-related support for 16/17 year olds and care leavers.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Cabinet on the proposed retendering of supported accommodation and housing-related support services for 16/17-year-olds and care leavers. These services will support young people aged 16/17 years at risk of homelessness who do not need to be accommodated by Devon County Council (DCC) as a child in care, as well as care experienced young people aged 18-25.
- 1.2 These services will be delivered by support providers offering support in settings including, but not limited to:
 - i. Supported lodgings with host families.
 - ii. Foyers.
 - iii. Training flats or shared houses.
 - iv. Private sector accommodation.
 - v. Social housing or social landlords.
 - vi. Specialist services.
- 1.3 These proposals have been developed in consultation with District Councils (Local Housing Authorities) in Devon. DCC and District Councils both have responsibilities towards the young people accessing support via this contract. Accommodation and Intensive Housing Management costs for young people supported through this contract will be met through Housing Benefit via the District Council to which they have a local connection, subject to eligibility, with the DCC contract covering support elements of the contract. Although DCC funds the support and not the accommodation, access to suitable accommodation for young people is a key qualifying criterion for providers to successfully be able to bid for this contract.

- 1.4 The availability and provision of supported accommodation and housing-related support for young people enables DCC and District Councils in meeting our statutory duties under social care and housing legislation toward 16/17-year-olds at risk of homelessness and care experienced young people.

It also supports DCC in delivering our strategic priorities as outlined in:

- (i) [A Place Called Home](#); and
- (ii) [Devon's Corporate Parenting Strategy](#).

- 1.5 In developing the proposed commissioning and procurement arrangements for supported accommodation and housing-related support services for 16/17-year-olds and care leavers, several options and approaches to the market have been considered.
- 1.6 The recommended approach is to tender for a multi-provider Dynamic Purchasing System with a number of block contracts called off from the agreement for a minimum period of 3 years, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years. This option is being recommended as it will allow sufficient stability to ensure sufficiency for young people and to engage strategically with providers around the development and delivery of services.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current arrangement for providing young people's homelessness prevention services is a block contract covering all of Devon. This contract is split into 2 service areas:
- Lot 1 covers accommodation-based support (5 providers across 3 geographical hubs)
 - Lot 2 covers floating support (1 provider who is also in Lot 1).
- 2.2 This contract arrangement is due to expire on the 31st March 2023 with DCC as the sole purchaser of support hours via the contract. Accommodation and support accessed via this contract is not regulated by Ofsted or CQC.
- 2.3 The current contract arrangements have been beneficial to young people. As of 31st March 2022, there were 87 young people in supported accommodation through this contract, therefore able to access appropriate accommodation and support to prepare for independence. For example, support to develop budgeting, tenancy management and independent living skills, and to prepare for, get into or remain in employment, education, or training.
- 2.4 However, it has become evident during the current contract term that there are some key areas for development where contract monitoring data and feedback from young people shows us that we need to improve. This includes support to young people in crisis, including access to emergency beds, accommodation options for young people who cannot be placed under current arrangements due to risk assessment or complexity of need; and improved multi-agency support to young people in supported accommodation.
- 2.5 During 2021/22, 172 young people accessed supported accommodation via this contract in total, with an average of 83 young people supported at any one time.

3. Overview of Options Appraisal and Analysis

- 3.1 An options appraisal and analysis was undertaken as part of re-commissioning activity. Options for contract type which were considered as part of the options appraisal included:

- 3.2 **Option 1 – Do nothing and move to spot contracting arrangements.** This option would mean leaving the existing block contract to expire on the 31st March 2023 with no formalised arrangements in place to replace it. This would be destabilising for providers, who are familiar with working on a block contract basis to ensure capacity is available. It could also make it difficult for District Council departments dealing with housing benefit to understand who the recognised supported accommodation providers are for Housing Benefit purposes. This could further destabilise providers and thus provision and increase costs to DCC if it resulted in the Council having to fund the cost of Intensive Housing Management in order to keep provisions financially viable. It could also impact on Personal Advisor and Housing Officer time and could increase costs if it meant that each young person currently being supported via a block contract needed to be individually assessed and referred for spot contracting arrangements. This option would also not be compliant with PCR 2015 procurement regulations.

This is not a recommended option as it would offer poor value, low sufficiency, and have a negative impact for young people and providers.

- 3.3 **Option 2 – Block contracting arrangements with no wider purchasing options available.** This option would mean retendering the contract as-is, with a block volume of hours purchased with no potential to go out for additional services to respond to emerging needs. This would guarantee DCC a service level and provide financial stability for providers but does not give the Council any option to respond to emerging needs, to young people with complex needs who may need bespoke arrangements to be considered, or if unforeseen circumstances led to peaks in demand. Whilst this option would be compliant with PCR 2015 procurement regulations it would limit our potential for market development over the course of the contract.

This is not a recommended option as it does not give us sufficient options for market development to respond to emerging patterns of need.

- 3.4 **Option 3 – Multi-provider Framework Agreement with entry points.** This option would be compliant with PCR 2015 Procurement regulations and would create flexibility to respond to the needs of individual young people as it would allow for new providers to join through the life of the framework. Through this option there would be the ability to design a tailored process including the addition of entry points at set points through the life of the framework agreement. It would also be possible to design a process whereby call off's can either be through individual referral (direct award) and / or block contract arrangements (mini competition), which would support us in maintaining sufficiency in the market through core block contracts. However, a full specification for the overarching framework agreement would be required as well as detailing any areas likely to change over the course of the contract. This option would require a lot of resource to run entry points each time the framework opened, which would be particularly difficult in this area of work given the need for evaluators from a range of organisations and disciplines for example, housing, corporate parenting, children's social work. It would also require resource from providers to tender for the framework, which they may not wish to put in if they are unlikely to get any immediate business resulting through it.

This is not a recommended option as it would require a high level of resource from a range of professionals at each entry point, which may conflict with other operational pressures and requirements on capacity.

- 3.5 **Option 4 – Multi-provider Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).** This option would enable providers to join the system at any time, rather than at set intervals as set out in a framework arrangement. This would allow quicker response times to emerging need. As with the framework approach described above it would be possible to design a process

whereby call off's can either be through individual referral (direct award) and / or block contract arrangements (mini competition), which would support DCC in maintaining sufficiency in the market through core block contracts. This approach would mean that evaluation capacity in DCC and District Councils would need to be permanently available, which could be resource intensive if the process for coming onto the DPS required a high level of input to evaluation. However, with a light touch approach to ensure providers were suitable to work with young people, the resources required to support this approach would be more manageable. Mitigation to a light-touch approach to enter the DPS would be strong evaluation arrangements of quality and value for money at the point of call-off. Again, this process would be compliant with PCR 2015 Procurement regulations, evaluations would need to be as automated as possible to reduce resource impact through the life of the DPS. Without any public sector experience some suppliers struggle to get onto frameworks or win tenders, getting onto a DPS is typically a more accessible route into tendering and securing public sector contracts.

This is the recommended option because it offers enough stability to ensure sufficiency through block contracts called off the system, but also allows for a level of flexibility to respond to emerging needs.

- 3.6 Options for contract partners which were considered as part of the options appraisal included:
- 3.7 Option 1 – DCC only contract. This option would offer familiarity for providers and operational staff as it mirrors current arrangements. It would also reduce the need for additional time around engagement and sign off with any partners. However, it reduces the potential for joint working between DCC and Districts, for example, to develop joint responses to emerging demands and to young people where we both have a responsibility, for this reason it is not the recommended option.
- 3.8 Option 2 – DCC-led contract with District Councils named as potential users. This option maintains the benefits of familiarity for providers and operational staff, as initial block contracts would still be DCC led. However, it allows potential for future joint working between DCC and Districts around areas where there are joint priorities or joint responsibilities. It can also accommodate changes in regulation or duties for all authorities concerned. This option will also ensure future proofing and flexibility for the preferred approach to market. For this reason, it is recommended that this approach is adopted.

4. Summary of Proposed Contract Scope, Design, Benefits and Rationale

- 4.1 Subject to approval, it is anticipated that the new arrangements would replace the existing approach to providing supported accommodation and housing-related support services to 16/17 year olds and care leavers when it expires on 31st March 2023.

Scope of services

- 4.2 It is proposed that a new arrangement is commissioned featuring the following elements:
- **Overarching Dynamic Purchasing System for supported accommodation and housing-related support:** This will be the first point of contact for providers to be eligible to tender for block-contracted elements of the service through a mini competition process, as described below. It will also create a pool of supported accommodation providers who can work with young people offering supported accommodation and floating support to allow DCC to respond to emerging needs or to young people with complex needs who require bespoke arrangements.

- **Block contracted element within the DPS for 'core' provision.**

- This will be split into three geographical areas of Eastern (East Devon, Exeter and Mid Devon District Council areas), Northern (North Devon and Torridge District Council areas) and Southern (South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon District Council areas).
- Providers will bid to provide support hours linked to a minimum number of beds which they must keep available for this contract. Providers can use their hours flexibly across this minimum number of beds, e.g., to provide more support to young people with high needs and a lower level of support to young people with moderate needs.
- Providers can also make use of additional accommodation that they or a young person has access to if they wish to offer their hours to more than the minimum number of young people, e.g. to offer move-on options with floating support to young people with a low level of need, or to offer floating support to young people who have access to accommodation outside of the provisions offered.
- Projections of expected levels of provision under this block equate to approximately 38,844 hours per year across Devon (approximately 83 beds) based on utilisation and trends in the current contract.

- **Block contracted element within the DPS for emergency beds:**

This will be contracted on a basis of available beds rather than support hours available.

- 4 beds will be contracted, with 1 emergency bed in each District that can be used for 16/17-year-olds and care leavers, and 1 bed countywide specifically aimed at care leavers with complex needs who cannot access other emergency beds due to risk assessments for shared accommodation.
- Standard emergency beds can be in shared accommodation and could be provided on a basis of either a dedicated bed, e.g., in an existing building, or as a 'rolling bed' where the option is available for the young person to remain in an emergency bed if they choose to remain in the accommodation, and the provider would allocate a new bed to act as the emergency bed.
- Emergency beds will also be funded during periods when they are vacant, to ensure availability, a KPI relating to the percentage of referrals within scope accepted will be used to ensure that funding of the beds even when vacant does not lead to providers refusing to accept referrals.
- Projections of expected levels of provision under this block equate to approximately 4 beds across Devon, based on utilisation and trends in the current contract.

- **Block contracted element within the DPS for young parents and young people who are pregnant:**

This will be contracted based on support hours, with a minimum number of beds attached. As for the 'core' provision, hours can be used flexibly to offer higher levels of support to young people with higher needs and lower levels to young people whose needs can be met through low to moderate support.

- There will be specific requirements on providers around the suitability of the accommodation for parents with young children, as well as the support offer to include supporting young people with their needs as parents and linking to multi-agency support for families e.g., children's centres.
- Due to low numbers of young people requiring this support, and the specialist nature of the support and accommodation to be offered, this will not be split into geographical lots. Instead, it will be a countywide lot, with an emphasis in the quality criteria around accessibility of the property via public transport to a wide range of areas in Devon, to enable young people to maintain social and support networks.
- The provider will also be required to link to District Councils around move-on options for young people, to ensure that young people accessing the accommodation but wishing to return to the district they have come from are able to do so. As levels of young people into this service will vary over time, it is recognised that providers operating the service may need to occasionally use beds in this provision for other young people with compatible needs, e.g., other young people who are not parents but wish to live together as a couple. Projections of expected levels of provision under this block equate to approximately 2,704 hours per year (4 beds).

4.3 The total number of beds estimated to be provided under new contracting arrangements is less than under the existing arrangement. However, they do reflect current rates of utilisation across the county for beds, as well as increased support hours per young person, which is in line with current trends and utilisation. It should be noted that actual number of block contracted hours and beds available once a new contract goes live will depend on costings at tender, due to the need to remain within available resources for the contract.

4.4 The wider Direct Purchasing System outside of the block contract does not have guaranteed volumes of business attached to it for providers. However, it allows DCC to work with providers around areas of emerging or priority need. Any additional spend under the DPS element of the contract would need separate funding agreed or to be offset by savings elsewhere – e.g., by reducing demand in other areas while offering a service that are at least as good. Any additional, or reallocated funding, will be reviewed and agreed by District Councils, Social Work partners and the Devon Youth Homelessness Prevention Partnership. Where this funding is available, and additional services are required, a further mini competition will be run through the DPS, including all providers currently on it to identify the successful provider.

Proposed Contract Design

4.5 It is recommended that a tender process is carried out to commission a multi-provider dynamic purchasing system, with block contracts called off for core provision, emergency beds and young parents' provision. The initial term for both the first tranche of block contracts, and the DPS, will be a minimum of 3 years with options available to extend up to a further 2 years. Block contracts will include a mechanism for inflationary fee increases.

4.6 To support the delivery of our sufficiency requirements the block elements of the contract will make up most services purchased under this contract. However, making this part of an overarching DPS approach improves our options to respond to emerging profiles of needs beyond what can be met by the block contract. This will also give the opportunity for new blocks to be awarded, for example if an existing block contracted provider decides

to leave the market or if unforeseen circumstances result in a significant increase in demand.

- 4.7 As the new arrangements will have multiple block contracts within them, some of which are new, specific terms and conditions will be drafted where applicable to support individual service specifications. All specifications will include a focus on trauma informed practice, supporting young people to avoid evictions and/or abandonments of tenancy, and multi-agency working to ensure young people have access to wrap-around support that they need to achieve positive outcomes.
- 4.8 To ensure that young people have access to accommodation that allows them to maintain links with their existing social networks, support services and employment, education or training, the majority of support contracted under block elements of the contract will be within geographical hubs made up of groups of neighbouring District Councils. This allows for accommodation options to be developed close to education and training hubs, such as local colleges, and to maintain economies of scale which will ensure that adequate support levels can be linked to properties including those with floating support.
- 4.9 Where a block contract is of a specialist nature, with low numbers of young people likely to require this service at any one time, geographical hub requirements will be waived in favour of an offer available to young people from across Devon. Current block contract elements where this applies will be young parents' accommodation and emergency bed(s) for young people with complex needs. In these instances, quality requirements will set out a need to support young people to maintain social and support networks, for example by ensuring accommodation is well linked to public transport networks.
- 4.10 Referral routes will set out the need for young people to be able to occasionally be referred across geographical hubs where this is in their best interest. However, this should be the exception and not the norm. It is expected that DCC, Districts and providers would work together to ensure sufficiency within each geographical hub.
- 4.11 To be awarded a place on the DPS, providers will go through a light-touch tender process which will include a selection questionnaire and questions to ensure their suitability to work with young people. Safeguarding and safer recruitment processes will also be tested at this stage. Costings will be expected at this stage for information, however, will only be assessed at the point of each contract 'call off'.
- 4.12 To be awarded a block contracted element of the contract, or to provide bespoke support for a particular young person/group of young people, providers will complete additional quality questions and submit prices for the service they are bidding for as part of a mini competition process which will be a commitment from them to deliver the service within that cost. Quality and price evaluation will be carried out at this stage, including a quality assessment of any buildings linked to the delivery of the service to ensure they confirm with agreed standards around housing, health and safety. Award criteria for any block or bespoke arrangements drawn off the DPS will be formed to balance quality, cost, and sustainability for young people.
- 4.13 District Councils in Devon will be invited to sign up to the contract as potential users. This will not commit them to purchasing from the contract but will provide the opportunity for them to do so where they require a service for a compatible group for whom they have responsibility, e.g., 18–25-year-olds who are not care experienced. This would also increase opportunities for partnership working on areas of joint responsibility.

5. Consultations, Engagement and Representations

5.1 Stakeholders consulted to help inform this paper included:

- District Councils via Devon Youth Homelessness Prevention Partnership.
- Young people via Participation Team surveys around A Place Called Home and face to face consultations with young people.
- Corporate Parenting and Children's Social Work colleagues via Devon Youth Homelessness Prevention Partnership, strategy development groups and the working group for recommissioning.
- Current providers regarding what's working and areas for improvement in the current contract via surveys and face to face meetings with providers individually.

5.2 Summarised below are examples of themes, ideas and feedback that have emerged through engagement with young people, providers and other stakeholders.

Topic	Examples of feedback received	How is this reflected in the new arrangement?
Emergency/temporary accommodation	<p>Young people – sometimes we are housed in B&Bs or accommodation that we don't find suitable. If this accommodation breaks down we could be found intentionally homeless.</p> <p>Professionals supporting young people – we find it particularly hard to access emergency beds for young people out of hours, and for young people who are too high risk to accommodate alongside 16/17 year olds.</p> <p>Providers – spot purchasing does not give us the stability to ensure beds and staff capacity are available for emergency accommodation. Emergency bed contracts need to consider the support offer to young people as well as the available beds.</p>	<p>Increased focus on availability of emergency beds that are suitable and safe for young people. This includes more beds and improving availability by moving from spot purchase to block contracts and ensuring that the right support is available as well as the beds.</p> <p>One dedicated emergency bed for care experienced young people whose needs and risks mean they cannot be placed in shared accommodation with 16/17 year olds. The number of these beds could be increased at a later date if funding was found and market development carried out to increase capacity in the market.</p>
Options for young people with high risks and complex needs.	<p>Young people – sometimes we don't have access to supported accommodation because</p>	<p>Increasing the average support hours per person per week for each bed under the block contract.</p>

	<p>we're told we're too high risk.</p> <p>Providers –support hours/funding per person per week under the current block are too low, which makes it hard to accommodate young people with higher risks.</p> <p>Providers – there needs to be a mix in the provision, if there are too many young people with the same risks those risks become very hard to manage.</p>	<p>The service specification will encourage providers in each geographical hub to work together to ensure sufficiency within the hub.</p>
Employment, Education and Training	<p>Young people – rents in supported accommodation are high if your earnings go above a certain level. This decreases motivation to work and earn beyond that point.</p> <p>Providers – Costs which are necessary to the provision e.g., intensive housing management costs, are part of the rent. We would like rents to be affordable for young people, but we can't just decrease rents in 24/7 staffed provisions. Some providers are interested in developing move-on provisions, but a commitment from DCC to support and fund these would be helpful.</p>	<p>Increasing flexibility of how support hours can be used and asking providers to work together in geographical hubs around overall sufficiency should make it more possible for providers wishing to offer step-down accommodation to do so.</p>
Geographical hubs	<p>Young people – it makes it hard to us to keep up friendships if we have to move around a lot.</p> <p>Professionals supporting young people – sometimes young people need to move a long distance in order to access housing (e.g.s of young people moving between North Devon and Exeter).</p>	<p>Geographical hubs covering neighbouring District Areas will be maintained to ensure economies of scale and so a suitable support offer can be maintained.</p> <p>More emphasis in the new contract on providers in each geographical hub working together to ensure</p>

	<p>Providers – We need to have some economies of scale in order to maintain our service offer – it would be difficult to offer economies of scale if provisions had to be in every District in Devon.</p> <p>Providers – it's a challenge when young people are placed with you from a distance away but all of their support offer (e.g. PA) is still in the District they've come from.</p>	<p>sufficiency within each hub.</p>
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6. Financial Considerations

- 6.1 Devon County Council's overall budget for Homelessness Prevention Services in 2023/24 is £919,000. This includes £158,000 outside this contract through DCC's contribution to the Homelessness Prevention Worker function which is joint funded with District Councils. It is proposed that this element of spend remains separate to supported accommodation and housing-related support services contracted by DCC.
- 6.2 Currently spend on young people's homelessness prevention is split across Lot 1 (accommodation-based support), Lot 2 (floating support) and a one-year pilot contract for an emergency bed for care experienced young people. Under the new contract it is proposed that this spend is all allocated to spend on block contracts via the overarching DPS.
- 6.3 Projected costs for block contracts recommended to be drawn off the DPS are in line with available resources. It should be noted that these are all projections based on the current trends and utilisation within the contract, and potential inflationary costs factored into current hourly rates. Until we go out to tender, we will not know final costs for the contract as we will be asking providers to submit prices at which they can sustainably deliver the service.
- 6.4 Block contract award will include competition based on price as well as quality to ensure that we are achieving value for money.
- 6.5 There is a risk that costs at tender will be above those projected. For example, if hourly rates increase beyond what we would anticipate due to high levels of inflation and increases to the National Living Wage. This is a particular risk if rates of inflation continue to rise significantly during the period between this report being submitted (July 2022) and a new contract going live (April 2023). If increases due to costs submitted at tender vary significantly from our projections then escalation routes will be followed with options for a decision, in line with DCC's levels of delegation. Measures we will take to reduce the risk of costs being above our available budget include increasing flexibility of how hours can be used to maximise economies of scale, reducing administrative requirements not related to direct support e.g., by rationalising quarterly reporting requirements for providers to key KPIs and ensuring that our contracting approach makes the best possible use of multi-agency support available to young people to complement this contracted offer.

- 6.6 A key principle of this recommissioning is that young people who are already accommodated with existing providers should not need to move purely due to changes in contract. However, this needs to be balanced against the financial risk to the Council of overspending the budget envelope, as we may need to continue to pay for young people in legacy arrangements after the new contract is live. To manage this risk, a contract transition period will be required whereby payments to the new provider(s) only commence as and when young people start to receive services under the new contract. This tapered approach should allow young people to remain supported as contracts change whilst reducing the risk of overspending the budget. For those young people already supported by the current contract a transitions period will be put in place to ensure that young people remain supported as contracts change and can remain in accommodation they are settled in wherever possible. Our approach to this transition period will be set out as part of the retendering work, and we will work with providers once contracts are awarded to ensure that the practical application of the transition period takes into accounts the individual needs of any young people affected.
- 6.7 The contract transition period is projected to require 6 months to complete. If this cannot be achieved within 6 months or example, if young people are unable to move on from supported accommodation during this period, then there is a risk of budget pressure due to supporting young people in legacy arrangements when the new contract has stepped up to full capacity.
- 6.8 The new DPS will include a formal process for agreeing and implementing inflationary uplifts on an annual basis. This will be in line with the methods used to project DCC budgets and market influences (for example CPI). This will allow providers to maintain sustainability and support levels by providing transparency of costs.

7. Legal Considerations

- 7.1 The lawful implications of the proposals have been considered in the preparation of this report and the formulation of the recommendations set out above.
- 7.2 The procurement process will be conducted in accordance with all relevant legal requirements, best practice principles, and procedures detailed in the tender documentation and with the principles of transparency, equality, fairness, and proportionality as stipulated by the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

- 8.1 The influence that a young person's accommodation and its proximity to social and support networks and their places of employment, education and training has been considered as part of an impact assessment. For example, in how it impacts on travel for the young person and for professionals supporting them.
- 8.2 For further details please refer to the published impact assessment.

9. Equality Considerations

- 9.1 Social impacts and mitigations within the impact assessment consider the impact of decisions on the health and well-being of young people, both groups currently supported by this contract and those who are not currently supported but could be in future, for example, young people currently in care age 16/17, and young people currently in temporary accommodation who may be able to be accommodated under a new contract.

9.2 The impact assessment also considers the potential positive impact of the recommendations being made on outcomes for young people, including improved health and wellbeing outcomes from having access to suitable accommodation, improved access to family and support networks through improving options for young people to remain within the geographical hub they present in, unless there is a strong reason why this cannot happen.

10. Risk Management Considerations

10.1 This proposal has been assessed and safeguards and actions have been put in place to mitigate risks identified wherever possible.

10.2 Risks around cost increases, and the potential impact on cost projections if increases in the hourly rate go beyond anticipated levels have been set out and addressed in section 6.

10.3 Risks around the transition period, and if not all transitions could be completed within 6 months have been set out and addressed in section 6.

10.4 Further risks of significance and mitigations are set out in the table below:

Risk	Potential impact	Mitigations
The number of young people requiring support under this contract increases	The number of beds we are contracting does not therefore meet our sufficiency requirements	<p>Intensive work with District Councils, providers and other partners to identify additional move-on options for young people currently in supported accommodation who could be ready for more independent living.</p> <p>Work with providers and multi-agency partners e.g., Bridges to identify whether there are any young people currently in supported accommodation who may be able to be supported to return home or to live with extended family.</p> <p>Making use of the overarching DPS to draw off additional beds if funding can be identified to do so. This could be for a shorter period than for the blocks already proposed, as a way of bridging a gap while the actions above are ongoing.</p>
The number of young presenting as homeless and requiring support over the course of this contract decreases over the 5 years of the DPS.	Although this would be positive for young people, it could mean that demand would not be sufficient to meet the block-contracted supply of beds. This would put providers at financial	Working closely with providers and Districts to identify if there are other compatible groups with a need for this accommodation, or any other contract areas where demand may have increased. For example, if more young people

	<p>risk due to not receiving housing benefit on some of their beds, which would impact on sufficiency and quality of services.</p>	<p>were accessing emergency beds but fewer were remaining in supported accommodation long-term.</p> <p>Working closely with providers to understand any financial impact that this is having on them and any recommendations they would have around service adaptations, as well as if they would be interested in stepping across to other areas with higher levels of demand in line with the point above.</p>
<p>Young people present with complex needs or risks beyond what our specification asks of providers to be able to support.</p>	<p>This could mean that young people cannot be supported under the contract. Alternatively, providers may try to meet needs they aren't prepared for which would impact on the quality of service provided, and/or risks to other young people accommodated with that provider.</p>	<p>Work with District Councils to identify accommodation options, which providers could link into with floating support, if it is the accommodation which is causing difficulties. For example, if the young people's needs mean they require self-contained accommodation, and the only available spaces are in shared accommodation.</p> <p>We will write provisions into the specification that allow the ratio of hours to beds to be revised if needed, and also flexibility for hours to be used more intensively with young people who have the highest needs.</p> <p>If skills and/or training is the issue, we could work with training providers to consider whether they are there.</p> <p>We could use the overarching DPS to create additional provision for some of the most complex young people, This would have financial implications so would need to be considered through the relevant budget sign-off processes if the issue arose.</p>

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

- 11.1 Approval for the commissioning and procurement arrangements proposed in this report for supported accommodation and housing-related support for 16-17- year- olds and care

leavers aged 18-25 will offer sufficiency for the majority of young people requiring supported accommodation through block contracts, with the potential for flexibility to respond to changes in need.

11.2 Accepting the proposals in section 4 will give DCC our best opportunities to ensure sufficiency for young people who require supported accommodation either due to a risk of homelessness or to support a planned transition out of care. The recommendations will also allow for economies of scale and to use available resources effectively.

11.3 Proposed arrangements of an overarching DPS with core blocks drawn off to meet the majority of need will balance providing a sustainable service within available resources and allowing flexibility to respond to areas of emerging need and young people with particularly complex needs over the life of the contract. It will allow DCC to work with partners and providers on market development of key areas, which also allowing for management of the quality and costs of services.

11.4 If the recommendations are agreed a process of pre-tender engagement with providers will take place, the tender process will be carried out with the new arrangements going live on the 1st April 2023.

Electoral Divisions – All

Cabinet Member for Children’s Services – Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

Interim Head of Children’s Commissioning – Rupa Parmar

Deputy Chief Officer- Head of Children’s Health and Wellbeing – Janet Fraser

Contact for Enquiries – Janet Fraser, Deputy Chief Officer – Head of Children’s Health and Wellbeing and Andrew Simkin, Procurement Category Manager (Services)

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Equality Impact Assessment		Link to be inserted here
Devon County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2022-24, Finding a place called home	2022-2024	Please see links in main text
Devon Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-24	2022-24	
Links to statutory duties and legislation	June 2022	