

# Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	09 December 2025
Title of Report:	<b>Children's Homes for Plymouth Programme</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:	Victoria Whitman
Contact Email:	Victoria.whitman@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

To provide a progress report on the Children's Homes for Plymouth Programme which has been established to respond to the increasing demand for placements which meet the complex emotional, behavioural, physical and developmental needs of children and young people in care, to enable more children in care to be cared for close to Plymouth and to be supported to step back into family placements.

## Recommendations and Reasons

- I. For the Panel to endorse the development of children's homes by Plymouth City Council.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. None

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

The Corporate Plan includes keeping children and young people safe as a priority.

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

The cost of placements for children in care is creating a significant challenge to the Council's MTFP process.

## Financial Risks

The increasing cost of placements for children in care is creating a significant financial risk to the Council. The children's homes programme creates the financial risk of requiring capital investment for the purchase of homes and revenue investment for staffing the homes ahead of delivering the planned savings.

## Legal Implications

None

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed setting out how the children's homes programme will minimise its carbon and environmental impact.

**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.*

The creation of additional regulated children's homes provision reduces risks to the Council of children in care residing in unregulated (illegal) arrangements.

**Appendices**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		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						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report							

**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)						
	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.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Lisa Davies, Interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families											

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 28/11/2025

Cabinet Member approval: *Cllr Jemima Laing*

Date approved: 28/11/2025

## I. Introduction

Children's Homes for Plymouth is a programme of transformation in Children's Services which forms part of the wider Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme. This work responds to the increasing demand for and cost of placements that meet the complex emotional, behavioural, physical and developmental needs of children and young people in care and seeks to improve outcomes for children and young people with these needs whilst providing the Council with better value for money solutions. The programme has capital funding and revenue implications.

Whilst our strategic aim remains for the vast majority of our children in care to live in family settings with foster carers, residential children's homes are occasionally the most appropriate option to support a young person with specific and more complex needs to make progress, usually with an overall plan to achieve a transition back into a family environment in a timely way. Plymouth City Council (PCC) is committed to placing children as close to their home area as possible to maintain positive relationships with their family networks, access local services (particularly health services), and support continuity with education provision.

Challenges in recruiting in-house foster carers in recent years have led to increased reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) and residential care, including having to resort to using high-cost unregulated settings. Whilst significant efforts are being made by Foster for Plymouth to recruit more foster carers, and more children in care are now placed with in house foster carers, this has created both cost and capacity pressures, and has impacted on the ability to provide consistent, high-quality care to locally to all of our children in care. PCC has an effective block contract in place with a local children's home provider and the children's homes programme is in place to complement this and enable more children to be cared for in Plymouth.

The Children's Homes for Plymouth programme commenced in November 2024. Since that point several strands have developed based on analysis of local need. This report provides an update on the four current strands of the children's homes programme (A–D) aimed at increasing local PCC regulated residential provision in specific priority areas in response to local needs analysis, improving outcomes for children, and reducing financial pressures by decreasing reliance on the independent sector.

- **Project A** encompasses the purchase and development of two four-bedroom houses to establish two Ofsted-registered children's homes in Plymouth. These homes will collectively provide provision for up to six children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and be operated directly by the Council. One home will offer placements for younger children (ages 9–12) with strong links to progressing to fostering placements, while the other will support older children (ages 13–17) with strong links to semi-independence pathways. Both homes will work to support children to return to their family networks where this can be achieved safely. One property is under offer and scheduled to open by July 2026, and a second property is under offer subject to survey, with an anticipated opening in Quarter 3 of 2026, depending on the survey outcome and level of refurbishment required.
- **Project B** addresses a critical gap in short break provision for children with physical and learning disabilities. It proposes the refurbishment of Colwill Lodge into a fully registered children's home offering overnight short breaks, including one solo provision for children with very complex needs and challenging behaviours arising from ASD. The final business case is scheduled to return to the Capital Programmes Board in January 2026.
- **Project C** will be a specialist new build children's home for four children and young people with very complex emotional and behavioural needs at risk of Deprivation of Liberty/Tier 4 NHS provision (e.g. mental health inpatient provision). This project will be jointly funded by PCC and the Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB), with a bid to the Department for Education (DFE) for matched capital funding having been successful. The purpose-built home, scheduled to open in 2028/29, will be Ofsted-registered and supported by a multi-disciplinary team including health professionals.
- **Project D** focuses on adolescents at risk of entering care as a result of experiencing harm outside of the home (e.g. contextual exploitation) or harmful sexual behaviour. It proposes a multi-

disciplinary, family-led intervention model that includes flexible accommodation options, outreach support, and therapeutic care. There is the potential for this to be progressed as part of the Colwill Lodge development, subject to the business case to Capital Programmes Board.

## 2. Level of Need and current costs

The number of children in care continues to rise both nationally and locally, creating significant financial pressures for PCC. At the end of September 2025, there were 534 children in care. The cost of placements has increased due to a national shortage of foster carers and the growing reliance on high-cost residential and unregistered arrangements. This has resulted in a forecast overspend of £3.887 millions at Month 6 of the current financial year.

At the end of Sept 2025, 62 children were living in residential care with 39 placed outside Plymouth. The average weekly cost for a child in a Plymouth residential home is £6,353 in a two-bed home and £5,143 in a three-bed home, compared to £7,877 for an out-of-area placement.

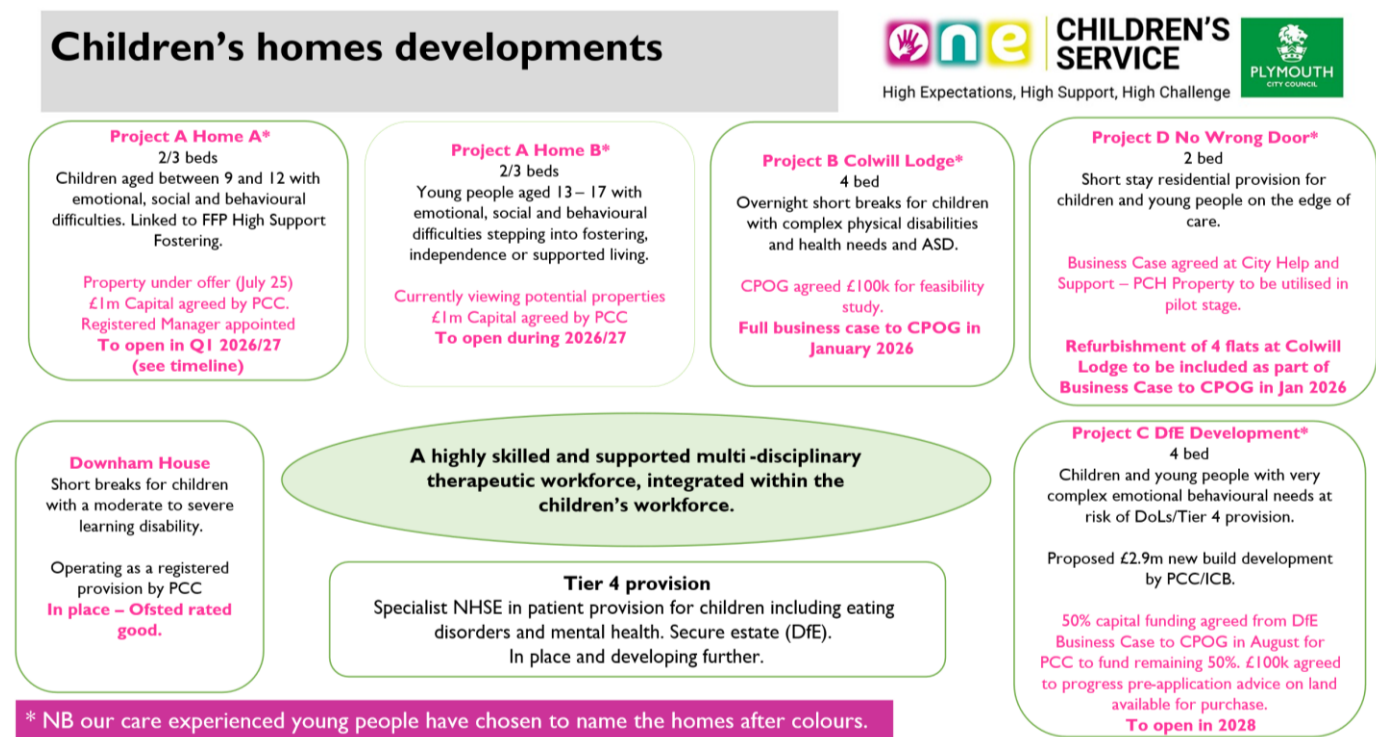
The table below shows the change in numbers of children in care in different types of placements since budget setting was completed.

2025/26 Cost & Volume Modelling			2025/26 Month 6			
Type of Placement	Estimated Numbers	Forecast Budget	Actual Numbers	Month 6 Forecast	Variance No.	Variance
External Residential - Spot Purchase/Framework	45	£16.332	51	£18.603	4	£2.271
External Residential - Keys Block Contract	17	£6.065	14	£6.065	-3	£0.000
Unregistered	7	£4.906	9	£5.968	2	£1.062
External Fostering	154	£9.767	122	£7.548	-32	-£2.219
In-House Foster Care	140	£4.006	163	£4.006	23	£0.000
In-House Connected Carers	50	£1.195	49	£1.195	-1	£0.000
External Supported Living	40	£4.033	51	£4.904	11	£0.871
External Supported Living - Block	9	£0.777	9	£0.777	0	£0.000
Secure Placements	1	£0.345	1	£0.345	0	£0.000
Parent & Child	4	£0.998	3	£0.998	-1	£0.000
Other Looked After Children (Placed with Parents/NHS)		£0.000		£0.000		£0.000
<b>LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>£48.424</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>£50.409</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>£1.985</b>
SGO, Adoption & Residence Orders	245	£2.541	245	£2.377	0	-£0.164
Care Leavers	30	£1.122	30	£1.122	0	£0.000
<b>PLACEMENT - NOT LOOKED AFTER</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>£3.663</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>£3.499</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-£0.164</b>

Placement Savings Moved to Delivery Plans				£2.066	0	£2.066		
PAUSE Contract & Brokerage Team			£1.030	£1.030	0	£0.000		
<b>Additional TPOTAL</b>			<b>£1.030</b>	<b>£3.096</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£2.066</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>742</b>	<b>£53.116</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>£57.004</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>£3.887</b>

### 3. The Children's Homes for Plymouth Programme

The programme to develop residential children's homes for Plymouth's children in care encompasses the following developments, specifically projects A - D:



The decision has been made by young people to name each home after the colour of its front door (e.g., Red Door House, Green Door House...).

#### 3.1 Project A – Children's Home A and Children's Home B

Project A involves the development of two children's homes in Plymouth, designed to provide high-quality residential care for children aged 9-17 with emotional, social, and behavioural difficulties. The homes will be operated directly by PCC and registered with Ofsted. Children's Home A will offer placements for younger children (ages 9–12) with strong links to progressing to fostering placements, while Children's Home B will support older children (ages 13–17) with strong links to semi-independence pathways. Both homes will work to support children to return to their family networks where this can be achieved safely.

A business case to the Capital Programmes Board led to £2m being allocated to this project. Active searching has been in place for suitable properties in suitable locations across Plymouth since November 2024, deeds have been obtained for over 110 properties, but many potentially suitable properties have restrictive covenants in place. To date, viewings have been completed on 35+ properties, with several second viewings having taken place. However, properties have been deemed unsuitable for a children's residential home due to several factors, including privacy within the neighbourhood and predicted renovation costs.

Children's Services have been working closely with the Strategic Projects Manager from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Team for advice on the building and any works likely to be needed to properties.

## **Property**

Children's Home A, located in Plymstock, is currently progressing toward completion, expected during December 2025. Refurbishment plans are being finalised to commence immediately following completion including a new kitchen being fitted, and a fixtures and fittings schedule is nearing completion. A location risk assessment has been carried out, and the procurement route for necessary works has been defined. Alongside this, the requirements for each room are being co-produced with care-experienced young people to ensure the environment of the home reflects their needs and aligns with Ofsted guidance.

A suitable property has recently been identified for Home B, located in Mutley. Following a review of the deeds, the Legal team has confirmed that the property is proceedable for purchase. Therefore, a formal offer has now been placed, subject to contract and survey, and this has been accepted by the vendors. A Level 4 Home Buyer Survey, including valuation, has been completed and the survey report and valuation is expected by the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2025. Next steps include reviewing the survey report and valuation, scoping renovation works and obtaining cost estimates and developing a renovation timeline (anticipated to take approximately five months post-completion).

The property search activity is being continued to scope the potential for a third children's home, which would be subject to a formal change request through CPOG. Daily alerts for newly listed properties are being monitored, with viewings taking place for those that meet suitability criteria. This ongoing search takes into account the time it has previously taken to identify suitable properties, ensuring that momentum is maintained and delays are avoided should approval for an additional home be granted, with the remaining capital budget allocated to Project A.

## **Staffing and Workforce Development**

In order to provide care for the children in the home 24 hours a day seven days a week, and meet the requirements for registration of the home with Ofsted, the workforce for each home will comprise of a Registered Manager, a Deputy Manager and twelve Children's Homes Practitioners. A Registered Manager with previous experience of running children's homes, has been appointed for Home A and started in post in September to support work on the set up of the homes including the development of policies and procedures required for Ofsted registration and to recruit and develop the children's homes team ahead of the home opening. This was a significant achievement as the recruitment of suitable and experienced Registered Managers for the children's homes is identified as one of the key risks for the programme given competition in this area from other care home providers locally.

Role profiles have been developed for the Deputy Registered Manager (DRM) and Children's Home Practitioner (CHP) positions and recruitment is progressing. A focused recruitment campaign has been planned with colleagues from HR-OD, promoting the rewarding nature of being involved in the day-to-day care of children in care and the opportunity to positively impact the lives and outcomes of vulnerable children. The campaign includes targeted recruitment on social media, featured job posts through Plymouth City Council's Facebook page, and direct outreach to prospective managerial candidates on LinkedIn. A press release will coincide with this campaign to promote PCC's planned Children's Home developments.

The advert for Children's Home Practitioners is now live with interviews planned early in the new year. Successful candidates appointed to these roles will not commence employment until the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2026, aligning with the anticipated operational timeline for the homes and financial planning. Plans are also in place to closely monitor the onboarding process to ensure there are no delays and that all pre-employment checks are completed promptly.

A workforce development plan has been developed to ensure a highly skilled children's homes workforce and will include training for all staff in;

- Trauma informed care
- Positive behaviour management including DESCAL8
- Risk management.
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Child and adolescent development
- Substance misuse interventions
- Communication skills for work with children
- Therapeutic work with young people

### **Communications Plan**

A communications plan has been developed to support engagement with key stakeholders including councillors, local residents, and staff. The plan will build understanding of the home's purpose and foster positive outlooks surrounding the project.

The initial notification letter and accompanying FAQ will be shared with local residents and councillors following completion of the purchase of the property, and ahead of the Change of Use planning notification, to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed. The FAQ will also be accessible online so it can be updated with any recurring questions. To manage queries, a generic mailbox has been created, and a complaints log will be maintained. A press release and a reactive media statement are also being finalised ahead of completion on the property. Following the initial notification, a Q&A session will be held approximately six weeks later, providing an opportunity for residents to meet the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual. Once the property renovations are complete, local residents and key professionals will be invited to visit the home.

Internal communications will include monthly updates in the staff newsletter, and as the refurbishment nears completion and the home opening approaches, an announcement will be made on Staffroom. Partners will continue to be kept informed through the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **Engagement with Young People**

Young people with care experience are being involved in shaping the specification for all homes, ensuring the homes are furnished in ways they consider welcoming. The Participation Team is identifying care-experienced children and young people to be involved in the design and furnishing of the homes and the recruitment interview process. We have also engaged with a local children's homes provider to gather feedback from Plymouth children in care who are in placement with them. This will help us understand what works well and what could be improved in existing homes.

### **Ofsted Registration**

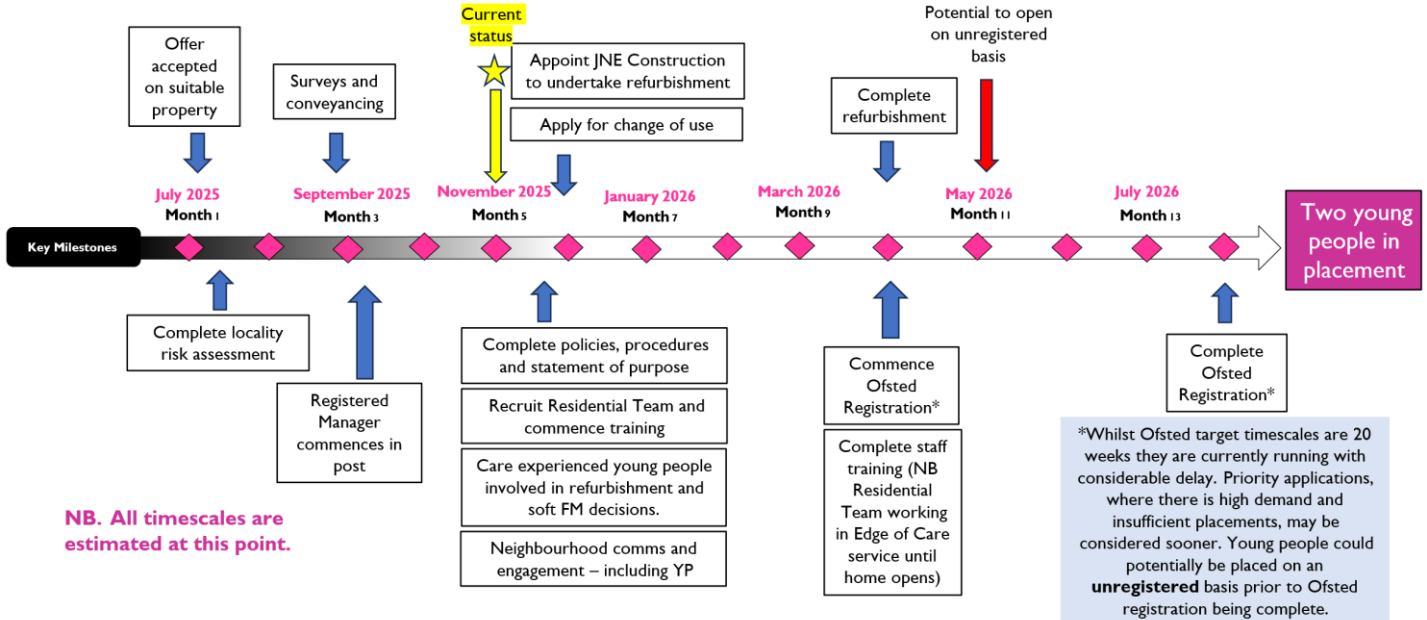
Preparations have begun for the Ofsted registration of Home A, in accordance with the requirement for all homes to operate legally. All policies and procedures required for registration are being finalised. This includes policies on safeguarding, behaviour management, anti-bullying, health promotion and medication, reflective supervision, staff contingency and missing children's procedures. The regional Ofsted Inspector will be contacted by the Responsible Individual for an initial conversation regarding our intention to register the home. Whilst Ofsted target timescales for registration are 20 weeks they are currently running with considerable delay. Priority applications, where there is high demand and insufficient placements, may be considered sooner.

## Timelines

## Project A – Home A Indicative Timeline



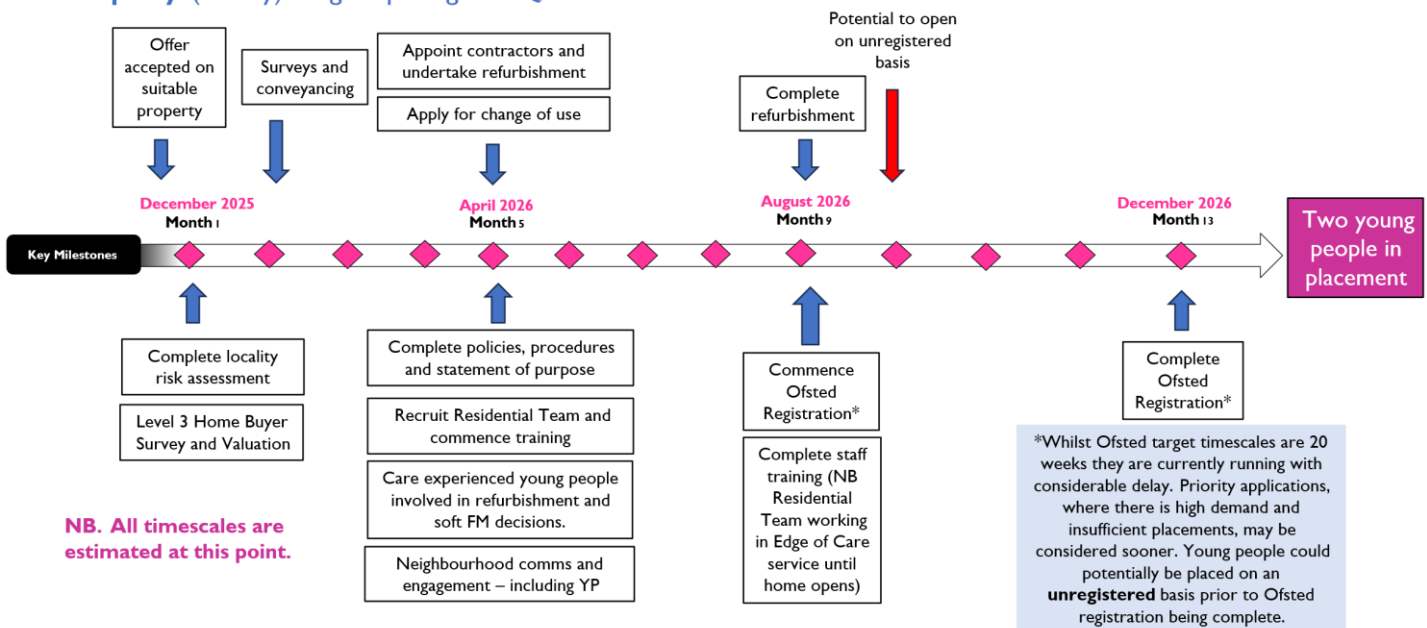
Property: (Plymstock) Anticipated completion date 05/12/2025



## Project A – Home B Indicative Timeline



Property: (Mutley) Target opening date Q3 2026/27



### **3.2 Project B – Colwill Lodge Short Breaks**

Project B focuses on the refurbishment of Colwill Lodge, an existing PCC provision for adults with learning disabilities, into a short breaks residential provision to meet the needs of children and young people with learning and physical disabilities, with the addition of a solo provision for children with more complex needs and challenging behaviours arising from Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Capital Programmes Board agreed initial funding to complete a feasibility study of the suitability of the building being redeveloped as a short breaks provision for children with physical health and disability needs when the building is vacated by the current service, anticipated to be the autumn of 2026. Following completion of the feasibility study and updated needs analysis, a Business Case will be developed for the building to be developed as short breaks provision for children and young people with physical and learning disabilities and challenging behaviours arising from ASD in order to provide better support for families and prevent children and young people from requiring full time care. The proposal will be that this home would include a very specialist solo apartment to allow the most complex of needs to be met safely as part of a short breaks package. The full Business Case is scheduled for submission to the Capital Programmes Board in January.

#### **Property**

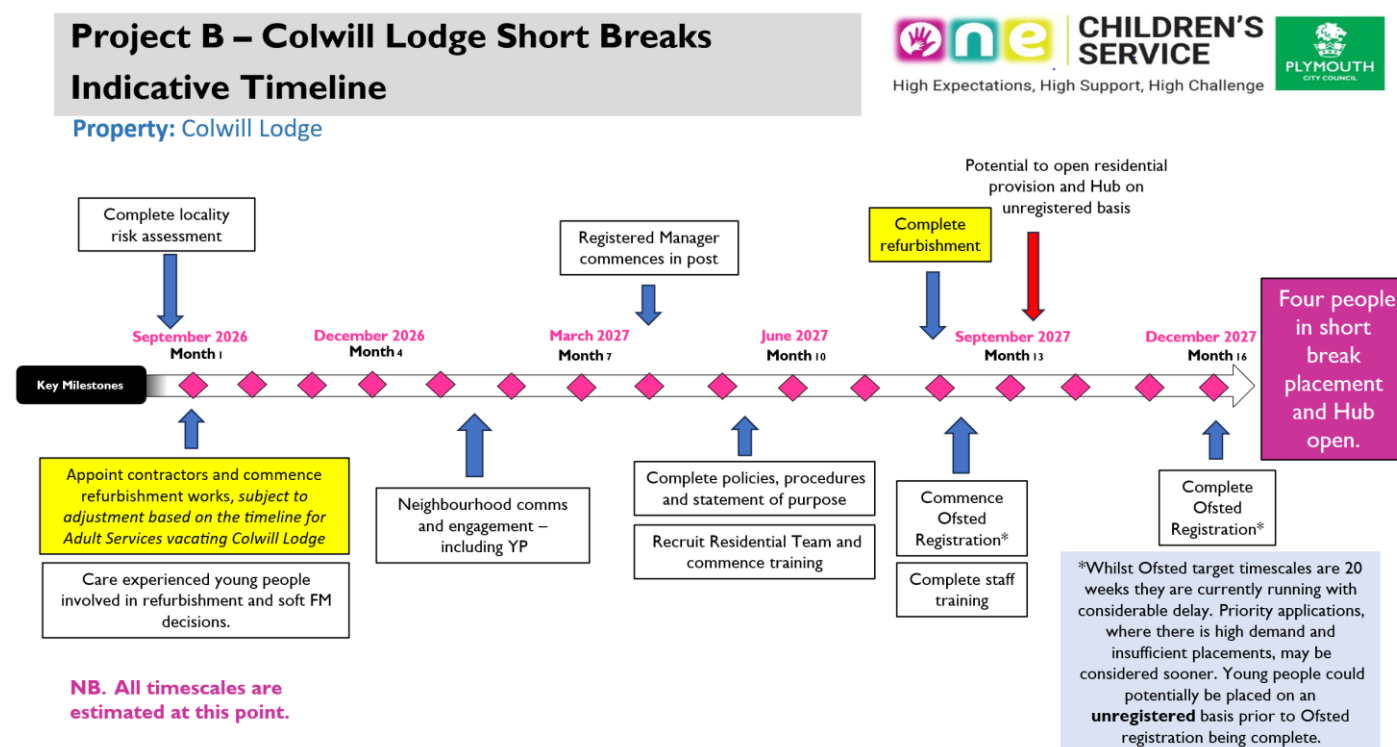
A feasibility study is being completed to confirm the capital investment required to develop Colwill Lodge, an existing PCC building currently used by Adult Services, into a short breaks provision for children and young people. To support this work, architects have been appointed and have developed a design for the proposed scheme and new specification requirements have been agreed. An assessment of design feasibility has been completed, and plans have recently been revised based on updated specifications.

The full business case for the Capital Programmes Board will evaluate the cost of the development and the ongoing revenue commitment against the current very high-cost spot purchase arrangements for these children when they come into care, which in some cases has exceeded £20,000 per week in provision that is not registered with Ofsted. Subject to the Business Case approval, the earliest on-site date to commence works needed is indicated as September 2026, with completion anticipated to be by September 2027. There are dependencies that may impact delivery, including delays with adults moving out of Colwill Lodge into their new build provision, and confirmation of the timeline with Adults Services is being undertaken currently to mitigate this risk.

#### **Workforce considerations**

A short breaks provision for children and young people with complex needs will require a highly skilled workforce, including staff with skills in meeting children's complex physical health needs as well as challenging behaviours. Timing of recruitment to management and care staff will be carefully considered to ensure sufficient time to deliver a well-planned programme of specialist training. The team will need to be multi-disciplinary allowing for access to therapists and specialist clinicians.

## Timeline



### 3.3 Project C - DfE Funded Provision for Complex Emotional Behavioural Needs

Project C will be a specialist children's home designed for four children and young people with complex emotional and behavioural needs who are at risk of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) or Tier 4 mental health provision or who are at risk of unregulated arrangements as a result of their complex needs and challenging behaviours.

#### Business Case

The business case to Capital Programmes Board set out the need for specialist provision in Plymouth for a small number of children with highly complex emotional and behavioural needs who are not currently experiencing stable care locally or good outcomes and are currently in extremely high-cost placements, often at a distance from Plymouth, due to a lack of suitable provision. They may also be experiencing inappropriate inpatient admissions in acute, paediatric or tier 4 settings.

#### Workforce Considerations

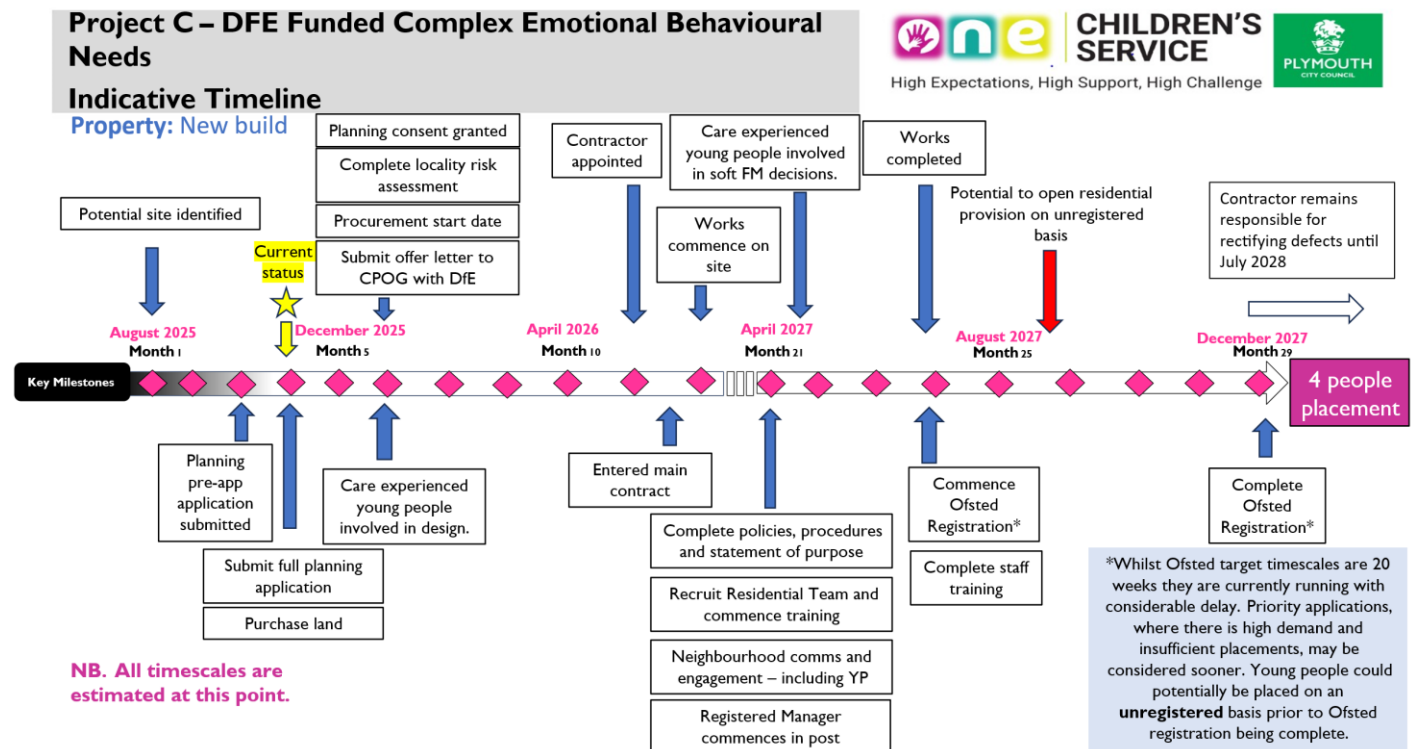
This children's home will be for children and young people demonstrating a high level of self-harm and risk-taking behaviours. It will be a joint development with Devon ICB to ensure children's complex needs are met holistically by suitably trained and experienced staff. The specialist provision is designed to enable children's needs to reduce so that they can return home or move to a foster family or more mainstream residential children's home.

#### Property

In January 2025 a successful bid was made to the Department for Education (DfE) for a 50% contribution for capital investment designed to improve national sufficiency in this area by funding the development of 200 additional placements nationally. The bid to the DfE was for a £3m new build development for four children on land to be purchased for this development, and following the 50% funding being agreed

by the DfE (£1.46m) a bid was made to the Capital Programmes Board for the remaining 50% capital funding required. This has been agreed and initial funding released for a pre-application process for a potential site. The Estates Team has been engaged to identify alternative viable land options should the pre-application outcome not result in a positive decision. The outcome of the pre-application process will inform the final decision on land acquisition and the final allocation of capital to progress the development.

## Timeline



### 3.4 Project D - 'The Port'

Project D is designed to prevent some children and young people experiencing harm outside of the home from entering full time care by redesigning the existing Children's Services Edge of Care team and developing a registered children's home operating under a model of care informed by an evidence-based model, referred to nationally as 'no wrong door'. The home will provide short-stay residential and activity-based support for children and young people aged 13+ who are on the edge of care, with the primary aim of stabilising their situation, supporting them to remain in their families care and preventing entry into full time care. The service has proposed that this provision will be called 'The Port', reflecting its purpose as a safe place where children and young people come to pause, receive the help they need, and prepare to return to living at home wherever possible.

While the full service is being developed, there is a need for an interim solution to deliver the intensive model over the next three to four months, therefore an interim response approach has been developed by temporarily redeploying existing staff. This approach will enable improved outcomes for children and deliver earlier financial benefits by reducing care entries.

## Business Case

The fully costed business case has been agreed at the City Help and Support Board, the project team has been established, and a detailed delivery plan is in place. Working groups have been established to progress the residential provision, redesign of the existing edge of care service, and the workforce development elements of the project.

## Property

The model includes care being delivered from both activity-based settings from property rented for short periods as and when needed, and in a home established for this purpose. Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) has agreed to rent us a three-bedroom property for the initial phase, and discussions are ongoing to confirm their refurbishment plans for the identified property. Alongside this, short-term accommodation options have been identified, including holiday rentals within 30 minutes of Plymouth. In addition, a business case for utilising part of the provision at Colwill Lodge will be included in the wider business case for the Capital Programmes Board in January, as a longer-term solution.

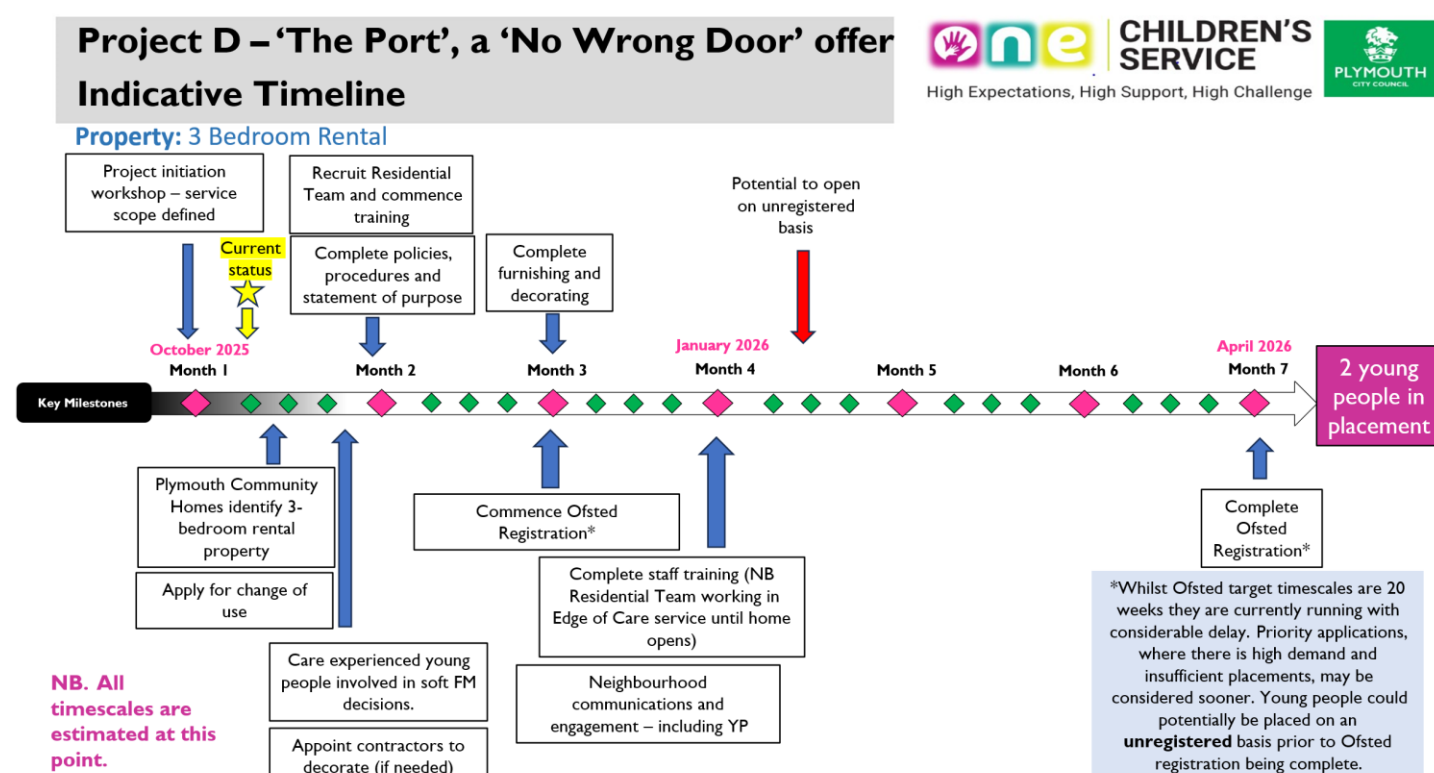
## Staffing and Workforce Development

In order to create the full proposed service model, the existing Edge of Care team will be redesigned to create the new service alongside recruitment to the additional posts agreed. In the interim phase a range of approaches have been considered to rapidly increase capacity for this offer, including voluntary redeployment of existing Edge of Care staff, redeployment of workers from other teams, agency recruitment via Matrix Talent Pool, and subcontracting staff from external providers such as local voluntary and community sector providers. In addition, a voluntary on-call rota is being developed, and pay arrangements for additional duties and sleep-ins have been considered. Detailed operational policies and procedures are in place including effective governance of access to the service and to ensure that plans for children are well considered and manage risks effectively. A workforce development plan has been created to support any staff moving into the service.

## Ofsted Registration

Whilst the provision will not be registered as a children's home in the initial phase, a comprehensive series of policies, procedures, service guidance, practice guidance and detailed admissions arrangements have been developed for the residential element of the service, and the residential offer will be overseen by our Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.

## Timeline



#### 4. Financial Impact of Planned Developments

The children's homes projects collectively address significant cost and volume pressures by reducing reliance on high-cost, spot purchased, often out-of-area and unregistered placements, improving local provision for children with complex needs, and introducing preventative models to reduce care entries. While each project requires upfront investment, the long-term financial benefits include reduced placement expenditure and improved outcomes for children and families. This is set out below for each development.

##### 4.1 Project A – Children's Homes A and Home B

Project A will deliver two new homes in Plymouth to reduce reliance on out-of-area placements.

- **Children's Home A and B;**
  - Staff revenue costs: £690,000 full year.
  - Placement savings: £915,000 full year.
  - Other costs include capital borrowing and maintenance.
  - Net saving: £133,000 full year.

##### 4.2 Project B – Colwill Lodge Short Breaks

Project B will see the development of a short breaks service for children with learning and physical disabilities, with the addition of a solo provision for complex needs. The fully costed business case will be developed for the Capital Programme Board in January.

##### 4.3 Project C – DfE Funded Complex Emotional Behavioural Needs

Project C will provide a four-bed home for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs at risk of Tier 4 or DoLS. This is a newbuild provision on land acquired for the purpose.

- Full-year revenue cost of running the provision for 4 children; £2.2 million.
- Current annual placement cost for four eligible children: £3.66 million.
- Capital development cost: £2.9 million (50% funded by the DfE).
- Forecast reduction in PCC annual revenue commitment: £243,076 FYE from 2028/29 onwards.

##### 4.4 Project D – 'The Port' (No Wrong Door Model)

Project D aims to prevent adolescents from entering care through including access to short-stay intervention as part of an intensive and multi-disciplinary support plan to the child and family.

- Full-year cost avoidance opportunity: £1.295 million, based on preventing an additional 24 young people from entering care.
- Investment required;
  - Year 1: £771,292.
  - Year 2: £775,689.
- Property cost: £15,000 per annum initially on a rental basis from Plymouth Community Homes.
- Training and development to ensure compliance with Ofsted regulations: £15,000.
- Running costs: £19,000.

## 5. Programme risks and outcomes

The risks identified currently for the programme are;

- Inability to recruit the staff team required given competition in the market. Particular challenges noted in recruiting sufficiently experienced Registered Managers. This has been mitigated by working actively with HR and marketing colleagues to design a creative and engaging recruitment campaign. The intention was to commence early recruitment of the staff team and for the appointed staff to work as part of the edge of care team ahead of the home opening.
- Difficulties identifying suitable properties in a timely way given the sensitivities of the provision and the high volume of Plymouth properties with restrictive covenants in place. This has been mitigated by working actively to identify and view a high volume of properties.
- Challenges from local residents in the neighbourhood of planned homes. This will be mitigated by a carefully planned programme of communication with local residents and key stakeholders.
- Significant delays in Ofsted registration process. An early conversation will take place with Ofsted but this is unlikely to reduce the risk of delays in this area. This may lead to consideration of placing children in the homes on an unregistered basis prior to Ofsted registration being achieved.
- Delays in refurbishment work due to contractor availability, supply chain, or structural issues. This is being managed by working closely with our **Strategic Planning and Infrastructure** team to schedule surveys and works needed to ensure an efficient approach following completion.
- Resistance to change from affected staff groups may impact on morale, engagement, and implementation of The Port. This is being managed carefully through a planned programme of communication to teams who are currently responding positively to the planned development.
- Failure to return children home from care/find alternative placements. This is a key risk and will be managed carefully by the Heads of Service responsible for placing children in the home and oversight of their care plans.

The planned outcomes of the children's homes programme are;

- Potential to prevent a child moving into an unregulated arrangement which has been a significant financial burden to Plymouth over number of years.
- Savings from social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers not having to visit children at a distance from Plymouth.
- Ability to support children with local education and health services.
- Improved potential to achieve step down to fostering and reunification to families when children are in Plymouth.
- Reducing the average length of time children spend in residential care and in care overall.
- Improved experiences for children with fewer moves and increased placement stability.
- Improved family time for children to maintain links and relationships with their families where possible.
- Better quality assurance, scrutiny and consistency of care.
- Early intervention for families who require a residential short break in a specialist local home – reducing the need and spend on high cost extended breaks or long-term residential care.
- Reduced number of children in specialist residential care away from Plymouth.

- Delayed requirement for residential care and therefore reduced overall time in placement.
- More disabled children remain in Plymouth reducing the cost to the Council of specialist school places and home to school transport.
- Children and young people better supported with preparation for independence.
- Establishment of a local service that enables health, education, and social care partners to collaboratively meet children's needs within the community.
- Children will experience improved emotional wellbeing and a reduction in their risk-taking behaviours, and the professional system will develop confidence that children are on a pathway to thrive and that their behaviours can be managed safely in a less specialist setting with a plan of outreach support in place.
- Reduced inappropriate attendance at Emergency Services for emotional distress, improved school attendance, a reduced legal framework reduced offending, and children and families reporting that they feel safer and happier.
- Earlier diversion of young people from exploitation.
- Improved school attendance.
- Reduction in offending and re-offending.
- Reduction in missing episodes and repeat episodes.
- Reduction in harmful sexual behaviour.