

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Report subject	Children's Services - Financial Update
Date	15 October 2019
Corporate Director	Judith Ramsden, Corporate Director, Children's Services

1.0 Background

1.1 As part of the Quarter 1 BCP Council Budget Monitoring a request was made for the Corporate Director of Children's Service to prepare a report setting out:

- the actions being taken or proposed to ensure CiC numbers do not exceed those assumed in the budget
- the actions to reduce the cost of the Children's front door Social Work teams
- the actions to cover the cost of the extra interim management capacity

2.0 National Context

2.1 In the national budget context, pressures in relation to children services is mirrored in BCP such as:

- the numbers of children with complex needs who need statutory services;
- the costs of public care;
- the associated costs for children with SEN/D; and
- the lack of social workers and costs of interim staff.

2.2 As a new authority, we have inherited budget pressures from 2018/19 and the predecessor Council's which we will continue to address.

3.0 Children in Care (CiC)

3.1 The pressure seen in Christchurch for CiC has increased due to a small increased number of residential placements and other placement costs escalating. The remaining CiC forecast for the previously Bournemouth & Poole localities has reduced due to focused project work and a net decrease in residential placements.

3.2 We are working closely with our commissioning colleagues to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective resource for the children and young people who require our 'care'.

3.3 The service is focussed on strengthening the application of the signs of safety model, working with families to support children and young people remaining in their family wherever possible.

3.4 There is a weekly high-risk case meeting which includes Service Managers, YOS representative and a representative from the Child Exploitation service to ensure strategic management oversight and a shared holistic approach to planning for our children on the edge of care.

3.5 The service is tracking and reviewing our children in care cohort to secure permanence arrangements are executed in a timely manner. This includes revisiting plans for children who have been in care for over 12 months and those in high cost provision.

3.6 There is a focus on timely interventions to rehabilitate children home to their families wherever possible.

4.0 Front Door Social Work Teams

4.1 Historically in both preceding authorities significant pressure was seen in both the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and the Assessment Team.

4.2 Resources were directed to cover case load and the demand entering the system. With the creation of BCP there has been an opportunity to review the new BCP Front Door.

4.3 Colleagues have also been engaged in a recent peer review specifically looking at this area of the service, in the light of previous inspection judgements and the reality that BCP needed to create 1 service from the 2 existing services.

4.4 This has led to a DfE funded partnership with one of the national Partners in Practice, North Tyneside who will be supporting the Local Authority and Partners to re design the multi-agency safeguarding hub to ensure its effectiveness and enable us to quantify the cost profile of the new single 'first response' team which will include the MASH and the integrated early help support route and professional consultation and advise service.

5.0 Interim Management Cover

5.1 The creation of BCP and the creation of the single senior leadership team led to a planned transition to new appointments and the need for safe transitional arrangements.

5.2 Historical interim management roles were inherited from 1 April with planned end dates of September 2019 which allowed for the permanent recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Social care and the Youth Offending Service and during this period the permanent Service Director for Family Services and Inclusion was appointed and has joined the BCP team.

5.3 An additional interim service director was needed between May and October to lead the self-assessment and base line analysis of where BCP is regarding Early Help and services for the most vulnerable young people, SEN/D services and the Virtual School for our Children in Care.

5.4 All these services need system wide restructure and improvement to meet the needs identified in the community, be fit for purpose and to enable 1 system to operate across BCP.