

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	Local Placement Plan – Children’s Residential Home
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>Southampton City Council (SCC) are proposing to open council owned and maintained residential homes for Looked after Children in the City. These would be Ofsted regulated services which would ensure that fewer placements are made out of area and more Southampton children could have placements that meet their needs in the City.</p> <p>SCC have seen a significant increase in the numbers of children coming into care over the five years of 2010 to 2015, rising to a high of 637 in the summer of 2015. Whilst this number has been steadily reducing since then through a persistent focus on achieving permanency for children, the rate (105 per 10,000) is still higher than would be anticipated for a city of Southampton’s size and demographic. At the time of writing the number of looked after children remains just below 500.</p> <p>The City does not have enough residential care provision and what exists is delivered by the independent sector. Presently there are not any block contracts in place to ensure Southampton’s children can be guaranteed a placement, which means that children who require residential provision are often placed out of area. As of March 2019, the Council had approximately 31 children placed in independent residential accommodation at a total cost of £4.6M. Care packages have been increasing on an annual basis and due to the demand for placements, private providers can refuse placements if additional support fees are not agreed, knowing that the local authority is</p>	

unlikely to be able to source another placement. A significant proportion of the children in residential provision are placed more than 50 miles away from Southampton, which is both detrimental to children and young people who subsequently find it harder to maintain networks and stability, as well as presenting a financial and time pressure for the council.

SCC has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 to ensure there are enough local placements to support children in care remaining as close to their home and community as possible. Children and young people in the care of SCC require a range of placements to meet their needs. These placements include residential child care used for children and young people who struggle to manage relationships, as well as those who are needing an emergency placement but due to the lack of foster care placements, end up being placed in a residential facility.

The proposal is therefore to acquire and develop 6 homes located within Southampton. These will be residential homes for Looked after Children between the ages of 10 and 18. Five homes will be a home for 2 young people each and will focus on longer term placements. One home will have 4 beds available and be used for shorter term and emergency placements. This means SCC will have 14 additional placements locally within the city which will support a group of young people who cannot currently have their needs met with Southampton residential homes.

Summary of Impact and Issues

The biggest issues currently faced by children in residential provision is that a large proportion of them are placed out of area. This means they are often separated from their valuable networks while in their placement and means re-integration to the local area when their placement ends is more difficult.

Additionally where a large proportion of children in residential placements are greater than 50 miles away this causes additional pressure for professionals working with the young person as all visits are logistically more difficult to organise and cost SCC both greater in travel time and travel costs.

These proposals, while having many associated benefits also has a number of issues which will not be fully overcome by the proposals. Two key issues will remain:

- Not all children in current placement outside of Southampton will be guaranteed a local placement. This may not be in their best interests and a change in placement may in itself cause disruption to the young person.
- Not all children who require residential placements in the future are guaranteed to benefit directly from these proposals. The number of placements to be created are limited and depending on the individual

young persons needs, there remain a possibility they would not be able to be supported by these proposed residential homes (examples include those with significant disabilities and those requiring specialist care).

Potential Positive Impacts

The following points have been identified as potential positive impacts of these proposals:

- Greater ability to make placements close to home and school for young persons.
- Achieve better outcomes for young persons who can have placements closer to family/friends networks and continuity.
- Creation of approximately 50 new jobs across the residential units.
- Reduce time spent for professionals (social workers, virtual school, independent reviewing officer etc.) travelling to non-local placements. Additionally, this will reduce travel costs for these professionals travelling to non-local placements.
- SCC will have increased oversight, decision making, and management of placements due to the fact the council will own the residential home.
- The proposed regulating body for the residential homes (Ofsted) have supported the proposals at this stage.
- Other local authorities have been identified also developing similar plans suggesting SCC is moving in the same direction as many other local authorities.
- Increased ability to implement effective step-down procedures with better links to advanced foster care.

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Date	19 Feb 2020
Approved by Senior Manager	Hilary Brooks, Service Director - Children and Families Services
Date	19 Feb 2020

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	The greatest impact of the proposal is likely to be for young	In order to minimise the negative impacts and

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	<p>people between the ages of 10 to 18 whose needs require them to have a residential unit placement. For some young people currently in residential placements this may mean a change of placement, however this is also likely to impact individuals who require placements in the future who may or may not have lived within a residential home in the past. With a limited number of spaces available, it also means logistically placements in SCC homes may not be available for all young people.</p> <p>Current analysis of data shows children currently in residential placement are of the following ages:</p> <p>9 years old – 1 young person 10 years old – 3 young people 11 years old - 4 young people 12 years old - 1 young person 13 years old - 5 young people 14 years old – 3 young people 15 years old – 7 young people 16 years old – 4 young people 17 years old – 2 young people</p> <p>The biggest impact for these young people will be the fact that these units are within their home city and mean they can be placed in a familiar location and will not be separated from local networks, environment, family and friends. This provides a much more stable environment for young people and has been shown to improve outcomes for individuals.</p>	<p>support individuals, ALL placement decisions are made on a case by case basis. Therefore a proposed placement in an SCC home is not guaranteed and is not always appropriate, thus the needs of the individual will be considered and assessed to ensure the most appropriate placement is always chosen.</p> <p>These proposals also offer some young people an opportunity to step down into advanced foster care, this may not be a realistic opportunity for all young people placed geographically far away as it does not allow for a phased and planned transition.</p>

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Disability	<p>Current data shows 20 out of 30 children placed in residential homes which equates to 66% of placements have a disability recognised as they also have an Education and Health Care Plan.</p> <p>These proposals may positively impact individuals who have mild to moderate learning disabilities and require residential care as they could be supported locally via these proposals.</p> <p>These proposals would not impact individuals who require specialist care (services under jigsaw teams).</p>	<p>All placements would be made in the best interest of a young person and in line with their care assessment and care plan.</p> <p>In these circumstances staff would be trained to a level that allows them to support individuals with such needs.</p> <p>In the future proposals could be considered for short breaks which would support individuals with disabilities however it would be important to have established the current homes proposal before this was considered to ensure the focus remains on residential care provision.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>Currently no data is available as data is not reported in this way. We would report an individual's recognised gender not a change in gender.</p>	<p>While it is not currently known if this is an impacted criteria, if such circumstances arise trained staff would manage such cases appropriately in order to support the young person.</p> <p>A care assessment and care plan for a child would always take into account these factors if relevant when making a placement decision. Only residential homes which can support young people with such needs would</p>

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		accept placements.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No identified impact.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Pregnancy – while currently information suggests no current children in residential units are pregnant there is a small chance that a young person may become pregnant during a placement in a residential unit.</p> <p>Maternity – No identified impact at this point in time as a young person would not be placed in a residential unit in these circumstances, their needs would be met by alternative provision such as foster care or child and baby units.</p>	<p>While it is not currently known if this is an impacted criteria, if such circumstances arise trained staff would manage such cases appropriately in order to support the young person.</p> <p>A care assessment and care plan for a young person would always take into account these factors if relevant when making a placement decision.</p>
Race	<p>These proposals do not directly relate to an individual's race however these factors would be taken into account when considering which placements are most suitable for a young person.</p> <p>Currently young people in residential placements have the following ethnicity recorded:</p> <p>Mixed: White & Black African – 2 young people White British – 25 young people White other - 3 young people</p>	<p>When making a placement decision an individual's race would be considered by trained staff to ensure the placement does not cause negative impacts.</p> <p>All young people have an assessment prior to any placement which would include any cultural considerations linked to race, when looking at appropriate placements</p>
Religion or Belief	These proposals do not directly relate to an individual's religion or belief however these factors would be taken into account when considering which	When making a placement decision an individual's religion or beliefs would be considered by trained

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	<p>placements are most suitable for a young person.</p> <p>Currently young people in residential placements have the following religion or belief recorded:</p> <p>Catholic – 3 young people Christian - 7 young people Muslim - 1 young person No religion recorded- 18 young people Unable/refused to provide information - 1 young person</p>	<p>staff to ensure the placement does not cause negative impacts.</p> <p>All young people have an assessment prior to any placement which would include any religious considerations when looking at appropriate placements.</p>
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Of current placements as at the end of December 2019 the mix of sex/gender for those in residential placements is as follows:</p> <p>Female: 9 young people or 30% Male: 21 young people or 60%</p>	<p>Currently no decision has been taken as to whether or not the different residential units will take single sex placements or mixed genders. These decisions will be taken at the point of registration. This allows for decisions to be taken based on the needs of young people and the demand for different genders to be considered.</p> <p>Registration can reflect what's required both in terms of greatest demand but also which placements are harder to find. SCC would also be able to amend registrations, if approved by Ofsted, should it be required over time.</p> <p>All young people have an assessment prior to any placement which would</p>

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		include any gender considerations when looking at appropriate placements.
Sexual Orientation	Significant numbers of individual's in current placement have expressed challenges in identifying their sexual orientation or have changed their orientation, often on multiple occasions.	<p>All staff would be trained to manage and be sensitive to a young person's sexual orientation therefore enabling staff to manage cases appropriately in order to provide appropriate support to the young person.</p> <p>All young people have an assessment prior to any placement which would include any sexual orientations considerations when looking at appropriate placements.</p>
Community Safety	It has been identified that some young people in residential care may also be considered for foster care as a step-down procedure. Due to the level of training required it can be considered less risky for community safety when young people are in a residential environment.	Careful consideration will be given to the location of all residential units to ensure placements are made in safer areas of the city which support young people. This would be evidenced and considered through location risk assessments required as part of any future Ofsted registration.
Poverty	No identified impact.	
Health & Wellbeing	It is anticipated that local placements for Southampton young people will have positive impacts on family, friends and networks. They will be able to	All placements would be made in the best interest of a young person and in line with their care assessment and care

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	<p>maintain closer relationships and feel more integrated to the location where they are likely to gain their independence in the future. Additionally, there are also expected to be positive impacts for the family of the young person if they are still in contact.</p>	<p>plan.</p>
<p>Other Significant Impacts</p>	<p>No identified impact.</p>	

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