



EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children's Services
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Children's Services
DATE:	6 th July 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children's Services
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT: Residential Review

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A review of residential services has been carried out and the proposals are outlined in this report. The review has considered the following:

- Children's homes staffing - the review considered the staffing levels and the skills base of staff required to care for adolescents with the most complex needs.
- Expansion of the Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) offer to reduce the number of adolescents coming into the care system. The ASU model is recognised for effectively keeping young people out of the care system by providing adolescents (age 11+) with a range of difficulties and their families with outreach support, programmes, activities and short breaks away from their home. The increased demand for this service indicates a need to expand capacity. The review recommends the development of an ASU model that links with the developing multi agency adolescent strategy, and links with the Family Group Conferencing (FGC) team, which focuses on those young people most at risk of entering the care system. The FGC team has effective step down arrangements so that young people and their families receive the right levels of support, at the right time for as long as they need it.
- The potential to provide short breaks to a number of children in the 8 to 11 age range in order to prevent admissions to care. This could be provided at the Lytham Rd base.
- The need to continue the provision of support to young people in fragile foster placements to maintain positive placement stability.
- Improved outcomes for young people at risk of coming into the care system - evidence indicates that young people who enter the care system in adolescence achieve poor outcomes in relation to emotional and mental health, education and on a range of other indicators.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Member is asked to approve the following proposals:

1. Cherry Tree to change from a children's home to become the main Adolescent Support Unit, offering short breaks and outreach support to young people aged 11 to 17 who are most at risk of coming into care. ASU capacity to increase from 55 cases with 20 of these receiving regular short breaks to 75 cases with 25 receiving regular short breaks.

2. The current ASU base at Lytham Rd to be retained as a satellite base.
3. New staff role profiles to be introduced across the residential service to ensure that the service has the staffing capacity required to manage young people with very complex needs.
4. 70 Whalley New Rd to continue to operate as a 4 bedded children's home for young people whose care plan is long term residential care.
5. 594 Whalley New Rd to become surplus to requirements and reviewed as a Council asset.

3. BACKGROUND

The background to this review is as follows:

- Staff at Cherry Tree have struggled to recover from the death of a young person in their care in 2016 and have been increasingly unable to manage the complex and challenging behaviours of adolescents admitted to the home. Despite extensive training, support and a period of closure it is clear that the skills base of staff required to manage this cohort of young people has not developed to the extent required.
- Whalley New Rd Children's Home has been operating below full capacity partly due to the current skill base of the team and partly due to matching considerations. With better skilled staff the home will be able to manage at full capacity and more effectively contribute to meeting the demand for residential placements. The complex needs of these children require a very skilled staff team able to manage challenging behaviours and staffing will be reviewed to meet this. The staffing capacity and skillset will allow for improved 'matching' ensuring the home is in a better position to operate a full capacity.
- Outcomes for young people entering the care system in adolescence, particularly between the ages of 14 and 16, are poor and ASU provision is effective at keeping young people out of the care system.
- There is a high level of demand for outreach services to support adolescents at risk of coming into the care system; this demand cannot be met by the existing ASU provision. The ASU building at Lytham Rd is too small for expansion but the need to reduce the number of adolescents entering the care system has persisted.
- The costs of caring for adolescents in the care system are very high. There is a national shortage of foster carers willing to offer adolescent placements, therefore pushing young people into the residential sector where the costs are significantly higher. Keeping young people with their families with appropriate levels of support is less costly and achieves better outcomes for young people that extend into adulthood.
- There is a demand for short breaks provision for children in the 8 to 11 age group also at risk of coming into the care system at some point in the future working in partnership with staff from the Limes. The Limes provides intense support to families where children are on the cusp of coming into care.
- Retaining Lytham Rd as a satellite base will allow the service to conduct independence work with 16/17 year olds likely to move to semi-independent living and to undertake more structured and evidence based group work with young people, parents and foster carers.

- 594 Whalley New Rd has been considered for use as a residential provision particularly for young people with mental health difficulties who are hard to place. However, the building requires significant investment to meet the standards required by OFSTED for this purpose. In addition, learning from previous practice around accommodation for young people with mental health issues suggests the staff skillset and capabilities to manage extremely vulnerable and challenging young people with complex needs is limited and it is far more effective to work with external providers to support with accommodation. It is worth noting that there is a growing issue across the region/nationally to provide suitable accommodation for young people with complex mental health issues, which incur significant costs and staffing resource. The service recognises it is unable to resource appropriate training, staffing levels and resilience within the workforce to manage the very complex cases hence external providers are better positioned to support high risk young people and ultimately provide efficient use of existing resources.
- The ASU has been very effective at supporting young people in foster care where there is a risk of placement disruption. The demand for short breaks support for these children has increased and cannot be met without the expansion of short breaks provision; in addition the expanded ASU will support pressures around emergency beds without hindering the short breaks offer or the outreach work. The proposed expansion will allow ASU to provide an innovative offer of support to foster placements that will encourage more foster carers to consider placements for adolescents and will be marketed to assist the recruitment of foster carers for this age group. The link between ASU and the Revive Service (Emotional Health and Well-being Service) will be strengthened as part of this proposal.
- The expanded ASU will require new role profiles to build a staff team with the skillset required to undertake structured programmes of work with young people, undertake family work, complete complex assessments, lead and engage in activities with young people, and manage young people presenting high levels of risk-taking behaviour. This proposal also addresses the need to develop more effective step-down arrangements from ASU.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

There is potential that the necessary changes in the role profiles could lead to some redundancies as not all Cherry Tree staff will be able to make the transition to become ASU workers. These roles are very different and require different skills and abilities. Similarly, the introduction of new role profiles at Whalley New Rd will not suit some staff. The waking watch role will no longer be required as the review concludes that this role should be replaced by increasing the number of residential staff who will all be required to perform the waking watch role when they are on rota to do so. This addresses issues arising from this role which include Waking Night Watch staff being isolated from the rest of the team, Waking Night Watch staff being unable to develop relationships with the young people and Waking Night Watch staff being unable to attend training and team meetings.

A review of this kind is always very unsettling for staff teams and this can have an impact on service delivery and ultimately on young people. Over the next 6 months the transition will be carefully monitored, managed and supported by senior staff.

The loss of Cherry Tree as a residential unit reduces the number of residential beds by 5. However, in reality Cherry Tree has been unable to operate at this level of capacity for some time. To offset the impact it will be necessary to achieve a reduction in the numbers of young people coming into care in a short timescale. Achieving improved foster placement stability and working innovatively with foster carers will also reduce the demand for residential placements.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The combined current budgets of the ASU and Cherry Tree will be used to fund this proposal. No additional funding is required to achieve the staffing of the expanded ASU. Staffing implications at Whalley New Road will also be met from existing resources.

It is possible that additional costs may arise from a reduction in residential capacity. It is anticipated that these costs will be offset by future savings to be realised from having Whalley New Rd at full occupancy, reducing the number of adolescents coming into the care system and developing the support offer to foster carers so that more are willing to offer adolescent placements.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications have been identified. Ofsted have been notified of the change of use for Cherry Tree Children's Home to the Adolescent Support Unit.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Existing resources will be utilised.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated



Resi Review EIA
v0.2.pdf

with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Staff consultation began w/c 18th June 2018

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION: 4

CONTACT OFFICER: Imran Akuji, Head of Service, Adolescent Services

DATE: 19th June 2018

**BACKGROUND
PAPER:** None