



REPORT TITLE:

Approval to appoint staffing team to manage the new specialist children's home (currently named Acorn 2)

Date : July 2021

Report of : Head of Service Children Looked After Services

Report to : Director of Children and Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

- In March 2021 Leeds City Council Executive Board sanctioned the construction of a new specialist children's home (currently named Acorn 2). The construction of this home is due to be completed by the end of January 2022. In order to ensure this home can function as soon as operationally possible, we now need to undertake a recruitment exercise to employ an entire new team of staff to run this new home.
- This report provides the evidence for the required staff team and outlines the necessary appointment process to ensure staff are employed in priority order and on time.
- This project will support the aims of Children's and Families by providing a fit for purpose specialist children's home that meets the current and future demand within Leeds. The home will ensure that children are able to maintain a close relationship with their families and friends and also transition into adulthood within their local communities.
- The new home will also reduce the ever increasing burden placed on Leeds City Council budgets by reducing the need to pay for extremely expensive out of authority children's placements.
- To meet the 'Best Council Plan' the proposed new home will support the 'Child Friendly City' by providing a specialist children's home for children with Autism and complex needs within Leeds. The new home will ensure children get the best start to life and facilitate contact between families and friends to maintain close bonds and relationships and maintain social, emotional and mental health as they grow towards adulthood.

- The home will also contribute towards 'Health & Wellbeing' by providing a bespoke living environment so children get the right care, from the right people in the right place.
- In addition, the home will provide 'value for money' by reducing the current number of very expensive packages of support required when placing children outside of the Leeds authority.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- A. All posts required to run the new specialist children's home be recruited into.
- B. The Implementation of the recruitment process will be managed by the Head of Service Children Looked After.

1. Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1.1 The development of the new specialist children's home has progressed from design phase and is now going through the process of appointing a contractor to construct the home. The home itself remains on schedule to be completed by the end of January 2022 at which point Children and Families Services can return externally placed children back into Leeds and into a purpose built home specifically designed for children with Autism and other complex needs.
- 1.2 Thorough transition arrangements with each of the returning children will need to take place prior to a move back to Leeds. It is envisaged these transition arrangements may take a number of months and ideally need to be undertaken by those staff that will manage the home when the children arrive at their new home on day one.
- 1.3 We now need to undertake a recruitment exercise to appoint the new staff team starting with the appointment of a new Registered Homes Manager (PO6). This new appointee would then form part of the recruitment team to complete the appointment of the entire staff team outlined below:-
 - 1 x Deputy registered homes manager (PO1)
 - 2 x Senior practitioners (SO1)
 - 10 x Residential practitioners (C1)
 - 1.9 x Night residential practitioners (C1)
- 1.4 The staff team highlighted above is a replication of already agreed and established staff teams currently in situ within homes running throughout Leeds and therefore serves as an example of best practice and what works best for those children living at each home.
- 1.5 The recruitment process is about to hit its critical stage. Appointments will need to be made in time to ensure no delays are incurred that could hamper the potential opening date for the home. The following recruitment process has been developed with colleagues within HR and allows for a notice period of 3 months for the successfully newly appointed registered

homes manager. What must also be noted is that an assumption has been made that we will attract and identify suitably qualified candidates for the various roles during the first wave of adverts.

- July - Director of Children and Families approve DDR
- Updates made to SAP and adverts produced
- Advert for RHM published for 1 month
- August - Sift applications and invite to interview
- September - Interviews held and offer made
- October - Adverts published for all other staff for 1 month
- November - Residential homes manager take up post
- December - Sift applications and invite to interview for all roles
- January - Interviews held and offers made
- February - All other staff commence roles dependent on individuals notice periods (Assumptions made that only 1 month notice period per individual will be required)

1.6 As can be appreciated from the timeline above, the necessity to commence the recruitment process immediately is of paramount importance to ensure we can maximise on the use of the home as soon as practicably possible.

2 What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: Please state the specific wards affected here. If city-wide, state "All" for clarity.

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

2.1 The report to Executive Board of 17th March 2021 provides this detail in full and can be provided as reference upon request.

3 What consultation and engagement has taken place?

3.5 The finance and Human Resources departments within Leeds City Council have provided an integral steer during the consultation and engagement process to identify the correct staffing structures and costs associated with these structures.

3.6 The Head of Looked after Children has ensured that Unions have formed part of a continuous cycle of consultation during the Acorn 2 project and updates and requests for advice, guidance and comment have been requested during the fortnightly meetings undertaken with Residential Services. No comments have been received to date.

3.7 The report to Executive Board of 17th March 2021 provides this detail in full and can be provided as a reference upon request.

3.8 The formulised and agreed processes for consultation and engagement will be adhered to during the recruitment phase of the project.

4 What are the resource implications?

4.1 The following table provides the annual budget requirements for the new staff team

Post Title	Grade	FTE	Salary per post	Total Costs
			£	£
Registered Homes Manager	PO6	1.00	57,130	57,130
Deputy Registered Homes Manager	PO1	1.00	42,730	42,730
Senior Practitioner(s)	SO1	2.00	37,260	74,520
Residential Practitioner(s)	C1	10.00	30,650	306,500
Night Residential Practitioner(s)	C1	1.90	30,650	58,240
Total Staffing Costs		15.90		539,120

5. What are the legal implications?

N/A

6. What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

6.1 The risk of not appointing to the staffing structure outlined in the report will mean we have a purpose built new specialist children's home that is left unused.

6.2 If a delay to the appointment of key members of staff unfortunately occurs, contingency plans will be reviewed to identify if fewer children could begin to transition into the home until a full complement of staff are appointed. These decisions will all be taken early in the new year (2022) after the first round of recruitment has taken place and an assessment of the necessary transition arrangements have been undertaken.

7. Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

X Inclusive Growth X Health and Wellbeing X Climate Emergency

7.1 The report to Executive Board of 17th March 2021 provides this detail in full and can be provided as a reference upon request.

8. Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered? N/A

b) How will success be measured?

- Success of the home will be measured against each individual's children plan.
- Relationships between children and their families will develop as travel distances are greatly reduced.
- The education and guidance from within the home will ensure that wherever possible

these children receive the greatest level of support when preparing for adulthood within their local communities.

c) What is the timetable for implementation? As seen in para 1.5

Appendices

N/A

Background papers

N/A