

## SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2018- 2021

<b>Cabinet Date</b>	30 January 2019
<b>Children and Young People</b>	Cllr Richard Boyles
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Background Documents</b>	<p>The Sufficiency Strategy used the following document to inform its content:</p> <p>Children, Young People and Families Needs Assessment 2018</p> <p>A summary of the Sufficiency Strategy is attached in Appendix 1</p> <p>Full Sufficiency Strategy attached in Appendix 2</p>
<b>Location/Contact for inspection of Background Documents</b>	<a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/children-and-young-people/2018-children-and-young-peoples-needs-analysis/">https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/children-and-young-people/2018-children-and-young-peoples-needs-analysis/</a>
<b>Main Consultees</b>	The Sufficiency Strategy has been developed with children and young people. 48 children in care and care leavers took part in consultation sessions in 2018 to share their experiences and views, to inform future commissioning.
<b>Planned Dates</b>	As the strategy is implemented and service provision is developed, children, young people and their families will be engaged further in designing specific services. The Strategy spans three years (2018-2021), but it will be refreshed annually, through feedback from all stakeholders.
<b>Divisional Councillor</b>	All
<b>Officer</b>	Wendy Williams, Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning Tel: 01452 328526 Email: <a href="mailto:wendy.williams3@gloucestershire.gov.uk">wendy.williams3@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval from Cabinet for the formal publication and implementation of the proposed Sufficiency Strategy for Gloucestershire Children's Services.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That Cabinet</p> <p>(a) Approves the Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People 2018-2021 for publication and implementation</p>

	<p>(b) Delegates authority to the Director of Children’s Services to develop an implementation plan, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People; and</p> <p>(c) Receives further reports as and when appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations</b></p>	<p>To comply with the duty of sufficiency, meeting needs for children and young people across the whole continuum of need.</p> <p>To provide and commission effective, efficient and good quality provision, to manage demand and reduce avoidable high cost placements.</p>
<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p>	<p>The proposed Vulnerable Children’s budget for 2019/20 in the Medium Term Financial Strategy is £84.3 million (December Cabinet 2018); this strategy covers the budget for these services. Through the implementation of this strategy services will be reconfigured to achieve efficiencies through better planning, purchasing of placements and market development. In liaison with the Lead Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, delegated decisions on specific service developments and contract awards will be made by the Director of Children’s Services with any financial implications being considered by Cabinet.</p>

## MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Sufficiency Strategy covers the breadth of children and young people's needs, and the provision of universal services to support all children, young people and families, right through to specialist services to support children and young people with complex needs.
- 1.2 As corporate parents, Gloucestershire County Council is committed to ensuring children and young people in care achieve the best possible outcomes and are well prepared and supported to step confidently into adulthood with the support they need. When they cannot remain within their family, Gloucestershire County Council is committed to providing children and young people with permanence and stability in care in settings, which meet their changing needs over time.
- 1.3 The duty to provide or procure placements for Children in Care (referred to as children looked after in legislation) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. This has since been strengthened by the introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.
- 1.4 There is a duty of "sufficiency" that requires Local Authorities and partners to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children are available locally, or that there is plan in place to move towards that position. This requires a strategy that describes how a Local Authority intends to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care.
- 1.5 The guidance also requires that the commissioning standards on securing sufficient accommodation for children in care, also apply to children in need who are at risk of care or custody (referred to as children on the edge of care). This is important since it is preferable, where it is in the best interest of the child, to provide support to avoid the need for them to become children in care.
- 1.6 This strategy sets out the overall approach to managing demand, focusing specifically on the right solutions at key points within "The Integrated Pathway". This includes provision of edge of care services to ensure the best possible outcomes for families. The strategy also focuses upon appropriate planning and delivering sufficient and high quality accommodation and associated support in order to ensure every child who is looked after away from home achieves their potential, irrespective of their permanence plan.

### 2. The Strategy

- 2.1 Appendix 1** outlines a summary of the Sufficiency Strategy. This highlights the numbers of children in care as at March 2018 which was 651, and that with continued increases, there potentially could be 760 children in care by 2020. The largest proportion of children coming into care is those in the 10-15 age group (35%). The number of children in this age band has doubled in the last 5 years. Through provision of the right care at the right time, the current proportion of children in care can be maintained and where possible, reduced.

2.2 Young people want placement stability; if they have to move placement they want to know why, where they are going and the opportunity to be involved. They want to know what information is being shared with carers and organisations; they understand information sharing needs to take place, to support the best match to their needs, but they want to be sure this information is in context and collaborative. Above all they want continuity of care; to feel cared for, loved and a sense of belonging.

## **2.3 Planning for Success**

2.3.1 The Strategy outlines the actions required around planning for success for children and young people. This will involve:

- Intervening early
- A robust early help assessment
- A wide understanding of thresholds and consistent use of these
- Better planning for children on the edge of care
- Developing bespoke services for 10-15yrs and 16-17yrs
- Supporting our most complex young people with a multi-agency response (IRIS)
- identifying risks of exploitation early and responding appropriately

## **2.4 Right Placement First Time**

2.4.1 The Strategy focusses on actions to ensure that the Council can support children and young people with the right placement, first time:

- Step down from social care interventions to early help plans and robust consistent implementation of thresholds for stepping up to social care assessment and interventions.
- Good planning and assessment for those coming into care and those in an unstable placement
- Increasing the percentage of in house fostering placements from 70% to 80% of children placed within the next three years.
- Dedicated work with the market to develop provision for GCC
- Increasing placements within Gloucestershire and neighbouring authorities
- Improving management and oversight of placements – approval and monitoring
- Implementing the new children with complex needs strategy
- Developing good quality local supported accommodation

## **2.5 One Page Profiles**

2.5.1 The development of a one page profile will focus on the assets and qualities of a child or young person, and they themselves will inform the content of the profile. This will move away from a focus on recording of problems, negative behaviours and risks.

## **2.6 Commissioning for Continuity of Provision**

2.6.1 Currently, commissioning arrangements, to purchase placements for children and young people, sit predominantly within three Southwest framework agreements. There is great national support for framework agreements, as these can achieve good efficiencies through joint buying power which drives down costs, depending on how robust the framework market is. However, the Southwest market is flooded with a growing demand for placements, many of the providers are ill equipped to provide the quality placements needed as they are small, independent and under developed.

2.6.2 Moving to a 'Child's Pathway' commissioning model, would dramatically reduce the Council's dependency on the Southwest framework. There is opportunity to build a flexible, responsive placement portfolio that is child and young people centred. So, the Council will commission to a "partnership" model, to work with two or three providers, who will offer a whole placement journey encompassing, independent fostering, residential homes and supported accommodation, with Staying Put, Staying Close and floating support also being available. These providers could be large organisations who offer all these elements within their portfolio, or they could be a consortium of a number of smaller providers who work together,

## **2.7 Panel Plan**

2.7.1 The Council will take into account current panels that are in place, and where appropriate reconfigure them, moving away from the current retrospective approval and review process of placements (see Appendix 1 showing the panels). A new model will be established which will provide both financial grip on the allocation of resources, as well as management oversight for decision making, monitoring arrangements and reviews.

## **2.8 Preparing for Independence**

2.8.1 The Council will develop a complete platform of accommodation options for care leavers and young people in vulnerable circumstances. Accommodation options will range from supported living with shared or single occupancy with 24/7 support, to staying put options in foster care post 18 years.

## **3. Risk Assessment**

3.1 There are no specific risks to manage at this time resulting from the production of the Sufficiency Strategy. Within each section of the Sufficiency Strategy, there is an associated action plan. Action plans will be implemented and managed using a project management approach, with a risk and issues log being actively managed. The Children and Families Commissioning Hub has recently recruited additional staff to support the implementation of the Strategy.

#### **4. Officer Advice**

4.1 The Sufficiency Strategy relates to a specific duty outlined in the Children Act 1989 and Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010), therefore it is recommended that the publication and implementation of it is endorsed.

4.2 The Sufficiency Strategy outlines how Gloucestershire County Council will ensure that children and young people who need to be in care, can grow up in high quality provision that is well matched to and effectively meets their immediate and long-term needs, and provides them with stability and permanence at the earliest opportunity.

4.3 The Strategy is based on views from young people, data and benchmarking within a robust needs assessment, and intelligence from the placements team in relation to sourcing placements and costs. Whilst one area of focus is on services for children in care and on the edge of care, the Strategy focusses on prevention and early intervention, therefore it covers the whole continuum of need for children and young people.

#### **5. Equalities considerations**

5.1 A Due Regard Statement has been completed which considers the Sufficiency Strategy in relation to the Equality Duty. This assessment highlights the potential for commissioning intentions and priorities identified within the Sufficiency Strategy for Children's Services to achieve positive impacts for Gloucestershire's children in care, care leavers and disabled children, and economic impacts for Gloucestershire as a whole.

5.2 Cabinet Members should read and consider the Due Regard Statement in order to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

#### **6. Consultation feedback**

6.1 We have been listening to our Children in Care and working with providers and practitioners to determine the priorities for the Sufficiency Strategy. A consultation period for the consideration of the Strategy by partners was held in January 2019. Ongoing engagement will be undertaken with all stakeholders through the implementation of the action plans.

6.2 The Sufficiency Strategy has been developed with children and young people. 48 children in care and care leavers took part in consultation sessions in 2018 to share their experiences and views, to inform future commissioning

6.3 Key themes from the consultation included providing consistency for children and young people; having planned pathways instead of being reactive; and building up trust and relationships within services.

6.4 To ensure this strategy is robust, the Council has drawn on a wide range of stakeholders, available data and evidence to inform it. This includes historical trend and comparator data, current service data and qualitative data from children and young people at the heart of the current service. The Council has also drawn on evidence around best practice both nationally and from those who have a detailed knowledge of our local services.

## **7. Performance Management/Follow-up**

7.1 Once authorised, officers will establish a programme board to oversee the delivery of this Strategy, with quarterly monitoring of action plans. The Board will be governed by the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Parenting Board.

<b>Report Title</b>	Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	Children Act 1989, 2004 Children and Families Act Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.
<b>Relevant County Council policy</b>	Children and Young Peoples Plan
<b>Resource Implications</b>	The proposed Vulnerable Children's budget for 2019/20 in the Medium Term Financial Strategy is £84.3 million (December Cabinet 2018); this strategy covers the budget for these services. Through the implementation of this strategy services will be reconfigured to achieve efficiencies through better planning, purchasing of placements and market development. In liaison with the Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services, delegated decisions on specific service developments and contract awards will be made by the Director of Children's Services with any financial implications being considered by Cabinet.
<b>Sustainability checklist:</b>	
Partnerships	Children and Young People's Partnership Joint commissioning
Decision Making and Involvement	N/A
Economy and Employment	Supporting young people's employment opportunities
Caring for people	Securing outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.
Social Value	The implementation of the Sufficiency Strategy will deliver additional social, economic and environmental benefits to Gloucestershire.
Built Environment	N/A

Natural Environment' including Ecology (Biodiversity)	N/A
Education and Information	Supporting young people and parents to access employment and education.
<b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	Carbon Emissions Implications? Neutral Vulnerable to climate change? No
<b>Due Regard Statement</b>	Has a Due Regard Statement been completed? Yes  A copy of the full Due Regard Statement can be accessed on GLOSTEXT via <a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1</a>  Alternatively a hard copy is available for inspection from Jo Moore, Democratic Services Unit, e-mail: <a href="mailto:jo.moore@gloucestershire.gov.uk">jo.moore@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a> .
<b>Human rights Implications</b>	None
<b>Consultation Arrangements</b>	As described in the body of the report