

Monday, 18 October 2021



TRANSFORMATION OF SURREY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES – Part One

Purpose of report: In line with the ambition of the councils Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Children on the Edge of Care 2020-2025, to seek support from Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee for the proposed transformation of Surrey Children's homes in order to strengthen the management capacity and current staffing structure and provide a workforce development framework. The transformation includes the development of additional provision of two places for children with autism experiencing crises.

Introduction:

1. Following work undertaken as part of our Placement Values and Outcomes Transformation programme that reviewed our children's homes, it is recognised that change is necessary
 - To ensure children receive the best care that is appropriate for their needs, close to their family and communities
 - To contribute to meeting the Council's legal duty to ensure that as far as is possible and consistent with the welfare of the children concerned it has sufficient homes for looked after children in the county, now and in the future
 - To meet the Council's legal duties to operate children's homes of good quality
 - To develop services to meet children's diverse and complex needs in partnership with other statutory agencies
 - To contain increasing costs and budget pressures

2. Our Sufficiency Strategy (which sets out the steps being taken to meet the Council's legal duty to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation in the local authority's area which meets the needs of its looked after children) states our principle of Surrey homes for Surrey children. Currently a significant proportion of our very vulnerable children are placed outside Surrey, which seeks to safeguard them but also serves to remove them from their

communities. To seek to address this and in accordance with our principle, the review has concluded it is necessary to invest in the development of our workforce in terms of training and qualifications so that they are equipped to meet increasing need and demand.

3. In line with the requirement enshrined in s17 Children Act 1989 our Family Resilience and Family Safeguarding practice models promote the upbringing of children within their families or wider family network wherever possible and if this is not possible, the first preference will be placed in a family placement (fostering). We recognise however that sometimes, residential care is a positive option for children with the highest level of need. Our proposed model of practice places emphasis on support and interventions with the objective of enabling children to be placed in a family fostering/community-based setting, where their needs can be met if they are unable to return to their families, rather than having sustained care within a residential setting.
4. Our proposal for a comprehensive model of practice aligns us with the principles of No Wrong Door TM¹ that seeks to improve the standard of care and long term outcomes for young people by providing a trusted and skilled team including investing in staff support and development. This Committee was appraised in September 2020 of the work, findings, and recommendations of the No Wrong Door Task Group.
5. Appropriate numbers and type of posts in the staffing establishment will enable the service to improve placement stability for our young people, strengthen our staffing resource through development, training and career progression and reduce the reliance on bank staff.
6. In 2020/21, the Council agreed a capital fund investment to replace some of our existing homes and to develop new homes. This proposed restructure of the staffing establishment will ensure the creation of a sustainable foundation for the staffing of the new homes alongside our existing homes.
7. This proposal is part of a wider strategy to contain costs whilst dealing with an increase in demand. The revised structure will require additional revenue funding, offset to some extent by health contributions but will provide increased capacity in services for children with disabilities (by two places) and will contribute to cost containment as children can increasingly be cared for in-house rather than a more expensive external placement. It is anticipated that occupancy levels across all homes will also increase. However, as set out previously the non-financial benefits of meeting children's needs locally, and

¹ [nwd-distinguishers-non-negotiables-provocations.pdf \(scie.org.uk\)](https://www.scie.org.uk/nwd-distinguishers-non-negotiables-provocations.pdf)

meeting regulatory requirements are also contributing to the overall recommendation.

8. Surrey County Council Senior leadership team was presented with the business case on 28 July 2021 and supports the business case presentation to Cabinet for agreement.

Key Drivers

9. The Council is seeing increased need and demand for children coming into care. On current trends detailed in the Sufficiency Strategy, and if nothing else changes, there will be an increase in numbers of children looked after by 169 in the next five years. Benchmarking data shows that this is comparable to statistical and regional neighbours. Whilst there is some confidence that this is a national trend, and internal forecasting indicates that there will not be a rise in the overall number of children in Surrey requiring residential placements, at the end of March 2021 62% of children living in residential care were in placements outside Surrey's area. Therefore, the development of the Council's Children's Homes is crucial to provide high quality to children with increasingly complex needs and to provide some increased capacity.
10. The in-house children's homes are mainly rated Good and Outstanding by Ofsted and our 2020/21 review of our residential homes established that they offer specialised care and placement stability for children who may have experienced high numbers of placement moves previously. It is our strategic intention to reserve the placements in these homes for the children with the most complex needs and for our in-house service to increase their ability to provide specialist expert care. We will modify our practice model to provide interventions with the long-term goal of stepping down to family-based/community-based care, which will help to ensure that our children have a local home where they are safe and can experience stability when they are at their most vulnerable.
11. The Children's Homes were not included in the 2018 restructure of Children's Services due to the priority need to strengthen frontline services. We are now in a position where our homes need the right numbers and expertise of staff to ensure an enhanced quality of care to our children, thus preventing placement breakdowns, escalations and reducing the need to source out of county placements.

12. The Council’s sufficiency strategy for looked after children and care leavers² outlines our intentions to develop high quality homes for Surrey children with a wide range of placements for diverse needs. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021³, has made it unlawful to place an under 16-year-old in an unregulated placement. This has made it imperative to ensure that we have specialised placements for our children. Specialising the purpose of each home and investing in our workforce will enable us to better meet demand, whilst providing placements within Surrey for our most vulnerable children.
13. There is a clearly identified need to develop our establishment to ensure we provide appropriate staffing levels and provide staff with clear incentives sufficient opportunities to complete relevant training, development, and qualifications to offer specialised care to our children. This will enable us to not only invest in our workforce and provide high quality care, but also to meet our statutory obligations under the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 - The leadership and management standard:
- a. 13.—(1) “The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child” use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home⁴

Surrey is committed to this as both an obligation and embedded in our values of providing the best care for our children, meeting their needs and ensuring our staff are supported in a way which is safe and allows them to develop.

14. Our proposed structure encapsulates our key drivers, ensuring we develop an establishment which continues to meet our statutory obligations and provides the best care for children. It is recognised that this requires significant investment, however, we are committed to our in-house residential homes as a high-quality provider of care enabling our children to stay within Surrey. In addition, the development of in-house resource remains a lower cost option

² [Looked after children and care leavers sufficiency strategy - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

³ [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

⁴ [The Children’s Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

than independent service provision. This revised structure is designed to enable the Council, in terms of staff skills and numbers, to sustainably provide this lower cost provision, whilst upholding high standards and the ability to provide quality care and outcomes to our most vulnerable children. The right number of staff will also enable higher levels of occupancy in all homes as there will be enough staff to meet children's needs

15. The cost comparator between in-house and independent service provision is detailed in Part Two which is commercially sensitive and so cannot be published. This evidences that the services could be provided much more cost effectively in-house which is a further consideration given the financial constraint on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Objectives

16. The Transformation of the Children's Residential services will allow the service to:
- a. Offer a range of in-house services that prevent more young people with complex needs requiring out of county placements. Whilst the out of county placement may meet their safeguarding needs, the geography impacts their connection with their family, education, important relationships and support networks in their local community.
 - b. Provide a staffing structure in our residential homes that is appropriate in terms of roles, numbers and expertise. This will be by strengthening management capacity and 'right-sizing' the establishment so that there is reduced use of bank and agency staff (except for occasional cover for unforeseeable absence or whilst recruitment to vacancies is completed).
 - c. Reinforcing the statutory nature of Registered Manager responsibilities by having accurate Job Descriptions and named Deputy Manager arrangements in all homes.
 - d. Implement an organisational structure that recognises and rewards those staff who have completed their level 3 qualification and that provides a career progression.
 - e. Recognise that in some homes, dedicated waking night posts are essential, to ensure continuity of care for young people from staff who know their bedtime and waking routine well and who can receive training and support from the council as permanent staff.

- f. Recognise the value of dedicated housekeeping and handyperson roles in all homes as a core part of the quality of care and support offered to children.

Proposals

17. Specialisation of purpose: It is proposed that work continues on the specialised purpose of each home to strengthen the expertise and enable diverse support while maximising capacity. The Children's Homes Regulations 2015 require that each home has its own Statement of Purpose which specifies the services offered. In addition, regulations are stringent about placement matching and how children living together potentially impact on each other. Increased specialisation will allow for children's needs to be met alongside greater efficiency and higher occupancy and avoid bed blocking. The Ofsted review of Children's Social Services and subsequent Commissioner visit in November 2019 established that our children's homes offer specialised care for children who often have had a number of placement moves; the homes can provide a high level of stability for children to enable positive and planned moves. Specialising the purpose of each home will also support the implementation of a clear pathway to follow on provision such as fostering or semi-independent provision for young people.

- a. **Home A**, 4-bed home that specialises in supporting young people that are affected by criminal or sexual exploitation and display criminogenic or Anti-Social Behaviours.
- b. **Home B**, 5-bed home to support younger children with trauma and attachment difficulties or older children who need support with emotional regulation. Medium term work with progression to foster care or return home.
- c. **Home C**, 5-bed home to specialise in young people aged 15+ and work to independence, especially girls with mental health needs, or risk from Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- d. **Home D**, 4-bed home to specialise in young females only working closely with CAMHS to support young people with emotional or mental health needs.
- e. **Home E**, 5 bed home supporting young people predominantly with mental health needs, emotional needs, trauma and attachment.
- f. **Home F**, Solo placement for young people whose current needs mean that they are unable to be placed alongside any other young people at this time.

- g. **Home G**, 2-bed home providing respite or short-term step down from tier 4 health settings (maximum 7-10 day stays) for young people experiencing mental health crisis. No changes to current statement of purpose proposed.
- h. **Home H**, 4 flats to offer up to 9 medium to long term beds with a specialism around autism. A new provision is proposed in the 4th flat to develop two new crisis beds for children with disabilities, offering assessment and short term crisis work supported by Children's Crisis Intensive Support Service (CCISS) in partnership with health. If for any reason the proposal regarding the jointly funded crisis beds is not delivered from this home, we will use this 4th flat to create additional long-term provision for three children.
- i. **Home I**, 6-bed home to specialise in short breaks and respite care for children aged 5 to 18 with learning and/or physical disabilities and autism. Within the six-beds the home proposes developing one solo placement to offer a short-term crisis bed for one child. This will be delivered alongside the current in-house Domiciliary Care Service for children with disabilities.
- j. **Home J** – 6 bed home identified as the base for the first No Wrong Door Hub in Surrey and outside of the scope of this paper.

18. Reflection of Management roles: We recognise that Registered Managers in the homes hold a role outlined in regulations with specific legal responsibilities that are not well reflected in their current job description. The deputy manager job description has also been updated and strengthened in respect of deputising for the Registered Manager. In some settings (Home H and Home G and one post in the Community Children's Homes) the role requires competencies in managing multi-agency and crisis services. A revised job description has been drafted which will be submitted for evaluation of the grade, with a possible outcome of PS12 grade or a market rate supplement paid to enable appropriate recruitment of suitably qualified staff in this role.

19. Implementation of new job descriptions: This proposal will seek to revise and update the job descriptions to adequately reflect the role responsibilities and increase management capacity in the homes:

- Amend current 'Team Manager' roles to 'Registered Manager' to meet the requirements to maintain Ofsted registration and reflect the responsibilities of the role.
- Amend the Job Description for the current Assistant Team Manager role to reflect a name change to 'Deputy Manager' and to strengthen the accountabilities of the role and requirements to deputise for the Registered Manager.
- Delete the Senior Practitioner Role and in some settings implement a new 'Portfolio Lead' role (Senior Practitioner equivalent) with a revised job

description that strengthens and more closely defines the role and responsibilities.

- Amend the existing Senior Residential Worker and Residential Worker job descriptions and structure and replace with Qualified Residential Worker and Residential Worker posts, with Qualified Residential Worker posts being available only to those staff who have completed a relevant level 3 qualification.
- Have dedicated posts for waking night staff in Home H – CWD Home, Home G – short term mental health home and Home I - Shortbreaks respite home, reflecting that children and young people in those settings will always need staff awake at night to support with personal care, risk or presenting needs. These posts will be Qualified Residential Workers and only available to those staff who have obtained a relevant level 3 qualification.

20. Update the staffing establishment: Ensure sufficient posts in the establishment to deliver suitable staffing for the intended purpose of the home and eliminate the reliance on temporary and bank staff. Appropriate staffing structure will enable us to recognise those staff who have completed the appropriate level 3 qualifications and provide a clear career progression for all staff.

Proposed Staffing structures

Home and capacity	Job Grade	5 Bed home (B)	4 Bed home (D)	5 Bed home (E)	5 Bed home (C)	5 Bed home (A)	Solo placement (F)	Total
Proposed staffing structure per shift		3 staff per shift	3 staff per shift	4 staff per shift	4 staff per shift	4 each weekday late and w/e, 2+ mgr on early shift	2 staff per shift	
Registered Manager	PS11	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	6.0*
Deputy Manager	PS9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	11.0
Portfolio Lead	PS8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	5.0
Qualified Residential Worker	PS7	11.0	11.0	15.0	15.0	12.0	8.0	72.0
Residential Worker	PS6							
Housekeeper	PS3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	5.5
Domestic	PS1/2							
Handyperson	PS1/2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.0
Grand Total		16.5	16.5	20.5	20.5	17.5	11.0	102.5

*One of these posts would be grade 12 and would deputise for the Service Manager

Home and capacity	Job Grade	CWD home 12 bed (H)	Shortbreaks and Respite 6 beds (I)	Mental health 2 beds (G)	Total
Proposed staffing structure per shift		3 staff in each flat, plus float for key times 1 W/N in each flat	staffing based on current care packages	2 staff on each shift plus waking night	
Registered Manager	PS12	1.0		1.0	2.0
Registered Manager	PS11		1.0		1.0
Deputy Manager	PS9	4.0	2.0	2.0	8.0
Portfolio Lead	PS8	4.0			4.0
Qualified Residential Worker	PS7	64.0	20.5	11.5***	96
Residential Worker	PS6				
Housekeeper	PS3	2.0	0.5		2.5
Domestic	PS1/2	0	0.5	1.0	1.5
Gardener/ Handyperson	PS1/2	1.0	0.5	0.5	2
Grand Total		76.0	25.0	16.0	117.0

***Home G – short term mental health home always has a high level of staff pre-qualified, who then move on to other qualified positions such as nursing

Financial context:

21. The revised structure will require additional revenue funding, offset to some extent by health contributions but will provide increased capacity in services for children with disabilities and will contribute to cost containment as children can increasingly be cared for in-house rather than a more expensive external placement. The anticipated net costs of the new structures are set out in Part Two of this report

Medium Term Financial Strategy

22. Taking account of all the financial detail in Part Two of this report, the calculations are for a net neutral overall budget requirement, the details of this are set out in Part Two. Any deviation from this would be an additional pressure within the Children Families and Learning Medium-Term Financial Strategy envelope, which will need to be met through additional efficiencies or income generation within the Council.

Key Legal context:

23.

Requirements on Local Authorities - Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 General duty of local authority to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children

(1) It is the general duty of a local authority to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, the outcome in subsection (2).

(2) The outcome is that the local authority is able to provide the children mentioned in subsection (3) with accommodation that -

(a) is within the authority's area; and

(b) meets the needs of those children.

(3) The children referred to in subsection (2) are those -

(a) that the local authority are looking after,

(b) in respect of whom the authority are unable to make arrangements under section 22C(2), and

(c) whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the authority's area.

(4) In taking steps to secure the outcome in subsection (2), the local authority must have regard to the benefit of having -

(a) a number of accommodation providers in their area that is, in

their opinion, sufficient to secure that outcome; and

(b) a range of accommodation in their area capable of meeting different needs that is, in their opinion, sufficient to secure that outcome.”

Our promise as Corporate Parents:

24. We are confident that this proposal will help us to deliver on the promises we made as identified in our Corporate Parenting strategy⁵:
- a. We will do the best we can to make sure where you live is right for you.
 - b. We will help you keep in touch safely with the important people in your life.
 - c. We will tell you about options and involve you fully in making plans about your life. We will support you with your education and help you grow up with good skills for life.
 - d. To keep you safe and ensure that you feel safe.

Conclusions:

25. Our residential homes require development to ensure they are equipped to respond to increased demand and the need for crisis beds. Our own review and our Ofsted evaluation shows that our homes are equipped with a dedicated workforce who are committed to the best outcomes of our children. It is recommended that we strengthen this workforce to enable them to continue to provide high quality care for children and create a stable environment for specialised interventions when a child is at their most vulnerable.
26. Our Sufficiency strategy commits us to “Surrey Homes for Surrey Children”, developing our establishment to provide placements for our most vulnerable children will enable us to meet this principle whilst ensuring that our homes are structured and resourced for those children that will benefit from them the most.
27. Our statutory obligations require us to have a stable workforce which continually develops to best meet the needs of our children. Investing in our workforce at this stage will ensure we meet this requirement.

⁵ [Corporate Parenting Strategy \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

Recommendations:

28. It is recommended that the transformation is approved to support the model of practice that will enable us to provide strengthened in-house provision for those children whose needs require it, alongside developing a model that ensures wherever possible children are able to remain in their community and return either home or to a foster family setting following skilled intervention and support
29. To support the development of the stated purpose of each home. This will maximise occupancy and enable a diversity of purpose across the estate to meet needs, whilst remaining competitive in cost against external provisions.

Next steps:

The Director of Corporate Parenting met with Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Clare Curran, on 29 September 2021 and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Becky Rush, on 28 September 2021, to further discuss the financial impact of the restructure.

The business proposal will be brought to Cabinet in November 2021 for the approval of additional expenditure. These recommendations are subject to the approval from Cabinet.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

- The council's sufficiency strategy for looked after children and care leavers
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 - The leadership and management standard:
 - Under the Children's Act 1984
 - Children's Act 2004
 - Corporate Parenting strategy

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