

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	Decision to vary the current contract for the Herefordshire intensive placement support service (HIPSS) for 12 months from 1 April 2023 up to 31 March 2024
<b>Date of decision:</b>	17/11/2022
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Service Director All Age Commissioning
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	In January 2018, following a competitive tender exercise, approval was given to award Action for Children a contract to deliver HIPSS, for 3 years with an option to renew for up to a further 2 years <a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50025367&amp;Opt=0">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50025367&amp;Opt=0</a> .
<b>Ward:</b>	Countrywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	The current provider Action for Children have confirmed their willingness to continue to deliver this service for the 12 months extension period.  Market research has shown that a number of other local authorities deliver a similar service model in house interlinked with their internal fostering services however, there are also a number of local authorities who do commission their therapeutic support externally.
<b>Decision made:</b>	To vary the current contract with Action for Children to extend the delivery of Herefordshire intensive placement support service (HIPSS) for up to 12 months from 1 April 2023 up to 31 March 2024 at a maximum cost of £407,290.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>The HIPSS approach supports the council's;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role as a corporate parent</li> <li>• Children and young people's plan (2019-24)</li> <li>• Sufficiency strategy aims by providing placement stability and reducing the need for residential placements.</li> </ul> <p>The main aims of the HIPSS service are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce reliance on agency fostering and residential placements</li> <li>• Help children and 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</li> <li>• Reduce the spend for agency placements</li> </ul> <p>Following a review of HIPSS undertaken in July 2022, the recommendation is to vary the current contract for a further 12 months to allow commissioning and operational colleagues to complete a full needs analysis and understand the overall therapeutic vision of the Council.</p> <p>The HIPSS service has helped to alleviate some of the pressures arising from growing caseloads and recruitment challenges by supporting children to safely step-down from residential care or by helping to stabilise their existing fostering place and preventing them from entering residential</p>

	<p>care.</p> <p>From April 2018 to the end of March 2022, the service supported 41 children deemed at risk of entering, or potentially able to step down from, residential care. A further 126 looked after children have received lower amounts of direct or indirect support via consultations or short term interventions. This has helped to improve carer resilience, which can prevent placement breakdown, reducing the risk of a child entering residential care.</p> <p>The majority of children who have received intensive support from the service are seen to be showing improvements in their ability to manage their own behaviour and engage in positive relationships.</p> <p>During the review period (April 2018 up to end March 22), 76% of children and young people achieved positive outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stepped down to general foster care</li> <li>• staying put placement</li> <li>• stepped down to supported living</li> <li>• reunified home</li> <li>• stabilised fostering placement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p>	<p>As the council's in-house fostering service look at increasing its capacity of step down placements; which will be available to those who are supported by the HIPSS approach, there is a risk that the service will have to be flexible with its therapeutic advice and guidance to support the wider social care workforce. Commissioners will work with social care staff and the HIPSS service to identify solutions to ensure carers and placements receive relevant support with issues before they escalate.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do nothing. This is not recommended. The contract with Action for Children will end as scheduled on 31 March 2023. The implication of doing nothing would be an overnight loss of specialist support for looked after children and their carers with an increased likelihood of additional placement disruptions.</li> <li>• The council undertakes a competitive procurement exercise to award new contract to deliver the service at the same/similar size and scope. This is not recommended at present as a full needs analysis is required to plan future provision.</li> <li>• To bring the service in-house as a specialist therapeutic unit in-house from 1 April 2023. This option is not recommended at present as a full needs analysis is require to plan future provision and the council may not be in a position to recruit and retain the specialist staffing required to deliver the service effectively.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None</p>