

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 2021**

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REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**LEAD OFFICER: RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & LEARNING****SUBJECT: TRANSFORMATION OF SURREY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES****Purpose of the Report:**

This report is to seek the approval from Cabinet to transform Surrey County Council Children's Homes by addressing vulnerabilities in the current staffing structure and management capacity, strengthening the specialised purpose for each home and developing a new provision for children with autism experiencing crisis.

We want to provide Surrey homes for Surrey's children and young people, enabling them to stay living in Surrey wherever possible and appropriate by having a range of homes that can meet children's diverse needs. This requires the council to have high-quality homes that meet different needs and have staff teams of the right size, experience and specialism to support young people. We know that children in care are disadvantaged socially, educationally and that their health outcomes are poor when compared to the general population. Being placed out of county and at a distance, further exacerbates this inequality.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agree to the transformation of Surrey County Council's community children's homes that will update the current staffing establishments, approve the specialisation of purpose for each home, implement new job descriptions and scope out the management spans of each home.
2. Agree to the transformation of Surrey County Council's specialist crisis provision for young people with mental health difficulties that will update the current staffing establishment, implement new job descriptions and scope out the management spans of the home.
3. Agree to the transformation of Surrey County Council's residential services for children with disabilities that will update the current staffing establishments to ensure continued legal compliance, implement new job descriptions, as well as allow development of a new joint-funded crisis provision for children with autism.
4. Note the intended funding position, which includes significant health funding contributions and that this investment will enable efficiencies by containing or saving

costs on commissioning external placements, therefore having a neutral budgetary effect.

Reason for Recommendations:

In order to meet the current and future needs of children who need residential care, transformation and investment in the in-house children's homes is required. This is

- 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

Transformation will ensure the in-house homes are able to specialise in caring for the children with the highest and most complex needs, maximising the occupancy levels in each home and preventing, where appropriate, those young people going to out of county placements at additional cost to the council. This is an important measure designed to contribute to the Council meeting its statutory sufficiency duty.

Executive Summary:

1. Please note, some specific details of the proposals relating to staffing structures and financial costs are included in the Part 2 annex of this of this report. This is exempt from publication due to commercial sensitivity and information about the children's homes that, if published, could present a safeguarding or confidentiality risk.

2. Legal Context

Sufficiency Duty

- 2.1. The Council has a legal duty outlined in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989¹ to 'take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its looked-after children and those who would benefit from being accommodated'.
- 2.2. The Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Children on the Edge of Care 2020-2025² states the Council's commitment to the principle of providing Surrey homes for Surrey children. Currently many of the most vulnerable children are placed out of county, particularly in crisis, removing them from their families, friends, and local communities and support. To contribute to addressing this and to strengthen the Council's compliance with our legal duty and stated principles, it is necessary to invest in the development of the in-house homes and workforce so that they are equipped to meet increasingly complex needs and demand. This also lays the foundation for future work to explore options to further increase the capacity of residential provision in Surrey over time, reducing the need to place children away

¹ Children Act 1989

² Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Children on the Edge of Care 2020-2025 [Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2025 - Looked After children \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sufficiency-strategy-2020-2025-looked-after-children)

from their local communities, in line with the ambitions and commitments of the Sufficiency Strategy.

Children's Homes Regulation

- 2.3. The Care Standards Act 2000 requires any establishment operating as a Children's Home to be registered with a Regulatory Body (currently Ofsted) and to comply with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015³ and Quality Standards.
- 2.4. This includes standards of fitness for the Council as the Registered Provider and for Managers holding the designated roles of Responsible Individual and Registered Manager. The Regulator can take enforcement action (including criminal and civil penalties) for non-compliance with regulations.
- 2.5. Currently 70% of Surrey County Council Children's Homes are judged to be Good and Outstanding by Ofsted. The proposals in this paper will be part of the action to address quality issues raised by Ofsted during inspections in respect of staffing levels and skill and matching of children. They will contribute to ensuring that all those homes maintain and improve their inspection judgement, and that the 3 homes judged to Require Improvement meet the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

3. Current Demand

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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 of the Surrey border.⁴ 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.
- 3.3. The Council currently spends around £23m per year on residential care for children, of which £16.9m is external placements and £6.1m (26%) is on in-house homes. In-house children's homes accommodate 35% of the children in residential care.

4. Current provision

- 4.1. In line with the requirement enshrined in Section 17 of the 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.

³ [QS Stat Guidance \(Consultation version - Formatted for Pub\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91122/qs-stat-guidance-consultation-version-formatted-for-pub.pdf)

⁴ Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Children on the Edge of Care 2020-2025 [Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2025 - Looked After children \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/childrens-services/looked-after-children/sufficiency-strategy-2020-2025)

- 4.2. Surrey County Council has six community residential homes for children who do not have disabilities, two residential homes for those with learning disabilities (one of which provides short breaks for children living with their families), and one home offering very short-term care for young people experiencing mental health difficulties or stepping down from hospital mental health care. In addition, the Council is developing another residential home into the first No Wrong Door hub (that home is outside the scope of this paper).
- 4.3. As Surrey's in-house provider, and the largest provider of residential care to Surrey children, the Council's service is in a unique position as an enabler and driver of the sufficiency ambitions, ensuring more children can stay within Surrey and close to their community.
- 4.4. The Council's children's homes are mainly rated Good and Outstanding by Ofsted and a 2020 internal review of its residential homes established that they offer specialised care and placement stability for children who have often had a high number of placement moves previously. However, the review found that the staffing establishment was not sufficient in most homes to cover the basic staffing levels required, resulting in high spend on bank and agency staff and reduced occupancy in some homes. Use of bank and agency staff tends to provide less consistency of care for young people and the Statutory Guidance requires the home to have no more than 50% agency staff on duty at any time. Registered Managers are required to monitor and review patterns of staff turnover and where possible address negative trends. Some homes have been in breach of this standard, particularly at night, although managers always seek to ameliorate any risks by engaging consistent and experienced agency staff, or by lowering the numbers of children cared for. Occupancy at two Homes, H and I, has been limited because there are not enough staff employed to care for more children.
- 4.5. Children requiring residential care increasingly have very complex needs, including previous trauma, emotional or mental health needs, vulnerability to criminal exploitation, and involvement in risk-taking behaviour. The in-house homes have shown skill and commitment to caring for children with these needs but the Council must ensure that staffing ratios are suitable and that there is a management structure and skill base to support the intervention. Without the transformation proposed, there is a risk that the Good or Outstanding Ofsted judgements cannot be maintained, or that enforcement action will be taken against the homes that Require Improvement.
- 4.6. In 2020 and 2021 the Council agreed to fund capital investment in the children's home's estate by replacing some existing homes and developing new homes. The proposals contained in this report link with that investment, in ensuring staffing levels and ratios take account of future homes' configurations.

5. Proposals

- 5.1. It is proposed to transform all the children's homes by:
- Developing a specialist purpose for each home
 - Introducing a revised job description for the managers of the homes and developing management roles across the service
 - Updating the staffing establishment in the homes to ensure there are enough suitably skilled staff to meet children's needs, including strengthening job descriptions and career progression opportunities
 - Ensuring the homes continue to provide value for money and which contribute to enabling sufficiency of homes in Surrey.
- 5.2. Specific details of the structure and financial costs are included in the Part 2 Annex of this of this report. This is exempt from publication due to commercial sensitivity and information about the homes that, if published, could present a safeguarding or confidentiality risk.

Proposal One: Transformation of the community homes

- 5.3. It is proposed that specialising the purpose of each home will enable a broad range of services to meet need and will support the implementation of a clear pathway for young people into independence or back into a family setting, including links with the in-house fostering service:
- **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.
 - **Home B:** 5-bed home to support younger children with trauma and attachment or older children who need support with emotional regulation. Medium term work with progression to foster care or return home.
 - **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).
 - **Home D:** 4-bed home to specialise in young females, working closely with Hope services to support young people with emotional or mental health needs.
 - **Home E:** 5-bed home supporting young people, any gender, predominantly with mental health needs, emotional needs, trauma and attachment
 - **Home F:** A solo placement for young people whose current needs mean that they are unable to be placed alongside any other young people at this time
- 5.4. It is proposed that the staffing establishment in the homes is updated including strengthening job descriptions and career progression opportunities. The proposed organisational structure recognises and rewards those staff who have completed their residential care qualification and provides a career progression. Job descriptions have been reviewed to reflect the specialist and complex nature of the work undertaken. 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. In some settings a new Portfolio Lead role will be introduced recognising the need for specific skill knowledge and experience related to the purpose of the home and offering a career progression opportunity for residential workers.

- 5.5. It is proposed that a revised job description for the managers of the homes is introduced to 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.

Proposal Two: Transformation of crisis mental health provision

- 5.6. **Home G** provides 2 beds offering respite or short-term care step downs from tier 4 health settings for young people experiencing mental health crisis. Stays are for a maximum of 7 -10 days. No changes to this purpose are proposed.
- 5.7. It is proposed that the staffing establishment in the home is updated including strengthening job descriptions and career progression opportunities. The proposed organisational structure recognises and rewards those staff who have completed their residential care qualification and provides a career progression. Job descriptions have been reviewed to reflect the specialist and complex nature of the work undertaken. In this home dedicated waking night posts are essential to ensure continuity of care and management of risk and the proposed staffing establishment takes account of this requirement. A new Portfolio Lead role will be introduced recognising the need for specific skill knowledge and experience related to the purpose of the home and offering a career progression opportunity for residential workers.
- 5.8. It is proposed that a revised job description for the manager of this home is introduced both to recognise that the Registered Managers holds a role outlined in Regulations with specific legal responsibilities and that this role require competencies in managing multi-agency and crisis services. A revised job description has been drafted which if agreement is given 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.

Proposal Three: Transformation of Children's Homes for children with disabilities

- 5.9. There are currently two homes for children with disabilities. *Home H* currently offers medium to long term care with a specialism of caring for children with autism. *Home I* provides short breaks, including day care and overnight stays of varying lengths. Currently there is no in-house provision for emergency or care for families experiencing crisis, and children with these needs are the most likely to be moved to an out of county home.
- 5.10. It is proposed that the purpose of both homes is developed to include a crisis provision:
- **Home H:** Children with disabilities unit comprising 3 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 offer two new crisis beds for children with disabilities, offering assessment and short-term crisis intervention supported by Children's Crisis Intensive Support Service (CCISS) in partnership with health. The staffing model and funding of this crisis provision is detailed in Part 2 of this report. If for any reason the proposal regarding the jointly-funded two crisis beds is not delivered from this home we will use this 4th flat to create additional long term provision for three children.
 - **Home I:** 6-bed capacity 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.

- 5.11. In line with the previous proposals for the community homes, and home for children with mental health difficulties, it is proposed that the staffing establishments in the children with disability homes are updated including strengthening job descriptions and career progression opportunities. The proposed organisational structure recognises and rewards those staff who have completed their residential care qualification and provides a career progression. Job descriptions have been reviewed to reflect the specialist and complex nature of the work undertaken. In these homes dedicated waking night posts are essential to ensure continuity of care and management of risk and the proposed staffing establishment takes account of this requirement. A new Portfolio Lead role will be introduced recognising the need for specific skill knowledge and experience related to the purpose of the homes and offering a career progression opportunity for residential workers.
- 5.12. It is proposed that a revised job description for the managers of these homes is introduced to recognise that the Registered Manager holds a role outlined in Regulations with specific legal responsibilities. In Home H it is recognised that this role requires competencies in managing multi-agency and crisis services. A revised job description has been drafted which if agreement is given 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.

6. Impact

- 6.1. The proposals will offer in-house services that can meet a wider range of needs. This will contribute to preventing young people with complex needs going to out of county placements that may not meet their needs, and which fracture their connection with their education, important relationships and support networks in their local community. In-house services offer expertise in meeting the most complex needs and in-line with the sufficiency strategy will be the preferred provision for children in crisis or with the most complex needs.
- 6.2. The transformation will provide staffing structures in the Council's residential homes that are fit for purpose 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).
- 6.3. Strengthened provision in-house will address the regulatory compliance in all homes which is currently potentially compromised by high use of agency and bank staff in some homes. It will also address the difficulties recruiting to some roles, in particular, those managing crisis services.
- 6.4. These proposals are designed to increase the variety and number of placement options for children and therefore to contain or reduce costs spent on externally commissioned placements which have higher unit costs and do not necessarily meet children's needs any better.

7. Options appraisal

- 7.1. Risks of the transformation proposals are summarised in the Risk Management section below. There is the option to do nothing, but if the proposed measures are not agreed, the Cabinet should consider the risks as follows:
- 7.2. Current costs for residential placements are increasing month on month. The proposals for children with disability services, if agreed, will increase capacity in this service by 3 crisis beds in total and will contribute significantly to cost avoidance of

additional external placements. The cost benefit analysis is included in Part 2 of this report.

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- 7.3. It has proven difficult to recruit to some Management posts in the service, as the candidates require a level of skill and management accountability for a multi-agency crisis-based services that is not reflected in the current job description or pay scale. If this is not addressed, future recruitment is jeopardised and this in turn risks the home's registration and inspection judgement with Ofsted.
 - 7.4. Home H is judged to be Requires Improvement by Ofsted. If the proposed changes to the staffing establishment are not agreed the home will continue to have insufficient numbers of posts in the establishment. Insufficient posts built into the staffing establishment means permanent staff cannot be employed and potentially extensive use of agency staff, reduced occupancy and risk of enforcement action from Ofsted. In these circumstances the Council may have to consider the future viability of the home's registration.

8. Capital Development update

- 8.1. As outlined in paragraph 3.6 above, the Council has agreed a Capital programme, which is now underway, to enable modernisation of the property portfolio of services for children who are looked after and care leavers. This includes some of the children's homes mentioned in these proposals and progress is as follows:

- 8.2. Extension of Short Stay Respite Care Home, (Home I)

- Planning consent has been obtained in Aug 21
- Start on site anticipated Jan 22
- Construction period expected c.6months (subject to tender returns)
- Completion anticipated Jul 22 (subject to tender returns)
- Anticipated final project costs £500k (subject to tender returns)

- 8.3. Second No Wrong Door Hub

- Planning Consent obtained April 21
- Completion date: Sept 22.
- Total project costs: £2.2m

- 8.4. Replacement Children's Home

- Planning Consent obtained June 2021
- Completion date: Jul 22
- Total project costs: £1.8m (excludes the retainer flats)

Consultation:

9. Changes to the structure and job descriptions in the homes will be subject to a statutory staff consultation.
10. Tina Benjamin – Director Corporate Parenting has discussed the financial implications of the transformation with Cllr Clare Curran and Cllr Becky Rush on 28 and 29 September 2021.
11. The Council's Select Committee considered the proposals on 18 October 2021 and has recommended that Cabinet agree the proposed transformation of Surrey's

Children's Residential Services provided there are no material changes to the recommended decision or supporting information as reported to the Select Committee.

Risk Management and Implications:

12. Legal and Regulatory Implications: Children's homes are regulated services and there is a risk to Ofsted judgements (and associated regulatory action) if services are not safeguarding the welfare of young people or providing sufficient and suitably qualified and skilled staff. The regulations are stringent about ensuring homes can meet the needs of children, and ensuring children living together are appropriately matched with each other. Specialisation of the homes, and appropriate staffing levels ensures greater efficiency, maximising occupancy of the homes and avoiding 'bed-blocking'.
13. Staffing and capacity: Homes require skilled and appropriately rewarded staff. The employment market in Surrey for these type of roles is highly competitive, and Surrey Council need to ensure it positions and maintains itself as an employer of choice. High levels of vacancies provide risks to the quality of care children receive, regulatory risk from Ofsted who monitor the proportion of permanent and agency staff, and financial risks if agency staff have to be employed to fill vacancies.
14. Cost risks: If there is insufficient in-house provision to meet the most complex needs of children, externally commissioned provision has to be sought at additional cost to the council. Part 2 of this reports sets out comparison of the unit costs. Even where externally commissioned homes have unit costs comparable to in-house services, most commissioned provision is out of the county meaning children are separated from their homes, networks, education provision and where other external services such as looked after health services may have to also be commissioned at cost.
15. Reputational risks: There is a significant reputation risk to the Council, as corporate parent to over 1000 children, and commissioner of external services if its own in-house homes are not operating to the Quality Standards. Similarly, if the Council is found to be in breach of its sufficiency duty it could be at risk of Judicial Review or a negative impact on the Ofsted judgement of children services

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

16. The details of the financial implications are contained in Part 2 of the report.
17. Before COVID-19 there was an expectation that the numbers of looked after children would reduce over time as a result of the practice changes which were being implemented. To reflect the impact of COVID-19 the Medium Term Financial Strategy was updated to reflect a spike in demand during 2021/22 which would then taper off over the following five years. What is now apparent is that the impact of Covid-19 has not yet finished playing out in services and for some considerable period of time, it is anticipated that the numbers of looked after children will remain elevated.
18. This proposal is part of a wider strategy to contain costs whilst dealing with an increase in demand. The revised structure will result in additional revenue costs, offset partly by health contributions. It will also 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 in a more expensive external placement. It is anticipated that occupancy levels across all homes will also increase. The proposals are cost neutral overall. The non-financial benefits of meeting children's needs locally, and meeting regulatory requirements are also contributing to the overall recommendation.

19. The calculations for the net neutral overall budget requirement are set out in table 1 below with further detail contained in Part 2 of the Cabinet Report. 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.

Table 1: summary of additional budgetary requirement

Description	£000
Additional budget requirement Community Homes	801
Additional budget requirement mental health crisis beds	152
Additional budget requirement children with disabilities short breaks and medium term care	1,153
Additional budget requirement children with disabilities crisis provision	144
Gross budget requirement	2,250
Additional health and other councils' contributions	(808)
Estimated reduction for 30% unqualified residential workers	(212)
Savings already identified	(330)
Net budget requirement	900
Estimated cost avoidance	(900)
Revised budget requirement	0

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

20. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the proposals to enhance the in-house capacity of the Council's children's homes for both quality and to avoid increased cost pressures. Modelling suggests this can be done in a cost neutral way, but this depends on additional income from health partners and being able to bring children into this provision as opposed to external provision. Early and regular monitoring against these objectives will be essential to ensure this is achieved

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

21. Under the Children Act 1989⁵, Surrey County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient accommodation within the authority's area that meets the needs of the children.
22. The council's responsibilities are further strengthened by the Children Act 2004⁶ to promote safeguarding and welfare of children.

⁵ Children Act 1989

⁶ Children Act 2004

23. All children's homes have to be registered with Ofsted under the Care Standards Act 2000, and are inspected and regulated by Ofsted against the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2005 which sets out the requirement for leadership and management and staffing of the homes in accordance with its stated purpose:

23.1. Regulation 13

- "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;*
 - (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;*
 - (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;*
 - (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;*
 - (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—*
 - (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and*
 - (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and*
 - (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home⁷*

Equalities and Diversity:

24. Any EDI impacts to staff will be made clear and mitigated within the consultation period of the engagement.
25. As part of the preparatory work for specialising the homes the service will undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment to consider the impact of the proposals on young people who are/may be affected.
26. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be provided as part of the consultation process and respond to any issues which arise affecting staff, including by the staff or trade union(s) on their behalf.

⁷ [The Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Other Implications:

27. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	This proposal directly affects looked after children and will positively benefit them by providing more choice of home, close to their communities and networks and improved outcomes.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	As above
Environmental sustainability	Having more children accommodated in Surrey will have a positive impact on our environmental sustainability as the workforce will be drawn locally and there will be a reduction in travel
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Not applicable
Public Health	Research shows looked after children have poorer health outcomes than their peers. This proposal enables them to stay close to Surrey and benefit from health and public health initiatives delivered by the council.

What Happens Next:

28. Once Cabinet has agreed, the transformation and restructure of the children's residential services will commence in November 2021.
29. The minimum consultation period will be 30 days and it is anticipated that subject to the feedback during the consultation, the transformation will be implemented in early December 2021
30. The outcomes will be communicated to stakeholders as part of the consultation process

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Consulted:

Tina Benjamin – Director Corporate Parenting
 Rachael Wardell – Executive Director
 Daniel Peattie - Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children Families Learning
 Chris Tisdall – Commissioning for Corporate Parenting

Fiona Mackirdy – Project Manager No Wrong Door™

Annexes:

Part 2 Report

Sources/background papers:

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

[Childrens Homes Research - Newgate.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#) – page 18

Ofsted Introduction to Childrens Homes - [Introduction to children's homes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Ofsted Register as a provider of children's social care services - [Register as a provider of children's social care services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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