
Decision maker:	Interim Director for Children's Wellbeing
Decision date:	17 May 2017
Title of report:	Herefordshire intensive placement support service (HIPSS) and therapeutic intervention support service (TISS)
Report by:	Commissioning officer

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To determine whether to exercise the option to renew the contract for the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) and Therapeutic Intervention Support Service (TISS) from 1st September 2017 to 31st March 2018.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **The contractual option is implemented to renew the existing contract for HIPSS/TISS (Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service and Therapeutic Intervention Support Service) for 7 months from 1st September 2017 to 31st March 2018 at a maximum cost of £303,500.**

Alternative options

- 1 Do nothing. The contract with Action for Children will end as scheduled on 31st August 2017. The implication of doing nothing would be reduced clinical support for vulnerable looked after children and the possibility of placement disruption as the support HIPSS carers currently receive would no longer be available under current arrangements. If these placements disrupt the children are at high risk of being placed in residential care at an average weekly cost of £3500.
- 2 The service could be re-procured for a new contract or brought in-house from 1 September 2017. This option is not recommended because there is an opportunity to 1) align the service with financial years and 2) inform any recommissioning exercise following an update of the looked after children and complex needs placements commissioning sufficiency strategy, which is due to be completed during 2017.

Reasons for recommendations

- 3 In May 2014 approval was given to award a contract for 3 years with an option to renew for a further year. Renewing for a period of only 7 months will mean the contract and any future re-commissioning will align with financial years. This renewal period will provide the necessary time period to allow for an in-depth evaluation of the service and the work on updating the looked after children and complex needs placements commissioning sufficiency strategy (to be referred to within this report as “the sufficiency strategy”) to be undertaken prior to any potential re-procurement.

Key considerations

- 4 The contract allows for a 12 month renewal. Four months of the 1 year was used at the beginning of the contract start for mobilisation leaving a potential 8 months for the renewal. Renewing for 7 months will align the contract with financial years and there are no sanctions or penalties within the contract that can be applied to the council for a renewal of less than 12 months.
- 5 In 2014 Action for Children was awarded the contract to work with the council to develop and deliver an intensive therapeutic placement support service for some of the most challenging children and young people in care or at risk of coming into care, in county. This service aims to reduce the numbers of children who step up from family based care into residential care or aid the transition of stepping down to local family based care.
- 6 The service aims to help young people develop greater emotional well-being and control over their behaviours so that they can engage in meaningful relationships, participate positively in the community, take advantage of opportunities in education and learning and live successful independent lives. HIPSS work in partnership and provide clinical support to the fostering service, who recruits the carers. Case studies for the HIPSS and TISS services are in Appendix 1.
- 7 The service supports the council’s role as corporate parent and the sufficiency strategy by providing placement stability and reducing the need for residential placements. Whilst there have been a number of placement breakdowns, this does not exceed what would be expected given the needs and challenges of the young people being supported.
- 8 Since April 2015, HIPSS have worked with a total of 22 young people. Of these 5 have been supported to return to live with their birth family; 3 to live independently; 6

stepped down to foster placements of which 2 were kinship placements; 2 are in residential care and 5 young people are placed with HIPSS carers currently. Up until 31 March 2017, 2903 bed nights, have been provided by HIPSS carers.

- 9 Although this service was not developed to support emergency referrals, HIPSS carers have provided 9 emergency placements, where the young person has required a placement to start that day. This demonstrates the partnership working with fostering services, by providing an interim placement, where a HIPSS carer has availability, when no other option was identified following searches. If this option was not available, the likely outcome would have been for the child to be placed in a residential placement out of county, whilst the search to identify alternative suitable fostering placement continues.
- 10 The LAC population has increased nationally; however Herefordshire has seen an increase at a higher rate, compared to statistical neighbours. In January 2013 Herefordshire had 218 looked after children, whereas on 1 January 2017, it stood at 294; a 26% increase. Against this increase, the number of residential placements has remained fairly constant at around 10 - 12 placements a year. Maintaining this level against an increase in LAC population has been achieved through a mixture of demand management by social care and HIPSS preventing a step up to more intensive placement for some of the challenging children and young people.
- 11 TISS has provided 74 consultations during 2016 regarding individual children, 35 consultations to the Edge of Care team and 1 to the 16+ team. A programme of regular consultations for 16+ team has been planned to continue into 2017. Evaluation forms completed by those attending consultations indicate that the service is highly valued by professionals particularly in understanding the behaviour of children and young people and planning approaches to supporting and managing their behaviour. TISS has also delivered training on a wide range of topics to social workers, foster carers, family support workers, and independent reviewing officers, a training provider and SENCO team, which evaluation shows to be highly valued by participants. A case study in appendix 1 demonstrates the support the service has provided.
- 12 The HIPSS service has the capacity to work with up to 8-10 placements at any one time. Carers are recruited and supported by the council's in-house fostering service and they currently have 7 specialist carers. ; The aim was to recruit sufficient carers to support 8 – 10 placements including respite. Difficulty in recruiting carers has impacted on the service's ability to operate at its full capacity and capability. A recruitment programme for new carers is still on-going.

Community impact

- 13 The Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) and Therapeutic Intervention Support Service (TISS) has supported children to stay in their local community and to step down from residential. 5 children who were in residential placements out of county are now placed in county and some of those at risk of residential have returned home to family.
- 14 By keeping children that would otherwise have gone into residential care in the community they are able to contribute to and integrate into the community better and achieve better outcomes. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of out of county placements, this would be considerably higher but for HIPSS.
- 15 The service provides intensive wrap-around therapeutic support as an alternative to residential care, that is outcome focussed and built on a robust evidence-based approach. Substituting the use of institutional care with local family based alternatives

not only increases the potential for improved long term positive outcomes for young people but is also much more cost effective.

- 16 Herefordshire's Children and Young Peoples Partnership and the council are committed to supporting families within our community. The Children and Young People's Plan has the vision for children and young people to grow up healthy, happy and safe within supportive families and carers. We want them to have the best health, education and opportunities to enable them to reach their full potential. Our main priority is to keep children and young people safe and give them the best start in life. Cases studies have been written to demonstrate the value of this service - Appendix 1
- 17 Remaining in county is better for the children as it supports them with maintaining contact with family and friends, as well as being able to continue education without a change of school, in most circumstances. Their network of support is also closer, which also reduces service costs, such as travel expenses and reduces travel time so to provide a more effective use of staff time.
- 18 This service supports the principles outlined in the corporate plan, Children & Young People's Partnership and Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Equality duty

- 19 Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:
"A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

20 This was a new service in 2014, identified as a need by an in-depth analysis of the looked after children cohort, at the time. It provides extensive wrap around support in a foster care family environment within the county, as an alternative to being placed in a residential setting usually outside the county. It is a priority of the directorate to not place children in residential care wherever possible, but to place within local communities in a family environment.
- 21 An equality impact and needs assessment form has been updated.
- 22 Within the contract there is a contractual obligation for Action for Children to monitor equality and diversity. They must have in place (at all times whilst providing any services and in relation to its activities within the United Kingdom) appropriate policies, procedures, and systems in place to monitor and enforce those procedures, to ensure its compliance with relevant law of the United Kingdom relating to equalities and anti-discrimination, including the Equality Act 2010.

Financial implications

- 23 The cost for renewing the contract for seven months from 1 September 2017 to 31 March 2018 is at a maximum of £303,500.
- 24 Officers will implement the price review process in line with the contract with a view to achieve efficiencies by the provider during the renewed period.
- 25 If the contract is renewed as recommended the final value since the start date 1 September 2014 to March 2018, will be at a maximum of £1,740,000.
- 26 There have been five young people that stepped down from a residential placement to a HIPSS fostering placement, totalling 1,100 nights of provision. Initial evaluation shows that the total cost for these 5 placements reduced by £100k, which has helped the directorate to manage placement spend during a period of growth in the LAC population. In order to better demonstrate the value of the HIPSS approach, further evaluation work will also consider the costs avoided by working with children at risk of entering residential care, and the cost of any child stepping-up from HIPSS to residential care.

Legal implications

- 27 A renewal of this contract for 7 months will be on existing terms and conditions. If the service is either re-procured or brought in-house, consideration has to be given to any implications under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and the European Acquired Rights Directive 77/187 and Rights Amendment Directive 2001/23/EC or any re-enactment or amendment thereof.

Risk management

- 28 The risk of not renewing the contract at this stage may result in increased placement disruptions and increase use of high cost residential placements. Placements would need to be supported by less specialised internal services, which in itself would create significant pressure within the social care system. There would be a reduction in skills development of staff and foster carers, which could destabilise families who access the service. This may result in increased referrals to MASH and some children having to be accommodated.
- 29 The number of placements will continue to rise, and children will not receive the specialist therapeutic care required and may step up to more intensive and expensive placements.

Consultees

- 30 As part of the service evaluation will involve seeking the views of young people who have used HIPSS, and HIPSS carers.

Appendices

Appendix 1 HIPSS and TISS case studies

Background papers

- None identified.