

# Cabinet



Date of meeting:	10 March 2025
Title of Report:	<b>Supported accommodation for young people aged 16+ - Contract Variation</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Emma Crowther (Service Director, Integrated Commissioning)
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Your Reference:	N/A
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

To consider the proposal to extend for two years through variation, an existing contract (PEO/20039) for accommodation and support provision for young people in care aged 16 and 17 and those who are care experienced. This is part of our approach to ensuring we meet our statutory duty to have sufficient local placements for children and young people in care and helps young people to prepare for independent living, particularly those who have previously been in residential care.

## Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

1. Extend through variation, an existing contract to the incumbent providers of supported accommodation for young people in care aged 16+, for a period of 2 years to an estimated value of £6.78m.

As part of this modification the contract framework will be reopened at a future date (to be determined) to allow new providers the opportunity to join the contract.

The specification for the contract will be updated to include specific notice periods for placements, reinforce the requirement for providers to be Ofsted registered and include a requirement for providers to be explicit about the furniture and furnishings they are able to take with them when they leave the placement.

*Reason: The current contract has been in place since 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and is performing well in providing a range of local homes for young people in care and care experienced which support them in developing their skills to live independently. The providers have adapted well to new regulations requiring Ofsted regulation and are focused on preparing for their first inspections. The current contract includes the majority of local suppliers of this type of accommodation for children in care and as such there is little to be gained from reprocurring the service at this time. Modifying the contract will provide continuity of provider and placement for our young people and we will continue to work with the providers and Ofsted to monitor quality.*

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

### **1. Allow the contract to lapse**

This option has been discounted as there is a statutory duty on the Council to ensure there are sufficient local placements to meet the needs of children and young people in care and care experienced. This includes placements which help young people in care to prepare for independent living as they become adults. This contract includes both block and framework arrangements with providers delivering services to a specification and Council terms and conditions, which help to ensure quality and safety for our young people.

### **2. Reprocure the contract**

This option has been discounted as all the current providers are delivering well against the contract and have successfully been registered with Ofsted to carry on delivering services in line with new regulations. The recent Ofsted registration process has included a thorough check of all their policies, properties and senior personnel. A procurement at this stage would distract them from their preparations for their first Ofsted inspections. The majority of the local providers are already signatories to the contract, with the framework to be reopened during the lifetime of the new contract to allow additional providers the option to join.

## **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan**

This decision aligns with the Corporate Plan: Keeping children, adults and communities safe, through the provision of suitable homes for children and young people in care and care experienced. It also aligns with HEA2 of the Plymouth Plan – Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

## **Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

The current annual spend with the contracted providers is forecast to be £3.39m, an estimated £6.78m for the duration of the new contract. This is included in the revenue budget for Children, Young People and Families as part of planned placement spend.

## **Financial Risks**

This spend is already built into revenue budgets. Our intention through the Homes for Cared for Children programme is to enable more children and young people in care to be able to be cared for in foster placements during their childhood, with less of a reliance on residential care. As such and if this is successful we would anticipate seeing a reduction in spend on 16+ placements during the lifetime of the new contract.

## **Legal Implications**

(Provided by Richard Hargreaves)

Legal Services stand ready to assist with the contract variation.

## **Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

Our intention is for as many children and young people in care as possible to be able to remain in Plymouth (if it is safe and appropriate for them to do so), attending local schools and colleges and retaining important links. This in turn reduces the need for their families and social work staff to travel significant distances to visit them.

## **Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

Care Experience has been treated as a protected characteristic since being adopted by the Council in March 2023. This ensures that the needs of children and young people who have ever been in care are considered as part of council decision making and the voice of those with lived experience of being in

care is routinely sought. This also includes ensuring that the needs of those with care experience are considered as part of recruitment processes for council roles.

## Appendices

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report: Supported accommodation for young people aged 16+ contract variation							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							
C	Climate Impact Assessment							

## Background papers:

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16+ Supported Accommodation Framework and Block Contract (PEO/20039)							
Contract Variation Authorisation Form			X				

## Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Emma Crowther											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 27/02/2025											

Cabinet Member approval: *Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)*

Date approved: 27/02/2025