



Financial Year	2016/17
Proposal no.	CS105
Directorate	Children's
Service Name	Safeguarding Children Unit
Area of Service	Safeguarding Children Unit

Savings Programme Pre-consultation Report			
Subject:	<i>Children's Rights Service</i>		
Report of	<i>Gail Hopper</i>	Author:	<i>Sandra Bruce</i>
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Children's Services	Author Telephone:	<i>Lead Officer Tel</i>
Type of Consultation	<i>Service Delivery with Workforce Implications</i>	Author Email:	<i>Sandra.bruce@rochdale.gov.uk</i>

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that members consider the proposal to Children's Rights Service in order to achieve savings of £30k.
- 1.2 A reduction in the commissioning cost for the children's rights service, for cared for children. This will include a change in the terms of the commission
- 1.3 The participation function and the independent visitor function of the children's rights service commission to be delivered by the Council's youth empowerment team from April 2016.
- 1.4 The advocacy function of the children's rights service to remain commissioned in order to meet the councils statutory duties

Reason for recommendation

- 1.5 For the past 9 years the council has commissioned out its children's rights service which is currently delivered by the Children's Society. In the main this is due to the statutory requirement for the council to deliver an advocacy service to its cared for children which sits outside of council management. The council also has a statutory duty to provide independent return interviews for cared for children who have gone missing which also need to be commissioned externally for the council to fulfil its statutory duty. However in light of the need to make savings consideration has been given to other functions of the children rights service being delivered internally which will not compromise the council's statutory responsibilities as a corporate parent and may also result in greater management oversight in terms of the quality of delivery, at less cost. The proposal is to continue to commission the advocacy function but, to deliver the participation function of the contract through the council's youth empowerment team.
- 1.6 The council also has a duty to deliver an independent visitor service for its cared for children which could also be managed through the youth empowerment team.

2 Background

- 2.1 The children rights service delivers on some key statutory responsibilities for the council as part of its corporate parent duty. Namely it provides independent advocacy for cared for children and independent interviews for cared for children who have had a period of missing. The council will need to continue to commission these functions as part of an external commission in order to comply with statutory guidance.
- 2.2 In addition the council should provide an independent visitor service for cared for children, which is also a statutory function, laid out in care planning regulations. This service does not need to be commissioned to independent providers but in transitioning into the council there may be some risk of losing current visitors who have built up relationships with our children and some negotiation will be required to look at whether the council can take over the management of these visitors from the current provider. In order to ensure the smooth transition and continuation of this service, the council may need to purchase independent visitor time in the short term through transition monies whilst it builds this resource. In the longer term, the council would be better placed to both recruit to and manage this service more effectively if it is managed by the youth and empowerment team rather than commissioned out.
- 2.3 The council is also required to provide the opportunity for cared for children to meet at regular times to provide some scrutiny and challenge of the council's corporate parent plan and to ensure the voices of cared for children are heard and influence the services delivered to them. This is called the children in

care council which in Rochdale is called the “Listen Up Group”. The Listen Up Group meets every six weeks. It elects corporate champions that also attend the Corporate Parenting Board every six weeks to represent cared for children. The structure and skill set required to deliver this is available through the youth council and parliament, which is managed by the youth empowerment team and this team with some additional sessional working could deliver this part of the service. It will also mean that our cared for children are supported to integrate into other areas of youth empowerment and engagement which would provide the possibility of a more robust approach to participation and empowerment across children’s services.

3 Financial Implications

The saving proposal is 37.5% of the total budget for the area of service affected.

3.1 Table 1 provides details of the Children’s Rights Service Savings Proposal realising £30k.

	Savings 2016/17		Savings 2017/18		Total savings	
	£k		£k		£k	
	On-going	One off	On-going	One off	On-going	One off
Total savings	30				30	

4 Asset implications

4.1 There are no asset implications

5 Voluntary Sector impact

5.1 The following Voluntary Sector impacts arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

5.2 There will be a reduction in financial contribution to the sector resulting from the change in commission

6 Consultation

6.1 It is proposed that consultation will be undertaken with the following groups:

- Consultation with cared for children through the ‘Listen Up Group’
- Consultation with the Children’s Society in relation to the changes in contract and re-commission of the service for April 2016.
- The proposal also includes staffing implications and will require workforce consultation in accordance with the Personnel Policy Framework.

7 Alternatives considered

7.1 Members could decide not to take the proposal forward and identify alternative savings proposals.

8 Risk Assessment Implications

8.1 The following risks arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

8.2 The council is required to deliver on its statutory responsibilities for cared for children and to ensure that they can access services independent of the council as the corporate parent. However, in ensuring that advocacy for our cared for children remains outside of council structures, we will ensure that young people are still able to raise issues and challenge the council in respect of its duty of care to them.

8.3 The transition of the independent visitor service, which is a statutory requirement, into the council could result in a gap in service and may also result in some children who currently have a visitor being unable to maintain this. During the consultation processes with the current provider officers will seek to retain the current visitor relationships. Transition monies will be used to ensure the continuation of independent visitors until this service is fully available.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 There are some legal implications namely;

9.2 The council has to deliver against its statutory duties and therefore the transition will need to be managed to ensure continuation of the key functions of the Children's Rights Service

9.3 There may be issues in relation to TUPE in of staff from the current provider which will be discussed as part of the consultation process.

9.4 The Council must adhere to its Personnel Policy Framework in consulting with staff.

9.5 The Council must comply with the commitments given in the Borough of Rochdale Compact to provide at least 90 days' notice of a reduction in funding and consult with staff, volunteers and service users and meet with the organisations to consider ways of mitigating the impact of the reduction in funding.

10 Personnel Implications

10.1 The proposals outlined within this report do have any personnel implication for the council's workforce and consultation will be undertaken.

11 Equalities Impacts

Workforce Equality Impacts Assessment

11.1 The Proposal will have staffing implications which will be included in a full Equalities Impact Assessment of all “at risk” groups of staff.

Equality/Community Impact Assessments

11.2 A full equality impact assessment is attached.

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR SAVINGS PROPOSALS

1. Please state the name of the officers leading the EIA
Sandra Bruce
2. Who has been involved in undertaking this assessment?
Sandra Bruce
3. What is the scope of this assessment?
This assessment seeks to ensure that changes in the current contract delivery of the children's rights service does not result in inequality of service delivery to cared for children
4 a). What does the function currently do? b). Describe the needs which this service meets?
The function of the service is to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure cared for children have access to advocacy • Ensure cared for children who go missing receive an independent interview • Facilitate the children in care council • Carry out specific pieces of work related to participation such as the annual survey of cared for children <p>This service is specific to cared for children and ensures that the council meets its duties on the Children Act and Children and Young Peoples Act and Care Planning Regulations</p>

The service ensures that children are able to access an independent person who can advocate on their behalf if they are not in agreement or have any concerns about the care and plans in place for them

5. What proposed changes do you wish to make?

There will be no change to service but there will be changes in how it is delivered

6. Who are the key stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed changes?

Cared for children are the key stakeholders in relation to this service.

7. What impact will this proposal have on all the protected groups?

Race Equality

None

Disabled People

None

Carers

None

Gender

None

Age

None

Armed Forces and Ex-Armed Forces Personnel

None

Religion or Belief

None

Sexual Orientation

None

Gender Reassignment

None

Pregnant Women or Those on Maternity Leave or Those who have given Birth in the

Previous 26 weeks
None
Marriage or Civil Partnership
None

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

What are the main conclusions and recommendations from this analysis?
The council has statutory duties in relation to cared for children and their access to advocacy and support. The change in delivery of this service will not affect its function but could allow a more integrated approach to children’s participation and greater oversight of the participation element of the service which in turn could positively impact the service for our cared for children

9. In the box below please provide details of who you will consult with on the proposals, when you consult, and the methods which you will use to consult. In the box below

<i>The Consultation and Inclusion Methodology Used</i>
Meeting with the children’s society who currently deliver this function. Attendance at the listen up group to consult with cared for children

10. Produce an action plan detailing the mitigation measures that you propose to put in place to address any adverse impacts.

Mitigation Measure	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date	Review Date	Evaluation Measure
To negotiate on transition of independent	Negotiate with current provider.	Sandra Bruce	This will be a process and not a specific date	April 2016	Children and young people have access to

<p>visitors including continuing to fund current visitors to ensure children and young people retain the current service whilst the council recruits and embeds this service, in house</p>	<p>Ensure transition monies in place for continuation of current providers</p>				<p>independent visitors</p>
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