



Derby City Council

**CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE**  
**3 April 2018**

**ITEM 9**

Report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services

**Update on the East Midlands Regional Childrens Framework and external providers**

**SUMMARY**

**1.1 Children in Care Council Summary:**

The East Midlands Regional Childrens Framework is used by Derby City Council to find placements for children/young people who come into the care of Derby City Council or who are already cared for by Derby City Council. It is a list of people who will be able to support children and young people in either a fostering place or in a children's home. Derby City Council uses this list to make sure that safe and good placements are found for children and young people.

The list has provided Derby City Council with a lot of placements in Derby and areas just outside Derby. It works fairly well to support Children and young people. At the moment out of 482 children in care in Derby 271 are placed with people on the list. The other placements are made with Derby City Councils own foster carers and Childrens homes.

This report is to show the work that takes place and the good providers who have helped Derby City Council to make safe placements.

- 1.2 This report details the use of the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF), giving an overview of the last 2-3 years of the framework post the re-tendering exercise.
- 1.3 The new Framework commenced on 1st February 2016 and is due to be reviewed before the end date of 31st January 2020. The Framework has encouraged market development within the East Midlands Region, encouraging new providers to tender when the framework re-opens each year, reassuring local authorities of good quality and value for money provision.
- 1.4 The report gives an update on Derby City Council's use of the framework and work that has been undertaken with local providers to support local placements and local sufficiency.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To understand the use of external provision for Derby City's Children in Care and the work undertaken to secure safe, quality placements.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF) is used by Children's services to source external placements for Fostering and Residential within the East Midlands region.
- 4.2 The focus of the Commissioning team is to source local placements for our children in care, enabling access to local services and social care teams. However, there are circumstances when there is a requirement to source placements at a distance due to risks for the child/young person. The EMRCF facilitates this with providers who have placements available at a distance.
- 4.3 Providers apply for the framework through a robust tendering process, which require the provider to meet high quality standards. They are vetted on: the quality of support and provision, their Ofsted rating and financial costs and models. This is evaluated by a team comprising representatives from each Local Authority who uses the framework. Over the 3 years of the framework there have been several providers who have applied but not met the high standards of the tendering process.
- 4.4 The EMRCF is managed by seven Local Authorities who have agreed to work collaboratively to utilise the framework and manage providers. These are Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council, Rutland and Northamptonshire County Council.
- 4.5 This consortium meets quarterly to review, challenge, and ensure quality and value for money services. As part of the consortium there is a central contract management team based in Northampton who support with the contract management for the region. Derby City Council along with the other Local Authorities (above) contributes toward an annual payment for the central team.
- 4.6 The Children's Integrated Commissioning team work locally and regionally to ensure the quality of the provision. The Quality Assurance process includes: visits to provisions, reviews of placements with social care teams (ensuring needs and outcomes are being met for the child/young person), contract management meetings locally with each provider and regional contract management meetings facilitated by the Central team. This enables us to discuss costs with providers for individual placements, ensuring they reflect needs, and change where they can be adjusted.
- 4.7 We will challenge our placements and providers to ensure they are meeting the needs of our Children in Care and providing safe and nurturing environments.

- 4.8 We encourage the voice of the child throughout, ensuring there is the opportunity to have a voice regarding the placement. We are strengthening our consultation with young people further, working with the Care Leavers forum to better ways to consult and ensure all young people have a voice.
- 4.9 The framework is crucial in supporting the commissioning function for sourcing placements for our children; we have seen an increase in the use of the framework and the number of external placements we make.
- 4.10 As of 31 January 2018 we had 280 placements with external providers (i.e. not Derby City Council Childrens Homes or Derby City Council foster carers), consisting of:
- 259 external fostering placements,
  - 13 external children's home placements,
  - 8 external disabled children homes placement.
- 4.11 The numbers of external fostering placements have increased significantly with a 62.5% increase since January 2015.
- 4.12 The increase is due to a number of factors; capacity to place internally, recruitment of fosters carers and changing needs of the young people in care or entering care. We continue to analyse this, and consider how we can improve the internal offer.
- 4.13 In contrast, the number of external Childrens homes placements has decreased by 59% over the last 4 years.
- 4.14 External providers need to be able to support children and young people with a range of specialist needs, including:
- ADHD/Behavioural
  - Criminal behaviours
  - Sexual behaviours
  - Attachment
  - Mental health
  - Self-harming behaviour
  - CSE/missing
  - At risk of Neglect/harm
- 4.15 To meet the above needs, the Framework contains four categories of needs within the fostering lot, and five categories within the Childrens Homes lot. These were put in place to ensure we meet the diverse changing needs of children in care. These categories range from 'standard' to 'complex needs'.
- 4.16 There has been a rise in sibling groups, with up to six children in one family group. This is a challenge for the market to facilitate placements together.
- 4.17 The Local Authority has a Sufficiency Duty, which means we need to ensure enough local placements. The framework is one of the tools used to do this. However, this does not come without issues. Whilst we are working with our local providers to ensure placements are made local to Derby, due to the shortage of carers and our boundaries of 20 miles merging into our neighbouring Local Authorities we have a challenge making as many local placements as we'd like to.

4.18 **Distance of Placements from Derby, as of 31 January 2018**

	<b>Foster Placements</b>	<b>Children's Homes Placements</b>
<b>0 – 10 miles</b>	68	1
<b>10 – 20 miles</b>	73	2
<b>20 – 30 miles</b>	42	3
<b>30 – 40 miles</b>	37	3
<b>40 – 50 miles</b>	11	0
<b>50+ miles</b>	28	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>13</b>

4.19 There is ongoing partnership work with local providers to facilitate local placements, with regular meetings and updates sent to providers to inform their recruitment of carers.

4.20 Where the needs of some of the children/young people are extremely high, we have not been able to meet their needs on the framework and have been required to utilise providers who are classed as 'off-framework'. The number of these types of placements has been reduced over the last few years and is very low, only 6% of our overall placements made. We carry out robust quality assurance of these providers before we place young people there, to ensure quality and safety.

**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 N/A

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Emily Feenan Alison Parkin, Head of Finance (Children and Young People)  Gurmail Nizzer, Director of Commissioning (Acting) & Head of School Organisation and Provision, Lisa Melrose, Head of Integrated Commissioning (CYP)
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<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Catherine Young, Children in Care Commissioning and Placements Manager 01332 642703 catherine.young@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The increase in the number of external placements made has had a significant impact on the cost of placements. However, there is the ability to cap costs over the life of the framework, which ensures a benchmarked price.
- 1.2 The table below shows a summary of spend over the last four financial years on different types of services which were purchased through the framework.

Financial Year	Childrens homes	Foster	Disabled Childrens Homes	Total external	CiC population	Costs of placement on the framework (£)
2014/15	23	164	8	195	470	10,889,785
2015/16	21	175	9	205	460	12,439,042
2016/17	20	193	14	227	447	12,395,453
2017/18*	13	250	8	271	482	14,654,257

\* As at 31st January 2018.

- 1.3 The average costs of external placements are:
- Average cost of a Foster placement: £800 - £1,060 per week
  - Average cost of a Childrens Home placement: £3,500 - £4,000 per week
- 1.4 These costs are inclusive of:
- Transport within a 20 per radius per journey (inclusive of School, contact and social activities,
  - Savings, pocket money, birthdays/festivals, holidays,
  - Clothing and personal care/toiletries,
  - Training for carers/staff/Supervising Social workers,
  - The costs of supervising Social Workers for the carers,
  - Activities/social and educational, and
  - Foster carers allowance (usually between 40-60% of the costs above).
- 1.5 Spend on external placements are being monitored closely with work being undertaken as priority to minimise cost. The framework has capped costs which mean there will not be a significant increase until the framework is reviewed.
- 1.6 The table above reflects the rise in the number of external placements made.

## **Legal**

- 2.1 Independent Fostering Agencies and Children's Home providers fall within the Light Touch Regime under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As such the contracting authority may decide, following appropriate consultation with the partner Authorities, on the method and procedure to be applied in connection with the award of these contracts provided that the general EC Treaty principles of transparency, openness and fairness are always adhered to. LGSS lead in the procurement activity on behalf of the region.

## **Personnel**

- 3.1 None Identified

## **IT**

- 4.1 None Identified

## **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The framework allows the Council access to provision for our most vulnerable young people and caters for a range of needs for Looked After Children.

## **Health and Safety**

- 6.1 All providers who are accepted onto the framework will have been assessed to ensure they provide appropriate quality of care in full compliance with relevant legislation. This is monitored on an ongoing basis by the regional team and on a local level by Commissioning and operational Officers.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

- 7.1 None Identified

## **Property and Asset Management**

- 8.1 None Identified

## **Risk Management and Safeguarding**

- 9.1 The framework facilitates comprehensive safeguarding processes and providers are expected to deliver services that are safe and of sound quality. The regional consortia work closely with Ofsted as the regulatory body to ensure providers are meeting standards, and where concerns are raised they are dealt with locally and regionally.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 10.1
- Protecting vulnerable children and adults
  - Promoting Health and Wellbeing
  - Delivering services differently
  - Meeting our Sufficiency Duty for Children in care