

Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

Corporate Parenting Advisory Board

Date: 24 September 2018

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Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek Corporate Parenting Advisory Board's approval of Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020.
- 1.2 All Local authorities have a duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked after children and young people. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty of 'sufficiency' requires Local Authorities to ensure that there is sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop and shape service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level, as far as is reasonably possible.
- 1.3 Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and prevention services to support children in their families as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.
- 1.4 This strategy has been prepared to respond to the duty by formalising the approach in which Swindon Borough Council will commission children in care placements. A short term strategy covering the period September 2018 to March 2020 has been developed in recognition that SBC is in the process of undertaking detailed work around demand management and financial modelling to improve the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection as well as manage cost pressures. The strategy will be refreshed once this work is complete. Our refreshed Sufficiency Strategy will support Swindon Council's Demand Management Programme and our improvement journey to secure better outcomes for children and families across universal, early help and statutory services.
- 1.5 This strategy is informed by a high level analysis of need of children and young people in care. A more detailed needs assessment of children and young people is planned for early 2019 which will consider the likely changes in the overall care population as we model future services to support the delivery of our demand management and service improvement programmes. The strategy takes into account the ambition to improve preventative and early help services, increase the number of children for whom permanency is secured, and ensure children

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are matched to the right placement to meet their needs. Securing sufficient, high-quality accommodation to meet the needs of children and young people looked after by the local authority is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group.

- 1.6 The strategy 2018-2020 sets out our approach to ensuring we have a sufficient number and range of accommodation providers in the area to meet a variety of needs. Our ambitions in respect of sufficiency is based upon best practice
- 1.7 The actions for implementing the sufficiency strategy are provided in the Children's Improvement Plan, known locally as the 'Pillar Plan'. The Pillar Plan provides the detailed activities, timeline and leads alongside measurable and realistic targets to track the impact of our improvements. The Pillar Plan is monitored and progress regularly reported to relevant management boards as well as council committee meetings.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 (attached as Appendix to the report), and support the ongoing commitment to improve the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers.
- 2.2 Recommend to Cabinet that it adopts Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

3. Detail

- 3.1 Detailed information on analysis of need, commissioning direction, market position and sufficiency, contract management, quality assurance and key priorities are provided in the attached appendix.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no suggested alternative options. Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 is key to improving the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council already provides resources to fund looked after children and care leavers. No further financial resources are being sought at this time.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None have been identified at this stage

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 will positively impact on vulnerable children and young people living in Swindon's community.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No specific risks have been identified at this stage for this report

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The officer preparing the report must consult appropriate Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report before submitting the draft report. The Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS), Corporate Director of Adult Services, Assistant Director (AD) / Head of Children Families and Community Health (interim), Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Head of Transitions, Head of Finance (Children's), Children's Management Team, Children's Strategic Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix - Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020