



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision over £500k

COMMITTEE: Children and Young People Committee

DATE: 29 August 2024

TITLE: South Region Residential Children's Home Framework

Ward(s): All

Officer presenting the report: Gail Rogers **Job title:** Head of Service Children's Commissioning

Committee Chair: Cllr Christine Townsend

Executive Director lead: Hannah Woodhouse: Executive Director for Childrens and Education

Proposal origin: BCC Staff

Purpose of Report: To seek approval for Bristol City Council to join The Southern Region Residential Care Framework led by Southampton City Council, and approval to purchase residential children's home placements, for children in care, which will be secured from South Central Residential Children's Homes framework whenever possible, or may be spot purchased in the event that the framework is unable to meet the requirements.

Evidence Base:

1. Bristol City Council has a legal duty under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 (the sufficiency duty), to take steps to ensure, as far as practicable, that we can provide children in care with homes that meet their needs, within our area. This involves making sure there is a sufficient range and number of providers capable of meeting the differing needs of our children in care and care leavers. Independently provided children's residential care is a key method by which the Council complies with our duties to provide high quality care to looked after children. The number of children in care living residential children's homes is currently 90.
2. To comply with procurement regulations, Bristol City Council must have a contract to purchase these children's home placements from. Bristol is currently part of the South Central Residential Framework Contract, led by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. This framework ends in September 2024, and from October Southampton City Council will lead the new iteration of the framework, with 21 Authorities part of the new Southern Region Residential consortium.
3. In order to be admitted to the framework, providers will need to evidence that they are registered with Ofsted and will need to pass quality checks on service delivery, safeguarding and equalities.

4. Residential placements are high cost and it is important the council plays a role in shaping the market to ensure placements are suitable, cost effective and deliver the agreed outcomes for children. The framework ensures value for money as providers are required to submit prices at the point of tender, there is then an annual uplift mechanism whereby providers must evidence why this increase is required. As lead authority, Southampton will procure and lead on the contract management and quality assurance of providers on the framework.
5. Joining a regional framework is expected to bring the following benefits:
 - Commissioning as a larger consortium of authorities with a larger market share will allow us to more meaningfully engage with, and manage the market, whilst enabling us to achieve efficiencies in the purchasing and development of services.
 - Co-ordinated response and clear leadership following provider concerns and Ofsted inadequate ratings with a clear process for engaging and monitoring providers.
 - Collated information about need and usage that will help us engage the market in terms of development of new homes / services as a consortium.
6. Framework contracts are standard practice across the council for contracting providers. Under a framework there is no minimum commitment to spend and authorities can be on multiple frameworks.
7. Although there is no committed spend under a framework contract, we anticipate that our annual spend will be up to £16m per year. The framework will run from October 2024 – 31 September 2028 with two options to extend for a further two years each time.
8. There is an initial procurement fee of £7,473 to join the framework, and we will then pay Southampton an annual management fee which is charged based on usage. Based on our number of children's home placements we anticipate that this will be approximately £17,915 per year.

Officer Recommendations: -

That the Committee for Children and Young People

1. Authorises the Executive Director Children and Education in consultation with Chair of the Children & Young People Committee to take all steps required to join, award and purchase (which may be over the key decision threshold) from the South Region Residential Children's Home Framework in-line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report.
2. Authorises the Executive Director Children and Education to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Child Friendly City: Children and Young People are supported by the city, their community and the council to have the best possible start in life. They can reach their full potential and are kept safe from and supported to overcome violence, abuse and other adverse childhood experiences.

City Benefits:

1. Meet the needs of children in care in line with the Children Act 1989 and the Equalities Act 2010.
2. Allow for quality assurance of provisions to ensure they meet our high aspirations for all children and young people in our care, delivering the assessed needs to achieve agreed outcomes.
3. Ensure the Council achieves value for money through transparent pricing.
4. Develop partnership working between LAs and residential providers to meet the changing needs of our children/ young people in the care of the Local Authority.

Consultation Details:

1. Consultation has been undertaken with relevant internal staff members, including Procurement, Legal and Children’s Placement Services.

Background Documents: [Section 22G of the Children Act 1989](#)

Revenue Cost	The spend on residential placements is expected to be approximately £128 million over the eight year life of the framework (contained within the annually approved budget set by Council).	Source of Revenue Funding	Children’s Placement Budget: General Fund
Capital Cost	£n/a	Source of Capital Funding	n/a
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Saving Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes - existing or new saving? Choose an item. OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional comments section: *When draft report written, seek comments from Finance/Legal/IT/HR/Procurement & PR. Reports will not be considered without professional comments.*

1. Finance Advice: This report is discusses joining the framework and approve the purchase of placements from the framework where possible. Procurement of placements via the framework ensures Procurement compliance and provides a greater degree of confidence and potentially greater value for money then off-framework spot purchasing, and so where there is need to purchase placements this framework will provide greater assurance and should provide greater value for money to the LA. Nevertheless the council finds itself in difficulty financial circumstances and so the use of any placements should be done within the proper

financial control and approvals , within the available funding envelope.

Finance Business Partner: Travis Young Finance Business Partner 9 July 2024

2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015/Procurement Act 2023 and the Council’s own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to calling off services from the South Region Residential Children’s Home Framework and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 10 July 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT regarding this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson Lead Enterprise Architect 10 July 2024

4. HR Advice: The report is seeking approval to join a The Southern Region Residential Care Framework to purchase/approval to purchase residential children’s home placements, for children in care, from this framework whenever possible, or may be spot purchased in the event that the framework is unable to meet the requirements. There are no significant HR implications regarding this proposal.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner 10 July 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment (Environmental Impact Assessment	YES
Appendix D – Decision Risk Assessment	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO

