

Supported Accommodation for young people aged 16+ (in care and care leavers) – Contract Award Report – PART I

1. Purpose and background

Plymouth City Council has a statutory duty under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to ensure there are sufficient placements in the local area to meet the needs of children and young people in care. These placements need to cover a broad range of provision, including children's homes, residential special schools and foster care. This also includes supported accommodation for young people aged 16 and 17, and some young people as they leave care and step into independent living.

In October 2020 permission was sought from Plymouth City Council Cabinet for a procurement of a contract for supported accommodation for young people in care aged 16 and 17 and care leavers, and for the contract award decision to be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families. This paper describes the outcome of the procurement and the recommendations for contract award.

This type of provision is not currently required to be regulated by Ofsted or the CQC, as it offers support rather than care. In February 2021 the government announced their intention to introduce national minimum standards for 16+ provision under Ofsted oversight, to be consulted on during 2021. This procurement anticipated those changes, and the contract requires successful providers to apply the national standards when they are finalised.

This contract replaces a Peninsula contract for provision for young people in care aged 16+, which was jointly commissioned by Plymouth, Devon and Torbay between 2013 and 2019. Between 2019 and 31st March 2021 the contract was novated to Torbay Council to hold on behalf of Plymouth and Torbay. This contract provides a replacement for these arrangements, based on the local needs and partnerships for Plymouth.

2. Procurement approach

An Open tender process was used, to commission a 4-year contract for 16+ supported accommodation, divided into 3 lots:

Lot 1 – block purchased provision in Plymouth (5 beds to be block purchased initially, representing a third of current usage) Lot 1a included beds in existing provision in the city, and Lot 1b allowed providers to be able to ask for consideration of new local provision to be added to the contract at a later date;

Lot 2 – spot purchase provision in Plymouth and within 20 miles of the city;

Lot 3 – spot purchased provision outside 20 miles.

For the Suitability Assessment section of the tender, the providers had to pass a number sections relating to Government Mandatory Exclusions, Economic and Financial Standing, Insurance, Health & Safety, Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Data Protection **and** achieve a minimum score of 67.40% in sections such as Technical and Professional Ability, Business Capability and Social Value.

The supplier award section of the procurement was weighted as 70% for quality and 30% for price/commercial:

Weighting %	Evaluation Criteria	Breakdown of criteria
COMMERCIAL RESPONSE		
30%	Price	Total weekly cost
TECHNICAL RESPONSE – METHOD STATEMENTS		
N/A	MS: Direct Delivery	Provider must deliver directly (no collaborations, partnerships or sub-contracting)
30%	MS2: Model of Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ethos of the service • How the service is staffed and managed • How staff and managers are recruited, trained and supported • How the performance of the service is monitored • How service delivery contributes to strategic and individual outcomes in a tangible and aspirational way • Regular opportunities for young people to share their views • Varied opportunities for young people to share their views, to encourage engagement • How young people’s views will be fed back into service delivery in a practical way • Engagement with wider forms of advocacy and participation for young people • Describe your understanding of the range of varied needs of young people requiring the service • Describe your understanding of Plymouth as a Trauma Informed City • Describe how your service plans to deliver a Trauma Informed approach
40%	MS3: Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes a commitment to supporting placement stability through a multi-agency approach • Examples of key partnership organisations in the area the service is based and how the service will engage with these • Practical examples of partnership working to support positive outcomes for young people, including where there have been challenges and how they have been overcome to maximise opportunities for young people • Describe how partnership working will be used to support young people on the three pathways described in the specification – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Looked after children/Late entrants to care – requiring stabilisation ○ Looked after children/care leavers – maintaining stability ○ Looked after children/care leavers – moving on

The prices on the Peninsula contract had been unchanged since 2013, so it was anticipated that there would be a rise in weekly placement costs from some of the providers. The new contract will apply to new placements made after 1st April 2021.

3. Tender evaluation and Recommendations

The tenders were evaluated by officers from Commissioning, Social Care (Social work Team Manager), Procurement and Finance. 28 providers responded to the Invitation to Tender. The respective provider scores and prices are described in the Part 2 report, which contains commercially confidential information. The recommendations for contract award are set out below:

Lot 1a – this relates to “block purchased provision in Plymouth from existing 16+ supported accommodation beds within the city boundary (a total of 5 beds to be block purchased at the start of the contract, this may be one provider or multiple providers based on a Most Economically Advantageous Tender basis)”.

RECOMMENDATION: To award a block contract for 5 beds to Parallel Care

Lot 1b – this relates to “supported accommodation providers who are either already operating within the Plymouth city boundary or intend to open provision within the Plymouth city boundary during the lifetime of the contract. Lot 1b providers will be able to request consideration of beds to be added to the Lot 1a block contract within the lifetime of the contract”.

RECOMMENDATION: To award a contract to Parallel Care, Livewest, Keys and CSM Independence, to be able to apply to add local beds to the block contract during the lifetime of the contract.

Lot 2 – relates to “spot purchase supported accommodation provision in Plymouth and within 20 miles of the city (no limit on the number of providers that will be allowed on the framework). There will be an entry point for new providers to be added at the end of year two of the framework”.

RECOMMENDATION: To award a contract to Caring for Communities, Key 2 Futures, Keys, Next Step Care Management, Parallel Independence and Young Devon.

Lot 3 – relates to “spot purchased supported accommodation provision outside 20 miles (no limit on the number of providers that will be allowed on the framework). There will be an entry point for new providers to be added at the end of year two of the framework”.

RECOMMENDATION: To award a contract to Acorn, Birchwood Independence, CSM Independence, Key 2 Futures, Keys, Livewest, Next Steps Care Management, the Halfway and Young Devon.

4. Summary of impact of tender

The service specification has set out the quality expectations for supported accommodation provision for young people in care aged 16+ and care leavers, and also includes the requirement to adapt to any new national minimum standards as they are introduced.

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The block contract will secure 5 existing local beds, from a provider who regularly provides placement for Plymouth young people which are of good quality. The Lot 1 contract also allows for future provision to be added, to improve local sufficiency for this cohort. Prices for local provision are realistic for the quality provided and include 24 hour staffing, which fits with the need of Plymouth young people.

The tender also provides for placements further than 20 miles from Plymouth, for those young people who are unable to be placed in the city, and allows for new provision to be added if required (although the intention is to use fewer placements which are away from Plymouth if possible)

The tender was successful in filtering out a number of providers who did not understand the requirements of the service and were unable to demonstrate that their level of quality reached required standards.

Emma Crowther
Strategic Commissioning Manager
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