

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	High Cost Placements
Committee:	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 February 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member of Children and Young People) Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
CMT Member:	Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Neelam Bhardwaja, Service Director
Contact details	Tel: 01752 308803 Neelam.bhardwaja@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:	
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

To provide information about the high cost placements, the circumstances when these placements are used and the cost to the authority.

Corporate Plan

This report meets the objective of the Caring part of the Corporate Plan in that children in need and those at significant risk are provided with accommodation to meet their needs, to keep them safe and to prepare them for adulthood.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Although the numbers of looked after children are reducing, the mix of placements and the increased cost have had an impact on the budget.

Since the original MTFs was formulated, there has been a significant increase in costs particularly around the cohort of more complex young people resulting in an over spend on the placement budget.

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

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact assessment carried out? No

Alternative options considered and rejected: Not applicable

Published work / information:

Not applicable

Background papers:

Not applicable

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off: comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert references of Finance, Legal and Monitoring Officer reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):

Fin		Leg		Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1.0 The Council has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and provide accommodation for children whose parents or carers are unable to care for them. The children can come in to care under voluntary arrangements or under the powers of a court order. In situations of an immediate harm the police can also exercise the powers of Police Protection and remove a child to a safe place, usually a foster placement.

1.1 When a child needs to be accommodated, every effort is made to care for the child in an in-house fostering placement in the first instance. However, the number of places required are far greater than the current capacity of the in house service.

1.2 In these circumstances the next option considered is an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement although more expensive than an in house placement, it still provides a family setting for the young person.

2.0 Some children exhibit such complex behaviours that they cannot be cared for safely in a family setting. For these children, consideration has to be given to placing them in a residential placement which are far more expensive than either the in house or IFA fostering placements.

2.1 Children may need to be placed in specialist residential placements by virtue of having severe disabilities and requiring specific handling and lifting equipment which cannot be provided in a home setting.

3.0 There have been a number of young people recently whose behaviours have been so complex or risky that even residential placement providers have terminated the placement with very short notice.

3.1 In these circumstances, an arrangement has had to be made to create an individual package of care involving securing accommodation and round the clock staff cover. These arrangements work out to be the most costly and are referred to as Supported Living placements.

4.0 There are occasions when young people present such a risk to themselves or others that they cannot be cared for in the community and in these circumstances, they have to be placed in a secure setting. The Service Director can consent to a YP being placed in a secure placement for up to 72 hours and beyond that the matter has to be placed before the court for any extension

4.1 Supported Living, Residential and secure placements are classed as high cost placements and have the most impact on the budget leading to an over spend.

5.0 **Supported Living:** There are currently 19 Supported living placements with the projected year end cost amounting to £3691764. The average cost was budgeted at £3376 per week whereas there are a number of placements costing, 5 and £10000.

5.1 **Residential Placements:** There are currently 35 residential placements with the projected year end cost £7838372. The average cost was budgeted at £4081 per week whereas majority of the placements are costing well over that amount and there has been 13% increase in cost of residential placements.

5.2 **Secure Placements:** There are currently 3 welfare secure placements with the projected year end cost £707723. One of these placements is costing £16000 per week because given the complexity of the behaviours, this YP requires staffing above and beyond what would be available in a secure placement.

6.0 The volatility of the situations being dealt with frequently makes it difficult to forecast the cost accurately, for example, a young person who has been in a secure placement for a number of months was expected to step down into a cheaper placement, however, within a couple of days the YP needed to be returned to the secure placement due to risky behaviours or a YP whose placement provider gives notice has to be then cared for in the much more expensive supported living arrangement as alternative residential placements are never available at short notice.

Conclusion:

The table below provides information about the budget for the above categories of placements, the spend, variance on the budget and the reason for the overspend.

Type of placement	2018/19 Budget	2018/19 Month 9 Forecast until Year End	Variance	Breakdown	Current Number of Placements in Situ	Average Weekly Rate
Net Residential Placements (<i>less Health/Education Contribution</i>)	£7,068,310	£7,838,372	£770,062	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	36	£3,765.46
				2018/19 - Month 9 Actual Placement in Situ	35	£4,076.72
Net Supported Living Placements (<i>less Health Contribution</i>)	£980,018	£3,691,764	£2,711,746	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	15	£1,252.99
				2018/19 - Month 9 Actual Placement in Situ	19	£3,085.65
Net Secure Placements (<i>less Education Contribution</i>)	£236,365	£707,723	£471,358	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	1	£4,533.03
				2018/19 - Month 9 Figures	3	£8,148.13
Total High Cost Placements	£8,284,693	£12,237,859	£3,953,166			