

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Wednesday, 12 December 2007

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 11th July 2007 (herewith). (Pages 1 - 5)

For Discussion/Decision:-

6. Minimising Youth Offending in Looked After Children (Pages 6 - 9)

Paul Grimwood plus SYP representative

7. Work Placements for Looked After Children (report herewith) (Pages 10 - 12)
8. Performance Information Quarter 2 (report herewith) (Pages 13 - 17)
9. Looked After Children Profile - including Absence from School (Pages 18 - 21)
10. Leaving Care Service and Care Leavers Accommodation Service - Tender Options (Pages 22 - 25)
11. Regulation 33 - Update (to follow)

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Wednesday 26th March 2008 at 2pm

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor G. A. Russell.

Vice-Chairman Councillor McNeely.

Councillors Dodson, The Mayor (Councillor Allan Jackson), P. A. Russell, Sangster, St. John, Thirlwall and Whelbourn.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL
Wednesday, 11th July, 2007

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Austen, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely and P. A. Russell.

Also in attendance was Malcolm Gabbitas along with representatives of Rotherham PCT.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cath Wright, Councillors Dodson and Gosling. The meeting was informed that Cath Wright's absence was due to serious illness.

Agreed:- That on behalf of the Panel, a letter be sent to Cath Wright wishing her a speedy return to good health.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Agreed:- That Councillor Gosling be appointed as Vice-Chair of this Scrutiny Sub-Panel.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL

The Senior Scrutiny Adviser submitted a paper which set out the background to and Terms of Reference for, the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel.

Agreed:- That the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Sub-Panel be accepted.

4. THE HEALTH NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Margaret Murphy of the Rotherham PCT commented on the content of a report submitted which set out the progress made in developing health systems to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Young People in Rotherham.

The report provided information about health services and outcomes for the period from April 2006 to March 2007. The information included :-

- facts and figures on the number of children looked after by Rotherham Local Authority as at the 24th April, 2007
- guidance on Promoting the Health of Looked After Children. This was to be reviewed in 2008 and some aspects of the guidance would become statutory
- the health framework in Rotherham; a Looked After Children Health

Group provides a strategic direction and is working towards the implementation of the Healthy Care Programme.

The report submitted set out the elements included in the Programme and the support available to looked after children and young people;

- the difference Health Care can make locally
- the achievements in 2006/07, objectives and outcomes
- the aims for 2007/08

Subsequent discussion included comments on:-

(a) the involvement of Chatham House in the process and the funding, required to help develop its own team to deal with issues involving looked after children

(b) annual health assessment from which all children should benefit.

The benchmarking situation for health assessment, how the figures can be quantified and improved upon having regard to the input process.

(c) addressing mental health issues, substance/drug misuse; awareness programmes for the latter;

(d) the support package available in respect of teenage pregnancies; ongoing work was outlined;

(e) the challenging nature of implementing the Programme, the main constraint being time;

(f) the new non smoking regulations which also affect children's residential units. It was acknowledged that the position in respect of looked after children needed to be dealt with sensitively. Signage regarding no smoking needed to be suitably sited and should refer to 'no smoking in our home' rather than 'no smoking on these premises'.

Agreed:- (i) That the report be received and an update position be presented in 12 months time.

(ii) That the Service Manager, Looked After Children, submit a report to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young Peoples Services reflecting the Panel's views on the implications of implementing aspects of the 'no smoking' regulations in children's residential homes.

5. RESPONSE TO 'CARE MATTERS-TIME FOR CHANGE' WHITE PAPER AND PROPOSED DELIVERY IN ROTHERHAM

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, reported that the Care Matters Green Paper was published by Government in October 2006, and the consultation process was closed on 15th January, 2007. The

Department for Education and Skills published a White Paper (Care Matters: Time for Change) on 21st June, some months earlier than originally envisaged. It takes forward the majority of the Green Paper's proposals and is informed by both the consultation process and the working groups.

The consultation indicated that the Green Paper had been generally welcomed as the start of a long overdue focus on children in care and an opportunity to effect long term change. The main concerns were to do with implementation; resourcing, ensuring the initiative does not become diluted, and how to prioritise policies which will make a real impact.

The report submitted provides a summary of the key points and recommendations from the White Paper, and a proposal for the realignment of the services provided to Looked After Children in Rotherham as part of a local response to Care Matters to create a Borough wide integrated Looked After Children's Service.

The various chapters of the White Paper covered :-

- Corporate Parenting issues
- family and parenting support aspects
- care placements
- education proposals
- improving the health needs of children in care
- transition to adulthood
- the role of the practitioner
- next steps arising from the proposals.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to :-

(a) development of a 'Pledge' for children in care, covering the services and support they should expect to receive including provision of high quality education;

(b) formation of a Children in Care Council in order for young people to express their voice and influence;

(c) financial implications of the proposals;

(d) involvement of and impact of the proposals for partner agencies;

(e) the LAC support services, the work of the Get Real Team being highlighted;

(f) training provision for all staff as appropriate;

(g) the proposal to alter the term 'Looked After Children' back to 'Children in Care'.

The report submitted set out the proposal for the Looked After Children's Strategy in Rotherham which essentially entails developing one service which directly manages the various teams involved with looked after children. The advantages of this were outlined in the report.

Agreed:- (i) That the contents of the report be noted and the proposals endorsed.

(ii) That an update report on progress of the proposals be submitted in six months' time.

6. ROLE OF COUNCILLORS AS CORPORATE PARENTS - UPDATE ON SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, submitted a report which set out the recommendations following the review of corporate parenting activities, progress on the recommendations as at June 2007 and risks associated with each recommendation.

Substantial progress has been made in consolidating corporate parenting activities and this was reflected in comments from the JAR 2006 "Looked After Children are a Key Priority for the Council which is excellent at carrying out its Corporate Parenting Role".

Comments on the report made particular reference to :-

- a. funding for celebration events; this was to be investigated and hopefully progressed
- b. members of the Scrutiny Sub-Panel, in very small groups, to visit Residential Centres and also to meet with foster carers on an informal basis

Agreed:- (i) That the report be received and an update be presented to the Scrutiny Sub-Panel in twelve months' time.

(ii) That the Service Manager make appropriate arrangements regarding (b) above.

7. PROFILE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN ROTHERHAM

The Service Manager reported that as at 3rd July, 2007, Rotherham had 334 children in care.

The details submitted set out :-

- the number of looked after children in the various types of care available
- the gender and ethnicity breakdown of children in care

- the school attendance record of children in care for the period September 2006 to 2nd July 2007, along with commentary on reasons for them missing school

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received.

(b) That work take s place to improve the reporting format and this be reflected in the next report to the sub-panel.

8. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed:- That the minutes of this Scrutiny Sub-Panel held on the 28th March, 2007 be received with the addition of Councillor Jack's apologies.

9. DATES AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meetings of this Scrutiny Sub-Panel would take place on Wednesdays at 2.00 p.m. on the following dates:-

19th September, 2007
12th December, 2007
26th March, 2008

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel
2.	Date:	12 th December 2007
3.	Title:	Offending by Looked After Children
4.	Programme Area:	Children and Young People's Services – Youth Offending Services (YOS)

5. Summary:

In March 07 a report submitted to the Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel compared offending by LAC in 2005 and 2006. The report was commissioned due to national and local concerns that children and young people who are looked after are at greater risk of offending than the general population with those individuals cared for within residential children's homes representing the higher percentage of children who are involved in offending behaviour.

Due to these concerns in respect of the residential population the report concentrated specifically on this group, and indicated an overall decline in frequency of offending by L.A.C., particularly in residential care. However other placements did not appear to benefit from this trend, although less analysis for this group was available

Panel members therefore requested a further examination of offending by LAC outside of residential care. This report further examines offending by both groups, and finds that offending by the residential population appears to continue to decline. For those in other placements it appears that those placed with parents and relatives are most likely to offend, but at a level not attracting a court sentence.

Trends in offending by LAC should continue to be monitored, and consideration given to how pre court services can intervene with those placed outside of residential care.

6. Recommendations:

That the contents of this report be noted and support given for the actions outlined to further reduce offending by L.A.C.

7. Proposals and Details:

L.A.C. Offending (Individuals)

	2005 Apr - Dec	2006 Apr - Dec	2007 Jan – Jun
	Individuals	Individuals	Individuals
Residential Units	26	11	5
Other	23	18	12
Total	49	29	17

Residential Offending.

In 2005 looked after children (in residential units) committed 129 offences, in 2006 50 offences, and in 2007 (although not for a comparable period) looked after children in residential units committed 13 offences.

Similarly, considering the offences which were most common in 2005, (Violence Against the Person, Criminal Damage and Public Order). The figures dropped from 53 (2005) to 30 (2006), and in 2007 this trend appears to continue with 13 offences. In 2005 these comprised 21 (40%) in or against residential units, 9 (30%) 2006, and 3 (23%) in 2007. This indicates that the CPS guidance in relation to children in residential care is having an effect, and/or new behaviour management guidance is decreasing the reporting of incidents that can be managed “in house” to the police.

The period being compared for 2007 is not comparable with 2005 and 2006, and the figures are relatively small. Caution should therefore be exercised in interpretation.

The data for July to September has only recently been submitted to the Youth Justice Board. At the time of writing no analysis of offending for the LAC population had been undertaken. However 6 LAC individuals (not necessarily in residential care), had offended in this period, giving grounds for cautious optimism.

	2005			2006			2007		
	Internal (Within Unit)	External	Total	Internal (Within Unit)	External	Total	Internal (Within Unit)	External	Total
Violence	11	18	29	7	13	20	3	5	8
Criminal Damage	8	7	15	2	4	6	0	1	1
Public Order	2	7	9	0	4	4	0	4	4
	21	32	53	9	21	30	3	10	13

Offending in other types of placement.

Offending by Placement (Individuals)						
	2005		2006		2007	
	Actual	Percent	Actual	Percent	Actual	Percent
Residential Care	26	53%	11	42%	5	29%
Foster Care	2	4%	5	19%	1	6%
Parents	9	18%	3	12%	6	35%
Relatives or Friends	6	12%	6	23%	3	18%
Independent Living	5	10%	1	4%	2	12%
Other	1	2%				

Offending in placements other than residential care is relatively small, with the group appearing most likely to commit offences being those placed with Parents, Relatives and Friends. The CPS guidance would not apply to this group.

With the exception of those in independent living, the majority of offences committed in placements other than residential care are not serious and do not come to the attention of the Courts. These are dealt with by Reprimands¹ and Final Warnings², and tend to occur outside the home.

Reprimands are referred to Rotherham's preventative services, and Final Warnings are managed by Youth Offending Services. Both services are being reviewed as part of the move towards integrated services and this provides an opportunity to consider the response to looked after children in home based placements. For instance, interventions for Reprimands and Final Warnings are both based on assessment of risk of re-offending. Is sufficient weight given to being "looked after" as a factor for intervening?

In addition to reprimands the current criteria for targeted preventative services across the borough are school exclusions and anti social behaviour contracts. Should looked after children be included as a risk group?

If the proposals for integrated services are approved by members, it is likely that services for looked after children and those that offend will be located in the same directorate. This is an opportunity for closer linkages between the two services, not only in the delivery of preventative services, but between Youth Offending Services and Looked After services.

1.A Reprimand is a formal verbal warning given by a police officer to a young person who admits they are guilty of a minor first offence.

2.A Final Warning is a formal verbal warning given by a police officer to a young person who admits their guilt for a first or second offence. Unlike a Reprimand, however, the young person is also assessed to determine the causes of their offending behaviour and may receive a brief intervention dependent on risk or need.

Suggested Actions

- Youth Offending Services, to ensure looked after status is explicitly considered in assessment of risk.
- Consider the status of looked after children, particularly those placed with parents and relatives/friends, in the review's of preventative services and final warnings.
- Continue to maintain close relationships between Youth Offending and Looked After Services.
- Regularly monitor trends in offending by LAC population.

8. Finance:

There are currently no specific financial implications, although related criminal justice system costings are a key driver for all criminal justice organisations.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

Figures quoted are accurate but represent a relatively small population from which to draw trends.

The LAC population generally by virtue of their status will have many of the predisposing and situational factors associated with offending. They are more likely to, amongst other difficulties, leave school without qualifications, experience unemployment, and suffer both emotional and physical problems than the rest of the population. Therefore attempts to address their offending must be part of a series of measures to improve their life chances.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

Looked after children represent a very small proportion of the overall offending profile within Rotherham, Performance can therefore shift quite markedly on the basis of very small changes within the L.A.C. population, but will only shift marginally when there are changes in the general population.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

Draft - Positive Management of Behaviour in Children's Homes. (C&YPS)
Draft - Informing the Police of an incident within Residential Homes. (C&YPS)
CPS Guidance – Offending Behaviour in Children's Homes..(Crown Prosecution Service).
Report to LAC Scrutiny Sub Panel (28/3/07)

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
2.	Date:	12th December 2007
3.	Title:	Work Placements for Looked After Children
4.	Directorate:	Children & Young Peoples Services/Chief Executive's

5. Summary

This report outlines the progress on the provision of work placements for looked after children within the Council.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the Scrutiny Sub-Panel note the progress on provision of work placements

6.2 That further reports be submitted to the Panel in the future to provide updates on activity.

7. Proposals and Details

Officers of the Get Real Team, the Bridges Team and Strategic Human Resources have been working together to identify and offer meaningful work placements for looked after children within the Council.

7.1 Placement Model

As previously agreed by the Scrutiny Sub Panel and by Corporate Management Team, managers are being asked to support 30 day work placements within their Service. These 30 days could be operated as a block of 6 working weeks or worked over a longer period on a part time basis for instance 2 days per week over 15 weeks. The precise arrangement in each case will be determined following discussions between the young person, the Bridges advisor and the service manager involved in order to best meet the needs of the young person whilst balancing this against the requirements of the service involved. At the end of the 30 days the placement will be reviewed and if both the young person and the service manager are happy with the arrangements the placement can be extended for an appropriate period (to be agreed between the manager, the young person and the young persons Support Worker).

7.2 Learning From Initial Placement

Prior to the implementation of the structured approach to work placements an attempt was made in May of this year to offer a work placement to a young person in the ICT Service of RBT. Although the work placement did commence, after a short period the placement had to cease because of challenges posed by the behaviour of the young person. Following this experience the placement process has been reviewed and steps taken to try to ensure that any young person commencing a placement is ready for the work environment and that potential needs and risks have been identified. These steps include:

- Bridges care workers closely linked to young people to make the initial identification of who is ready to undertake a work placement
- Young people to complete a Curriculum Vitae specifically designed by the Get Real Team, Bridges and Strategic Human Resources
- Bridges care workers to complete a detailed risk assessment documents highlighting issues related to each individual seeking a work placement which may need to be taken into account when seeking an appropriate placement
- Case meeting between Bridges and Strategic Human Resources to discuss individual needs and risks and identify potential placement areas

7.3 Current Activity

Work Placements

Two young people have now been identified by the Bridges Team as being ready to undertake work placements. Each has prepared their CV and risk assessment documents have been completed by Bridges. Following a review of this information by Bridges and Strategic Human Resources, Streetpride and 2010 Rotherham have been approached and each has agreed to host a work placement for one of the young people. In line with the respective areas of interest of the young people involved the placement within Streetpride will take place within a unit carrying out landscape architecture, whilst in 2010 the young person will be given the opportunity to identify specific areas of construction/building maintenance which they find of most interest, the placement will then be structured around this.

Prior to the commencement of each work placement, Business & Education South Yorkshire (BESY) will undertake a risk assessment of each work place as per the originally agreed work placement model.

Information for Care Leavers

As part of Care Leavers week, Children & Young People's Services organised a drop in event at the Library & Arts Centre at which a range of information was available on education, housing employment and benefits. Strategic Human Resources attended the event to publicise information on the types of jobs available within the Council and where these jobs were advertised.

Awareness Raising

Children & Young People's Services are preparing a presentation to be delivered to each Directorate Management Team (DMT) to raise awareness of the needs of looked after children and gain further support for offers of work placements across the Council as and when young people are identified as being ready for such placements. The Service will also be able to provide training for those employees who will act in a supervisory capacity for young people during their placement.

8. Finance

Funding is available to provide expenses for young care leavers under the age of 18 who engage in work placements. However there is no funding to compensate for the time of officers involved in the process of securing and managing work placements. Such costs would have to be bourn within existing Department Budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

A failure to adequately champion provision of work placements at a senior management level could lead to reluctance within Departments to provide work placement opportunities. Work placements provide a potential avenue for some looked after children to secure mainstream employment and thereby avoid social and economic disadvantage, a failure to provide work placements will deny opportunities to overcome this disadvantage.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

In its role as a Corporate Parent there is an expectation that the Council will use its best endeavours to improve the life chances of looked after children and work placements provide one means of doing this.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	LAC Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	12th December 2007
3.	Title:	Performance Indicators Affecting Looked After Children - 2nd Quarter Report Appendix A – Quarterly Performance Monitoring Table [Wards affected – All]
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

This report outlines performance at the end of the 2nd quarter 2007/08 against targets, with comparisons against 1st quarter 2007/08 and 2005/06 All England top quartile authorities, for those indicators which relate specifically to Looked After Children.




6. Recommendations

- **That the Performance Report be received**

7. Proposals and Details

Five performance indicators are reported this quarter for Looked After Children. One indicator has two component parts.

The symbols shown in the Year To Date performance column are used by the corporate monitoring system "Performance Plus" to demonstrate performance against target. Their use can be interpreted as the following:

-  Green Star - Above Target (2% Above Target)
-  Amber Circle (previously blue circle) - On Target
-  Red triangle - Below target

NB/ Please note those indicators that have achieved 100% which also had a target of 100% are shown as an amber circle as this is the designated rating produced through the performance plus system although it is recognised that this is top performance.

Summaries of the Year To Date analysis are shown below;



Above Target

32 b % Looked After Children placed for adoption within 12 months of their best interest decision LPI 222 b



On Target and 100%

3 Reviews of child protection cases BV 162



Below target

2 Placement stability - % LAC with 3+ placements BV 49
 4 % Adoptions of children looked after BV 163
 29 % of children looked after with qualified social worker. LPI 219
 30a No. Looked After Children adopted within 12 months of their best interest decision LPI 222 a

Direction of Travel

In addition the following table sets out a summary of the Direction of Travel (DoT) for indicators from quarter 1 compared to quarter 2 performance. Four indicators have a downward direction of travel this quarter, one remains static and one has improved.

Direction of Travel	Number
↑	1
→	1
↓	4

Of those indicators which have a downward direction of travel, BV49 remains in the good performance range. Commentary in relation to all the indicators is included in the table at Appendix A.

8. Finance

There are no financial implications to this report. The relevant Service Leader and Budget Holder will address financial implications of the Action Plans. Members will be consulted where appropriate.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Risks related to the performance indicators which are not on target and which have a downward direction of travel. However, BV49 remains in the good performance range and the remainder are mitigated through their recovery plans. Performance at Quarter 3 will enable us to determine if recovery to target can be achieved before the year end.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

A number of Performance Indicator's support and have an influence on inspections including the Annual Performance Assessment, (APA), of Children's Services and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, (CPA), and our Local Area Agreement.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- 2007/08 Children and Young People's Service Performance Indicator quarter1 forms.
- Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08
- Children & Young People's Plan 2007- 2010
- Local Area Agreement 2006-09 – CYPS Block Revised Action Plan 2007

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Explanation of the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Table

Detailed below is explanation regarding the different items within the following quarterly performance table

Table Item	Explanation of Content
No.	Number as they appear in the table. Added to ease discussion at scrutiny
Definition	Name of the indicator
Ref.	Official reference number for the indicator
Good Perf.	Indicates the direction performance should travel to improve
05/06 Top Quartile	Comparative data for top 25% authority performance
06/07 Actual	Previous year's published outturn performance
1 st Qtr Perf	Published performance for 1 st Qtr
2 nd Qtr Perf - Fixed	Performance in 2 nd Qtr
2 nd Qtr Perf - Cumulative	Total performance to date
07/08 Target	The end of year performance for 06/07
On Target	Does the year end performance meet the target?
Quarter Direction of Travel	Direction of travel of performance compared to 2005/06 outturn.
Recovery Plan	Is there a recovery plan in place to address performance?
YTD - Year To Date Performance	 Green Star - Above Target,  Amber Circle (previously blue circle) -On Target  Red triangle - Below target
Comments	If necessary further explanation of performance is summarised here. Examples include details of external influences, seasonal trends or impact of action.

Glossary of terms

PI	Performance Indicator
BV	Best Value
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LPI	Local Performance Indicator
LAC	Looked after Children
SEN	Special Educational Needs
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework

No	Definition	Ref	Good Perf	05/06 Top Quartile	06/07 Actual	1st Qtr Perf	2 nd Qtr Perf		07/08 Target	On Target	Qtr Dir	Recovery/Delivery Plan	YTD	Comments
							Fixed	Cumulative						
1	Placement stability - % LAC with 3+ placements [Sue May]	BV49	Range 0-16	14%	13.90%	13.81%	14.03%	-	10.00%	X	↓	Yes Delivery	▲	Performance Clinic held in July established that targets were too stretching and this will be addressed in 2008/09. Performance continues to be consistent and above the national trend. The delivery plan to increase placement choice is on target and should impact positively on this PI, Improvement in recruitment and retention of foster carers is though a long term strategy.
2	Reviews of child protection cases [Jim Stewart]	BV162	HIGH	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	✓	→	Yes Delivery	●	Top performance maintained
3	% Adoptions of children looked after [Andrea Hobson]	BV163	HIGH	9.5%	5.7%	6.52%	6.40%	-	9.50%	X	↓	Yes Recovery	▲	There has been a slight increase in the number of LAC which has reduced the % of adoptions. This period includes August when court dates are unavailable due to Court closure for the holiday period.
4	Percentage of children looked after with named social worker who is a qualified social worker. [Fred Butlin]	LPI 219	HIGH	N/A	96.17%	95.20%	94.01%		98%	X	↓	Yes Delivery	▲	Trainee Social Workers are involved to provide stability to some children and all are closely supervised by a fully qualified Social Worker.
5	For Looked After Children adopted during the year the number who were placed for adoption within 12 months of their best interest decision being made expressed as	LPI 222									.			This quarter includes the month of August, and it is not possible to get court dates for this month due to court closure for the holiday period. Following a concerted effort in family finding, 9 children are placed for adoption and 4 children have been adopted in the first month of the third quarter.
	a) Number		HIGH	N/A	9	5	1	6	20	X	↓	Yes Recovery	▲	
	b) Percentage [Andrea Hobson]		HIGH	N/A	56%	83%	100%	86%	70%	✓	↑	Yes Delivery	★	

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting: Looked After Children's Scrutiny Panel
2. Date 12th December 2007
3. Title: Rotherham Looked After Children Report
4. Programme Area: Children and Young Peoples

The Quarterly Report for Looked After Children's Scrutiny Panel, Profile of Numbers of Children, Looked After.

As of 3rd December 2007 there are 337 children Looked After by Rotherham MBC, of these children, 25 children are allocated to the Children's Disability Team.

LAC as at 03/12/2007

Total Children: 337

	0 - 5	06 - 10	11 - 15	16 +	Sum:
Placed for adoption	10	3	1		14
Foster Care - In LA	62	48	82	26	218
Residential inside Rotherham			10	3	13
Foster Care - Outside LA	1	4	12	3	20
Residential outside Rotherham			6		6
Residential School			3		3
Other Residential	4		3	4	11
Independent Living				10	10
Placed with Parents	7	7	12	9	35
Secure Unit outside Rotherham				1	1
Other Placement			3	1	4
Sum:	84	62	132	59	337

Looked After Children, Placements by Ethnicity

	White British	White Irish	White Other	Asian	Black African	Dual Heritage White/Black African	Dual Heritage White/Asian	Dual Heritage Other	Other	Total
Placed for adoption	14									14
Foster Care – in House	201	2	2	2	4	2	5	1	1	218
Residential Care in Rotherham	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Out of Authority Placement - Fostering	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Out of Authority Placement - Residential	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Independent Living	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Placed with Parents	32	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	30
Other Placement	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Totals	309	2	3	2	4	2	7	3	1	337

Regulation 33 Visits to residential Children's Homes – Themes and Trends

- In order to meet identified need, the Statement of Purpose has been reviewed in two Children's Homes and both are currently with OFSTED. Studmoor has become a long term Children's Home and Creswick has become the respite unit.
- Increased participation of young people in the homes. Goodwin has increased the Young Person's meetings to weekly from monthly, and all homes now developing this model.
- Privacy/confidentiality: public payphones were installed some years ago to meet the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations, (to ensure all children are able to make and receive calls privately.) Goodwin was the first home to replace pay phone replace with

dedicated telephone line for young people. All other homes planning to do same in near future.

- Post/mail. St. Edmonds's is currently only home with a secure mailbox. At other homes the post is hand delivered by the postman, however, there have been occasions when postman has actually handed this over to young person believing her to be member of staff. All homes will have a secure mailbox by Christmas.
- Internet Access. All homes have internet access for young people, however, there are problems accessing the main sites that young want, for example MSN or BEBO. This is being addressed, and the I.T. section due to attend to this before Christmas.
- Independent support: St.Edmonds's and Hollowgate have solid experience of helping young people with independence programmes, the other homes need to develop capacity. Following a recent meeting with Shelter and NCH, this will be addressed across all homes
- Activities/leisure: all homes have introduced comprehensive summer programmes; all homes have an activity co-ordinator and are improving planning for weekends.
- Bullying: inconsistent across homes; currently being addressed with support from Get Real and new LAAC Support team
- Significant events/incident reports: in-house incident reporting is improving month by month. A programme I in place to improve the quality of reports to OFSTED
- Behaviour management: all homes use incentive schemes and also have a sanctions policy: this I fairly consistent across homes but requires close monitoring. New Positive behaviour policy is currently in development and Morri heads up the working group for Looked After Children.

Absences for Looked After children as of 26th October 2007

Child	Year group	No of half days excluded	No of authorised absences (half days)	No of unauthorised Absences (half days)	Total No of half-days missed	Comments
Child a	Year 11	26	9	19	51	Has been truanting from school recently came into care. Has been excluded from school. Now placed out off authority. Get Real Team are involved in planning.

Child b	Year 6	21	30	0	51	Placed with parents has been excluded from school. Get Real team are involved in planning/ support
Child c	Year 9	0	28	39	67	On a part time timetable not engaging with programme. Plans to continue to engage young person in their education. Get Real team are offering teaching input
Child d	Year 9	0	38	30	68	Not engaging with education on a part time timetable. Get Real team involved in supporting planning to re-engage young person with their education.
Child e	Year 11	0	21	55	76	Place with parents On a part time timetable attendance is poor Get Real team are offering support. Plan to continue although young person not engaging at present.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:**2. Date****3. Title: Leaving Care Service and Care Leavers Accommodation service Tender Options****4. Programme Area: Children and Young Peoples****5. Summary**

The contract between Rotherham MBC and NCH for management of Leaving Care and Care Leavers Accommodation services ends in April 2009. The service provision will require external tender and this report considers the tender options available.

Developments in legislation, the commissioning market and service provision have provided a background for a review of service expectations which underpin a service review and proposals for amendments to the service under tender.

6. Recommendations

The Leaving Care service is subject to an external tender. As there are considerable benefits in management of this service by an external provider, that Rotherham MBC does not submit an in-house tender.

The Accommodation project is subject to a separate tender. The tender for this service would include the post 16 service provision currently operated in house (Hollowgate). An in house tender is submitted for this element of the service, to fully explore all options for Best Value in service provision.

7. Proposals and Details:

The Children, Leaving Care Act 2000, requires Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive service to all children leaving the care of the Local Authority who are looked after aged 16 and who have been Looked After for 14 weeks or more. This service also requires Local Authorities to ensure Care leavers have access to a range of accommodation options, in the case of care leavers aged 16 and 17 this Accommodation should be appropriately supported.

Currently the Leaving Care service is provided by NCH. The specialist Leaving Care Accommodation provision is provided in house (Hollowgate post 16 unit) and by NCH (Floating Support and supported Lodgings) an element of the NCH service is funded by Supporting people, which enables support to be provided for Care Leavers over the age of 18 and provides for Foster

Carer conversion to supported lodging providers, therefore enabling care leavers to remain in foster care.

The contract with NCH for provision of both services will end in April 2009 and a full Tender process has commenced to ensure that the new contract is agreed by October 2008, giving a 6 month notice period.

Tender Options

It is proposed that the current Leaving Care service and Care Leavers Accommodation service are tendered separately. Organisations will be free to tender for either or both services. Though there has been some ease of communication in one organisation providing both services, there is no reason why this is necessary and the separate projects may attract tenders from differing types of organisations, with specialist skills. The Commissioning Team Manager and Service Manager, provider services have undertaken a joint review of service provision and projection of service requirements over the next 5 years.

1. Leaving Care Service. There is evidence of consistency in the leaving care populations over the last 5 years, which is projected to continue. The leaving care population comprises of approximately 30 to 35 individuals each year, who require support for at least 5 years (more if in education). The gender split varies widely from year to year but averages out at 50% Male and Female. 95% of care leavers are white British, the remainder being mostly Unaccompanied Asylum seekers and from no consistent BME population. 68% of Care Leavers require support from more than one agency and 33% of Care leavers are recorded as having complex needs, which require intensive interventions. Current performance indicators show positive trends and it is unlikely that the service specification would benefit from significant amendment.

Tender Options. This service will require external tender, the option to be considered is whether to place an R.M.B.C. tender to manage the service in-house.

External management of the Leaving Care service has brought many benefits. Children, Leaving Care respond positively to the separation from Children's social care which has for many become a complex relationship. The voluntary sector has also an enhanced ability to attract external funding, bringing added value to the service. There is a considerable degree of interest in tendering for Leaving Care services within the established Children's Voluntary sector and it is likely that the tendering process will provide a response sufficient to test service provision on the basis of quality of service provision and value for money.

2. Care Leavers Accommodation Service. The current NCH service provides 16 units of tenancy support with a capacity to provide intensive tenancy support for 5 young people (up to 7 contacts per

week) and up to 10 places within Supported Lodgings. An improved partnership with Neighbourhoods and Adult services has enabled provision of accommodation for the use of care leavers who require intensive support and are aged 16 and 17. In addition 6 units of accommodation with 24 hour staffing are provided in house at the Hollowgate unit. Demand for supported accommodation is high, especially within the Hollowgate unit and for supported Lodgings. Recruitment for supported lodgings providers is subject to all the same pressures as for Foster Carers and the team work closely with the fostering team. Options for the expansion of the current Hollowgate resource through a new build, funded in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord and the Housing Corporation are currently being explored.

Tender Options. The Accommodation project currently managed by NCH will require external tender. The options for consideration are: inclusion of the current in house supported accommodation resource and consideration of an in-house Tender.

Expansion of the current Hollowgate unit to a 9 or 10 bedded unit will require a greater staffing input. The most effective means of increasing the availability of staff without increasing the revenue costs is through the use of a core and cluster model of service provision whereby floating support staff provide services to all service users including Hollowgate residents. Tender of the whole Accommodation service would enable a creative response to the staffing and management of all service provision. The Supporting People Team, who part fund the current NCH provision have indicated that they have no objections to this process and would provide practical support and advice.

It is likely that this tender would attract some interest from the Children's Voluntary sector and from The Housing support sector. As some provision is currently in-house and the management of scarce resources is an issue, it may, however be advisable to test this tender for best value through an in-house Tender bid.

Finance

The service provision proposed within this Tender would be managed within the current budget agreed for Leaving Care services. Should the proposal for the unified Accommodation project be agreed this also allows for efficiency savings which would be used to improve staffing to the Hollowgate service to enable expansion of provision should the proposals for a new build resource be successful. The financial implications of the tender process will be managed within existing resources.

1. Risk and Uncertainties

For the Leaving Care service, the main risk is that the tender process may not attract suitable applications, however, the Leaving Care Field is currently strong and Rotherham has a good profile which will encourage positive

applications. The current service providers have indicated that they will wish to re-tender for the service.

The Accommodation project is also likely to attract tenders from a variety of differing organisations from both the Children's and Supported Housing Sectors. Should the proposal to tender out the whole service provision (including Hollowgate) be accepted, advice will be taken about management of a tender of a service in development. Early discussions with the voluntary sector have indicated that change management processes of this type are acceptable within an external tender.

Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Leaving Care service will be managed within the new Targeted support team and future service provision will be developed within the wider Targeted youth support agendas.

2. Background and Consultation

This proposal is made with consideration of:
Children, Leaving Care Act 2000
Every Child Matters
Change Matters
Supporting People 5 Year Plan
Rotherham Leaving Care Policies and Procedures

Consultation with
Service Manager, resources
Commissioning Team
Supporting people team

Statistical information from
NCH
RMBC Children and Young people's services
National DFES statistics

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