

CSC Improvement and Intervention	Paper Title:
Proposer / Presenter:	
Outline of main aim/purpose:	
Decision/s required:	
Additional Info:	

Investment and Improvement Grant Bid

Project title/which local authority does this bid relate to?	Bristol City Council
Name of DfE officer submitting this bid	
Please list other funding or support from DfE that the local authority has received in the last three years for its CSC services that you are aware of.	

Describe the challenges and opportunities that the Enhance diagnostic programme and most recent Ofsted report have identified in the LA's CSC service.

Following our Most Recent ILACs report it was highlighted that key areas we must improve on are:

- The timeliness and consistency with which initial decisions about thresholds for access to services are matched to children's levels of risk and need, to help ensure that they routinely receive timely and proportionate support.
- The timeliness and consistency with which child protection strategy meetings are held, primarily, within the First Assessment Service (FAS) when children may be at risk of significant harm.
- The timeliness of initial health assessments for children coming into care.
- The reliability and effectiveness of performance management and quality assurance arrangements.
- The consistency and effectiveness of assessments and support to children living in private fostering arrangements.
- The effectiveness of some aspects of joint working with partner agencies, in particular health and the police

1.0 Workforce sufficiency challenges are impacting the services' ability to improve consistency

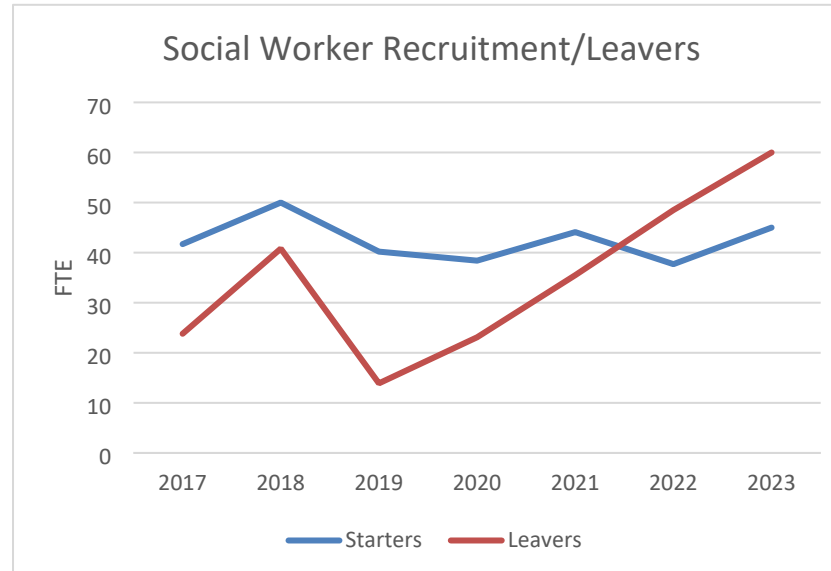
In Bristol we pride ourselves on the quality of the work we do with Children and Families and we aim to provide a consistent service for all those in need of our services. We know, that currently as highlighted through our recent OFSTED ILACS, we are unable to provide that quality on a consistent basis.

“The timeliness and consistency with which initial decisions about thresholds for access to services are matched to children's levels of risk and need, to help ensure that they routinely receive timely and proportionate support”

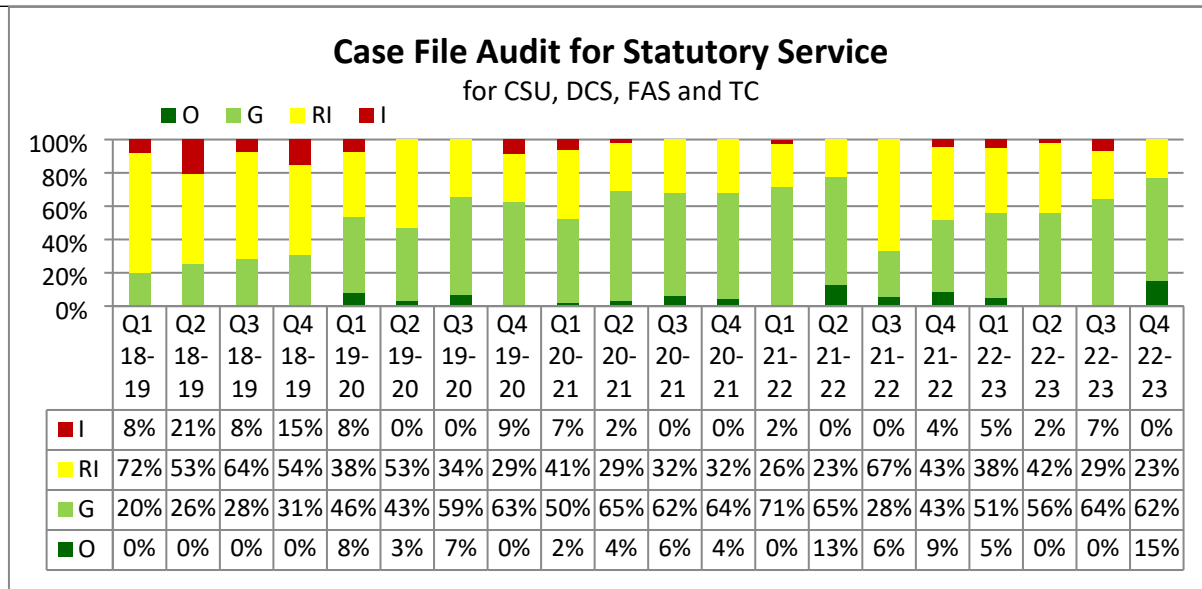
The Enhance Diagnostic looked to understand some of the underlying reasons that we are unable to provide a consistent service. The diagnostic first looked to understand where pressure is currently held within the system and found a trend of reducing CIN starts linked to an increase in work with our Early help teams. Further work with our social work teams explored their perceptions of this challenge. Each of our Service teams were surveyed on this issue with 42% of teams recognising that they do not provide a consistent service for Children and young People in Bristol. The survey response highlighted some key challenges around the service capacity impacting on the available time to work with Children and also time for staff to train. This appears to be impacting the application of thresholds culturally across the survey with Early Help holding increasingly complex work as social work team prioritise those children at highest risk of harm. Staff Survey – ***“There is limited time for training / reflection across teams & the areas.”***

Increasing vacancy rates and inexperience in children's social work teams is a significant and growing risk for the Local Authority. As of the 31st March 2023 there were 169 Social Workers permanently employed in frontline statutory services. This reflects a vacancy rate of 18.3% (against the latest national social worker vacancy rate of 19.8%). Whilst this benchmarks against national vacancy rates Bristol is experiencing a much steeper trajectory in workforce sufficiency challenges as in September 2021 we

had a vacancy rate of 1.3% and the average vacancy rate as reported in statutory workforce census between 2018 and 2021 was 3.2%. The vacancy rate is particularly acute within our Area Social Work teams (25.3%) and Disabled Children and Specialist Services (20.8%) in March 2023, both of which undertake child protection and legal proceedings for the local authority and is worsening with one area of children's social work (South Bristol) holding current vacancy rates of 46%. In the last twelve months 46 qualified social workers have left the Local Authority.



Our Quality Assurance Framework and consecutive Ofsted inspections have demonstrated the local authorities' ability to make improvements to practice however these are held back by workforce sufficiency challenges. Our QAF demonstrates that our improvement journey slowed in parallel with our workforce sufficiency challenges (see Quarter 3 21/22 onwards). Progress made over recent quarters (Q4) is largely reflective of areas of the service not experiencing workforce sufficiency issues as fewer audits have been able to be undertaken in Q3 and Q4 of this year in Area teams. Where these cases have been reviewed there are patterns of:



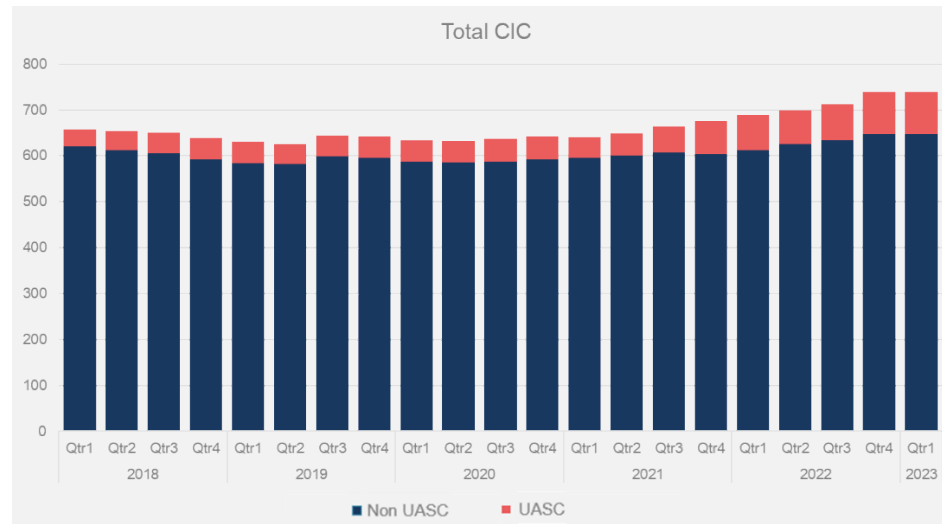
One of the key enablers to our improvement journey to date has been our investment in systemic social work training which we launched in partnership with the Centre for Systemic Social Work in 2019. The Enhance Diagnostic cultural survey and recent Ofsted inspection demonstrated that there was good understanding of the local practice framework and social workers were able to articulate the framework well. Where there have been fewer workforce sufficiency challenges, improved conditions of practice eg lower caseloads maintained in the Through Care services this has been reflected in improvements with Good gradings achieved for Children in Care and Care Leavers domains in the recent ILACs.

In analysis of the 22/23 exit interview data for social workers, the most common response (43%) for leaving related to not being able to manage long hours or achieve work life balance due to the demands of the role. The second most common response was 'Workload/ pressure of work' (36%). This was also reflected in Social Workers' interview answers about how stressed they felt on a scale of 0 (not stressed) to 10 (very stressed) when they decided to leave their job, as (79%) scaled themselves as 8 or above at the point of leaving. Social Workers frequently described workload and capacity issues impacting on stress levels, in addition to lack of necessary support such as clinical supervision to deal with the vicarious trauma and emotional impact of the work they were undertaking.

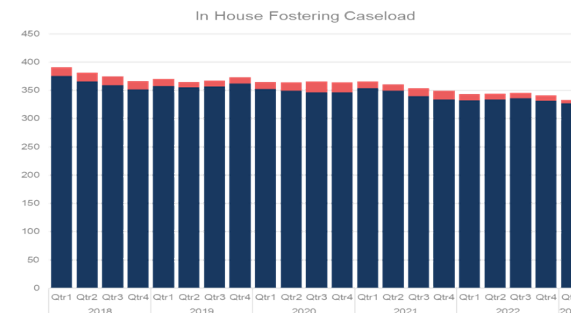
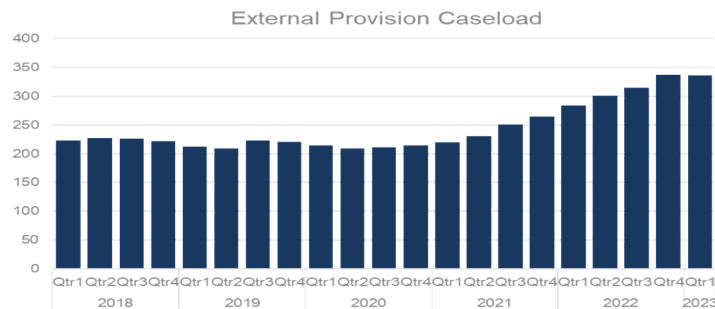
The full supporting evidence pack for this Opportunity can be found in APPENDIX C

2.0 - Lack of internal provision is driving up our spend on external placements

The Enhance diagnostic focussed on how the demand in our service has changed over time and subsequently how we are changing to meet that need. One of the key findings looked at our increase in CIC numbers over time.



These additional CYP are being housed in a combination of Internal and External Placements



We can also see that over time the number of CYP housed in our Internal Foster Caring system has reduced substantially. Over this time we have seen a rise of 130% on our spend on Placements. Ofsted commented that **“some shortfalls remain”** in overall sufficiency of care placements. In particular, it was noted **“recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a challenge”**

The diagnostic identified significant operational and financial challenges around the recruitment of foster carers.

- 15% reduction (58 fewer children) in house fostering caseloads since 2018 despite the overall number of children in care rising 12% in the same period
- 49% fewer enquiries to be foster carers in 2021-22 than in 2015-16
- There is currently a lack of detail on why prospective applicants drop out of the application process. Currently, 77% of enquirers between 2019 and 2023 dropped out at 'Stage 1 Complete'. There is a significant recruitment opportunity in identifying the precise point at which applicants leave, and embedding an improvement cycle process to target these areas.

The retention of foster carers was also noted in the diagnostic findings

- There were 51 terminations of carers in the last financial year, compared to 11 approvals
- BFCA chair commented that 'retention is worse now than its ever been'
- The duration people are spending as foster carers has fallen
- 17 foster carers were approved after enquiring in Q2 2020 (during the pandemic). 5 of these have already ceased to become foster carers. The need to understand why exactly these carers left fostering was highlighted.

The full supporting evidence pack for this Opportunity can be found in APPENDIX D

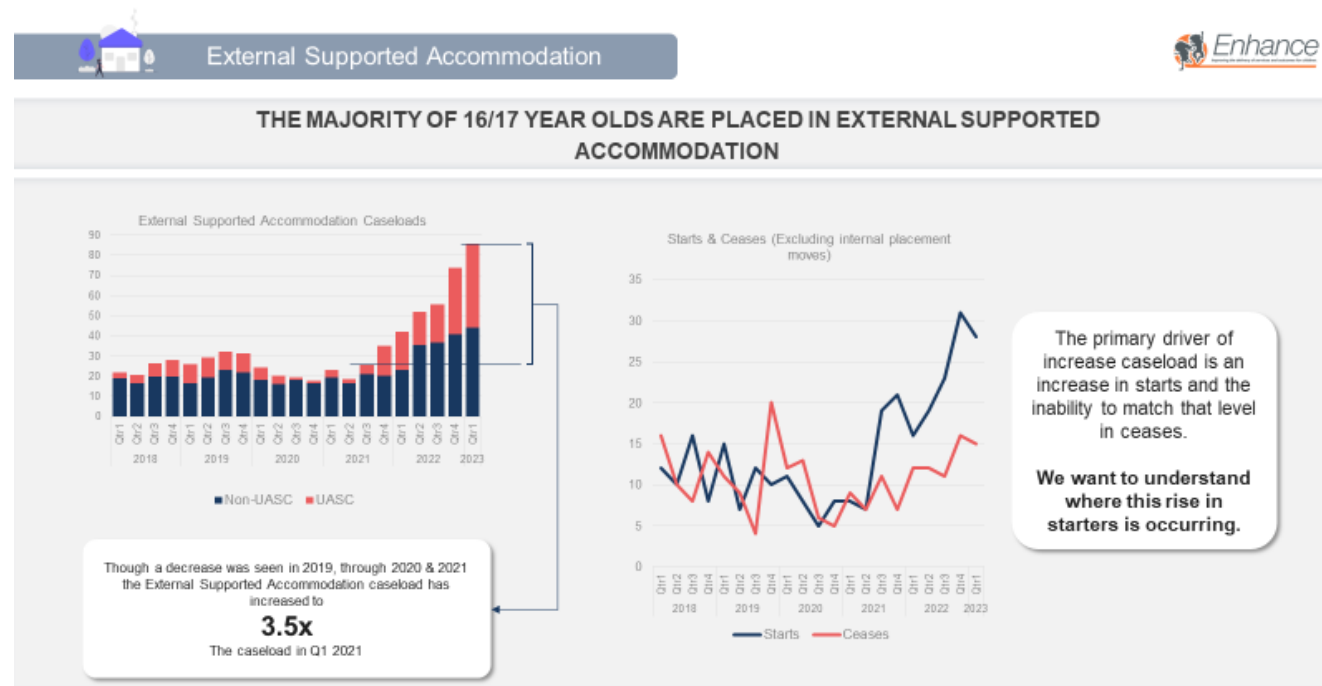
3.0 – There is an opportunity to reduce spend on External Supported Accommodation and support older teens find a more suitable pathway.

Our Ofsted inspection noted that young people presenting as homeless receive an inconsistent service and that joint assessments do not always take place. Through the Enhance Diagnostic work it was also highlighted that the number of 16/17 Year olds entering care has increased 90% since 2019. Through Case Reviews undertaken within the diagnostic, it was found that 75% of those children entering care could have avoided entering if we had worked differently with them or had additional housing support available.

We had 87 young people present at the Housing front-door 'MAPS' between April 22 and March 23 and that 25 entered care (22 going into an ESA), while 1 was offered accommodation through Part 7 of the Housing Act. Others were judged not homeless and 1 was returned home. The process for assessment of young people has been agreed through a joint protocol agreed in April 2023, but initial decisions that bring young people into care still seem to be resource-led (ie lack of assessment provision) rather than needs led.

Young people who come into care where this is not their request and where they are not judged to require care through assessment, are almost always placed in External Supported Accommodation (ESA), often spot purchased because the current

framework lacks the quantity of provision required through additional demand over the last 12 months. ESA accommodation average costs are £1,755 per week or c£91,000 per year and annual costs have increased by 12% in this largely unmanaged market. On top of this, there are infrastructure costs for social workers, IROs and a duty to children as Care Leavers until at least the age of 21. Through the Enhance Diagnostic we have reviewed our trend in this area with a large increase in starts in ESA accommodation over the last 2 years.



We know a large number of the places coming in are UASC starts, however our overall net spend following UASC subsidies has increased from £1.8m to £8.8m over the last 5 years in this provision.

We have developed a 16+ Sufficiency Strategy because we can see that the older entrants to care are driving significant crisis and spot purchase activity without full control of costs or quality. The strategy has not been signed off and would benefit from input and joint up with Housing Options colleagues, and also from an agreed set of actions, of which some would be relevant to the commissioning of the new Youth Homelessness service.

The Housing Options commissioning strategy and service for young people is currently being reviewed for re-commissioning with a new service to be in place in October 2024. This presents an opportunity to fully review our practice together and to quantify services that need to sit around this for both Children's Services and Housing Options services.

In this area we have also explored our wider offering for Adolescence in Bristol. We have recently undertaken a significant system redesign research of our service offer for adolescents experiencing exploitation. The findings of this system redesign can be found [here](#). This has informed our current re-commissioning of specialist exploitation service as we are commissioning a strategic partner who will be able to act on the recommendations for greater integration of specialist exploitation services and statutory services. This provides opportunities for efficiencies such as implementation of a single assessment process; improved outcomes for children; reduction in duplication across specialist services/ Strengthening Families/youth justice and social care and reduction in changes of worker for young people. The key areas of focus from this work are detailed below.



RELATIONSHIPS

- More availability and consistency of workers
- More connection to other young people
- More community guardians and local role models
- More flexible access to mental health support from their trusted professional
- Support beyond 18 for CSE



KNOWLEDGE

- More awareness of exploitation from a younger age
- Better understanding of exploitation from schools



ACTIVITIES

- Opportunities for a change of environment
- More connection to local activities
- Help to find activities of interest & passions



ENVIRONMENT

- More support with career opportunities
- More housing solutions
- More genuine support from the police
- More safe spaces

Using this information we have an opportunity to act and improve the way we work with Adolescence to reduce the number of Children and Young People entering our care at an older age.

The full supporting evidence pack for this Opportunity can be found in APPENDIX E

How does the LA intend to overcome the challenges identified?

Our Families Programme

In Bristol we are undertaking a large transformation programme entitled the “Our Families Programme” that aims to tackle some of the areas highlighted above alongside some further aspirational activities. Full Details of the Our Families Programme can be found in **Appendix A**

Our Families Programme will design effective services with, and for, children, young people and families; and efficiency of delivery will improve as a result through a whole system change. There is a systemic relationship between the programme areas because greater stability will not be achieved by focusing on one area alone. The programme is to transform Children and Education services ensuring the wisely use of resources (human and financial) on those things that will deliver the best outcomes for our children, young people and families in Bristol in alignment with the Corporate Strategy and Belonging Strategy.

The programme acknowledges the improvements required to take Children Service from Requiring Improvement to Good, and as such has committed funds for both resource and investment in some key improvements linked to Ofsted Action Plan, which illustrates the Council's commitment to enable the improvements and long-term sustainability (human and financial).

Key Investment areas for 23/24	Other Investment Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to enable the delivery of the programme and support delivery of Ofsted Action Plan where appropriate. • Strengthen our talent management (recruitment and retention) framework through alternative models such as aligning our pay to market rates, apprenticeships, international recruitment, social work academy, key worker status etc - £0.8m • Home to School Travel - £0.8m • Strengthen our statutory duties, practice and offer e.g. Mockingbird improving quality of support for foster carers and stability - £0.1m; Safer Families - £0.12m • Digital and technology - £0.25m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residential children's homes (DfE. funded) for children with complex needs • Recommissioning housing pathway (inc. homelessness pathway for young people) • Commitment to 0-25 service in next 2 years - Transitions • Housing offer for care leavers - inc. out of custody pathway • The effectiveness of some aspects of joint working with partner agencies, in particular health and the police • Embedding health and wellbeing to enable whole system work for early intervention and prevention to strengthen demand management - SEND, Family Hubs, and high-cost placements

In addition to the above investment we are undertaking internal projects to address the challenges detailed above. We believe some of our aspirations below would benefit from the funding available and the individual implementation activities are described in the next section.

How does the LA intend to overcome the challenges identified?

Plans to target Specific Opportunities

Each of the detailed Opportunities above are looking to be explored through the following workstreams

Opportunity 1 - Increasing staff Capability, Recruitment and Retention to support consistent delivery of practise

- **Remodelling our Recruitment Processes** – Working to understand more around our current recruitment process and how to ensure a more consistent approach across our CSC teams
- **Systemic Social Work Model** – Increasing our ability to undertake therapeutic training to enable future systemic supervision, increasing support and future retention of our staff
- **International Social Worker Recruitment** – supporting ongoing recruitment of International Social workers to increase team capacity and capability to support a wider range of CYP in Bristol

Opportunity 2 – Increasing Internal Provision to improve our offering and reducing spending on External Placements

- **Implementing the Mockingbird Foster Care Model** – implementing a pilot constellation to improve the support available for our foster carers both increasing retention and improving the offer for prospective carers
- **Increasing our internal Residential provision** – transforming accommodation units both new and de-commissioned to provide improved internal offerings for UASC CYP, those with complex needs and improving our available accommodation for care leavers
- **Challenging External Costs** – Transitioning to new Commissioning model combined with adults service, focussing in the short term on capacity to engage with the market to reduce cost.
- **Increasing our Internal Foster Caring Recruitment** – Modelling our end to end fostering process, implementing a new toolset to increase the use of data to support further marketing/recruitment activities to increase the recruitment and quality of new Foster Carers

Opportunity 3 – Working to reduce the numbers of 16/17 Year Olds entering care to support independence and reduce External Supported Accommodation Spending

- **Remodelling our housing Pathway** – *Ensuring we understand the effectiveness of our current commissioned services and understanding the cultural challenges facing our teams on a day to day basis.*
- **Re Designing our Adolescence service** – Working to understand what models could be adapted to support the increased needs of adolescence in Bristol as early as possible, with an aim to rolling out a future operating model change.

How does the LA intend to overcome the challenges identified?

Detail For Activities without need for Funding

2.1 Increasing internal residential provision

We have multiple current units coming live to reduce our reliance on Out of Authority Placements and support our high support care leavers into new accommodation. Both improving outcomes and increasing provision available for further entries to care

Type of provision	Name of provision	No. of units	timescale
16-25 disabilities	Concorde Lodge	7	April 2024
UASC 16+	ACH	4	May 2023
UASC	ACH	4	May 2023
UASC	ACH Freemantle Rd	4	existing
UASC	1625	3	existing
	1625 City Rd	6	Pending Legal: Aug 23
	1625 Oxford Rd	3	Aug 23
Asylum 18+	ACH Fishponds	6	July 23
UASC	ACH Fishponds	4	July 23
?	New Chapters Muller Rd	6	
18-25 care leaver high support	SHAP DLUCH bid	10	Jan 25
Complex care: emotional & MH	Strategic partner	3	Aug 2024
Complex care: 14+ males with trauma	Strategic partner	4+ 2 move on pods	Aug 24
Complex care: 6-12 yrs	Internal Ch Home	4	Apr 24
Disabled children's home	Internal Ch Home	4	No property identified as yet

<p>Explain how the LA has prioritised the opportunities to improve.</p>	<p>The opportunities to improve will make the most significant impact in the respective areas.</p> <p>Workforce and recruitment is fundamental to the quality of practice and impacts on all work across the areas of opportunities. The opportunities described to improve recruitment and retention will make the largest impact and have a good evidence base regarding being successful.</p> <p>Improving our internal provision will enable us to keep our children local and better connected to family and friends and continuing attendance at their known education provision. Alongside this, internal provision is more cost effective. The opportunities described to improve internal provision are evidenced based and have proven good successful outcomes.</p> <p>Research tells us that for some children who come into care when they are older their outcomes do not always improve and we know this is a financial pressure for the service. The opportunities described will support us to ensure there is the right provision and we work with children to support them remaining at home within their communities.</p>
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Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Staffing Recruitment and Retention

The three elements of this bid work in tandem with each other, although can be delivered separately should funding not be sourced. They complement and scale up existing programmes and are timetabled to support stabilisation of the workforce through the Our Families transformation programme recognising the impact of change. There is a balance between shorter term improvement outcomes through “nudge” improvements in attracting social workers in our recruitment processes and medium/longer term improvement capacity building with enhancements to the international social work recruitment programme and systemic social work implementation.

To further meet the challenges, we are facing with recruitment and retention we are looking to understand our recruitment process in greater detail and focus on understanding where we can improve our offer and where our recruitment activities are effective. We currently have a service-led recruitment process where each service manager offers a personalised recruitment programme for their area building high quality relationships between potential candidates and managers. However, this has also brought inconsistencies in how we advertise and recruit.

We want to fund a project that will:

- Develop a suite of marketing materials to better promote the service’s values and vision end-to-end through the recruitment process, from advertising at local Universities and recruitment fairs to attracting social workers from other parts of the country who may want to relocate.
- We are aiming to review and evaluate our recruitment and onboarding journey for social workers in the city to ensure that social workers are attracted and supported to work in Bristol. We will also look to evaluate the benefits of a centralised recruitment process and how to retain more social workers at every stage of recruitment journey.
- Further scale up our current clinical supervision and coaching programme which is currently funded for a discreet group of staff. This will complement the existing offer through the social work workforce team and enable us to target retention at an earlier stage preventing burnout and sickness rates and maintaining social workers in the role.
- The funding of enhanced clinical supervision over the next 18months whilst new Systemic Social Work Lead posts are formed and trained through the Our Families transformation programme will support us to stabilise the workforce through this period of change as we move into a model with greater resilience, reducing demand and stress levels and implementing the therapeutic systemic lead posts described

We believe these activities will:

- Attract more potential candidates to Bristol with good align to Bristol’s vision and values
- Make HR recruitment process more efficient reducing resource impact on senior managers in medium and long term
- Increase number of candidates retained at every stage of advertising to onboarding
- Improve journey into workforce for interim and permanent candidates so potential candidates aren’t lost

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retain existing strength of model with personal relational approach of managers and workforce• Trial and measure benefits of different marketing strategies to focus future marketing investment by the local authority• Concurrently improvement consistency and quality of services for children as we stabilise our workforce |
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Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Systemic Social Work Model

Bristol have seen significant benefits and progression in quality since the systemic practice model was introduced in 2019. There is evidence that this training supports practitioner development and retention. Currently we are reliant on external agencies for delivering the bulk of this training which limits the number of people that can be trained each year. We have also got to a key point in our systemic training delivery with 6 Intermediate trained systemic practitioners across the service and over 100 systemic trained social workers, managers and leaders. We now have sufficient expertise across the service to begin to build our own in house capacity to support improvements.

We want to:

- Create three new workforce posts for dual registered social workers and systemic therapists to act as clinical leads for the service and support the delivery of consistent practice framework. We believe this model would be strongest if these posts were recruited from practitioners who are embedded within Bristol systems and practice who have credible leadership quality and practice experience. This also enables us to demonstrate the non-management progression opportunities available in the service.
- Train these three post holders to MSc level as accredited systemic therapists. They will focus on Early Help, Targeted Services and Edge of Care; Area Social Work Services; Through Care and Disabled Children and will provide support and resilience by working within the workforce development team. This will take 2-3 years due to the timing of the course with interviews being held in 22/23 and training beginning in 23/24.

We Believe this will:

- Support Bristol's drive for consistency of practice with building capacity of local systemic technical experts who are able to lead practice across the service. This will include delivering of in house training, formulations, group supervision, system alignment, workshops and will provide opportunities for income generation and collaboration with Gloucestershire LA in developing a regional Centre for Systemic Social Work practice driving expertise and improvements across the service.

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

International Social Worker Recruitment

Bristol have invested for an International Social Work Recruitment programme and are due to procure a recruitment partner in Q2 of 23/24 for an initial cohort of 15 International Social Workers with the intention to repeat this in future years depending on success. Learning from other areas highlights the opportunities presented by recruiting internationally however we understand from wide ranging consultation with other local authorities nationally that retention and maximising the benefits of these programme can be achieved through high-quality, slow-paced induction and familiarisation programmes.

We want to Fund:

- Additional investment to increase the initial cohort size to 20 social workers recruited from abroad
- A workforce development role to design a Bristol International Social Worker induction and onboarding programme which can then be delivered as a train-the-trainer module to key workforce and learning development leads across the service to enable sustainability for future cohorts. We would also be able to maximise this investment by working in partnership with surrounding Local Authorities and adult social care colleagues in Bristol in combining resources and shared programme approaches to build sub-regional best practice models and networks to ensure that social workers recruited internationally are retained in our region.

We believe these activities will

- Improve retention of social workers recruited internationally to support with stabilisation of the workforce and enable good conditions of practice
- Training programme which can be shared across the region as best practice

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Market Efficiency Pilot

Last year, we attempted to bring together a small team from within our Placements Team and Strategic Commissioning Team to review high-cost contracts and to bring down those costs through negotiation and scrutiny of contracted services and their actual use by children and young people. Cost avoidance of just over £4M was achieved, but this has been difficult to sustain when operational demand is so high and resources are not actually dedicated. Analysis shows that some of the individual contract efficiencies were not sustained and that additional costs have been added. We need to fully understand this and work with providers to deliver the outcomes that we have contracted without continually adding cost. Colleagues in Adults Commissioning have established a small Market Analysis Team to review packages and costs, and longer-term, the Children's and Adult's Commissioning Teams will align to form a Commissioning Hub. However, we are also part of a regional bid for a Regional Commissioning Co-operative, and this would give us better market positioning and influence than aligning all services with our Adult colleagues. Planning around future structures is therefore required to sustain this role; there is an internal timescale of September 2024 for commissioning alignment and a timescale from September 2023 for the Regional Commissioning Co-operative pathfinders.

We Want to:

- Return to the Efficiency work to mitigate some of the high costs we have seen.
- Create a resource that needs to sit outside of the operational team and alongside the Market Analysis Team (MAT) to develop practice and progress high-cost reviews;
- Deploy a current staff member within the Strategic Commissioning Team to the MAT to ensure internal links with social work teams is effective through clear processes and pathways and to support with this work.
- Boost the impact of market efficiency work and deliver cost avoidance/savings through the use of an agency staff member over the next six months

We Believe this will:

- Support the links between Commissioning and social work teams in progressing regular contractual reviews
- Reduce spending on Out of Authority Placements
- Support our future Commissioning hub setup to enable sustainable savings

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Increasing our Internal Foster Caring Recruitment

We have recently invested in marketing to further increase our Foster Care enquiries. We recognise that we also have to increase our conversion rate and tenure/capability of new foster carers to meet the demand we require for our CIC Cohort. From the Enhance Diagnostics, working with Newton Colleagues we have reviewed our current use of Data and understanding of our processes in comparison to behaviours in other Local Authorities. It has been identified that there is a substantial activity to take place to understand our prospective Foster Carers in greater detail to target out recruitment activities in the right areas, Ensure we do not lose people along the recruitment journey and to understand where individual carers may need further support.

We want to:

- Analyse our recruitment process start to finish building new governance, processes and a new business intelligence toolset to support us in effectively targeting our recruitment. This would assess the possible barriers there are for diverse applicants from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities and from the LGBTQ+ community amongst others
- Pilot activities in the community (i.e. to measure their reach and success. Through both standard marketing activities and a digital presence review. The LA appears 6th behind 5 IFAs when googling 'Bristol fostering', for example. Our social media presence is largely limited to Twitter and Facebook, and therefore we are missing out on accessing a number of other social media avenues to increase enquiries.
- Fund a large consultation event with our existing foster carers to enhance our understanding of what the key levers in addressing our challenges around recruitment and retention are from a foster carer's perspective. Our experience has shown that these events are far more effective when held in person, rather than survey format, hence would be an effective use of funding.

We believe these activities will:

- Increase the number of Enquiries to our service, returning to levels seen in previous years
- Increase Conversion rates to those seen in previous years
- Increase overall number of approved foster carers enabling new starts to have internal provision option reducing external spend

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Implementing the Mockingbird model

The Mockingbird is a licenced model overseen by the fostering network. Furthermore, It is referenced in the recommendations of the care review. It is an evidenced based method of providing additional support and stability to carers and children supporting stability and retention. In terms of recruitment Mockingbird is an attractive offer to new carers and could be used as part of recruitment campaigns to interest potential carers for Bristol. Implementing the mockingbird model would therefore address our key twin challenges of recruitment and retention.

In essence the Mockingbird model is comprised of a home hub carer that usually has 2 vacant beds. They then support a constellation of 5-10 fostering households with a mix of children and ages. The home hub carer offers sleep overs to children in the constellation when required and at least a monthly organised social activity as well as emotional and practical support where required. Bristol is in a good place to implement this model, there is appetite for it in the fostering community and we have a stable and experienced management team that can support its implementation. The Bristol Model would form the foundation to our Mockingbird Ethos (of therapeutic parenting program).

We want to Fund:

- Start up fees and costs yr1 and 2 – to Fostering Network
- A Mockingbird co-ordinator for a pilot period to help set up
- Support for funding for constellation activities to ensure the Pilot is a success
- Support for funding home hub carer fee (this is at a higher rate recommended L3/ Intensive support) and will be funded through savings in the future.

We Believe this will:

- Improve the support available to our carers
- Reduce breakdowns of placements
- Reduce carer terminations and therefore increasing the tenure of our carers
- Act as a positive for recruitment of carers

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Piloting developing therapeutic environments, including specialist OT time and redesigning spaces we hold.

Our current improvement plans have increased the funding paid to internal foster carers, cited as a key lever in retention by the head of the Bristol Foster Carers Association. Alongside this increased financial package, we are proposing further addressing the challenge of retention through piloting a scheme of developing therapeutic environments. Additional funding would provide more therapeutic spaces in our homes and re-design at least one home to be specifically supported at providing a therapeutic environment for younger children to support their regulation and processing their trauma increasing their chances of stepping down to foster care.

Bristol are developing their offer for step down and planning increased children home sufficiency in the City for our younger children in residential care to support this ambition. Bristol through BTSS offer an intensive support service to children, carers and children's homes. Our vision for step down for our children in residential care is that BTSS will provide intensive support to a child and home which will then transfer to the foster carer when the child is ready to step down.

We want to Fund

- The design of therapeutic environments pilot in the children's home supported through additional BTSS capacity
- Consultation/input from a Sensory OT specialist to support or understanding of how we help children regulate in their body
- Additional resource to support Training offer for staff, carers and children home staff on therapeutic approaches, and diversity

Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.

Re-designing the Housing and Homelessness Pathway & options for young people aged 16-17

We currently feel that we lack capacity to bring sufficient expertise and best practice to optimise this re-commissioning opportunity and create strong join up across the two services. An additional resource for this specific piece of work would ultimately support us to deliver young people the best service to meet needs.

We understand that current challenges we face are a mix of both process and cultural issues and we want to understand not only how best the process works alongside our housing colleagues but also what cultural elements must change.

We want to:

- Review our data, forecasts and costs for 16+ and utilise a critical friend approach to test out the actions that sit under our 16+ Sufficiency Strategy. Output to be a recommended 16+ sufficiency commissioning plan.
- Advise on the interface between CSC and Housing Options with full consideration for the current re-commissioning of the YP pathway underway by Housing Options (new service to commence October 24). To fully review MAPS which is the front door to the service to review the sufficiency of resource contributed by CSC and Housing Options to support prevention and joint assessment, the processes followed, and the available provision for yp who are homeless and/or in need of care. Output to be a recommended plan around location, structure, communications, process and resource following best practice.

<p>Describe the implementation activities that have been selected for funding and how they address the challenges this LA is facing.</p>	<p>Adolescence Service Redesign</p> <p>Within Bristol we know that we should work differently to support Children earlier in their journey to ensure we are supporting the correct children and the correct time. Our current Edge of Care service is extremely effective at supporting children from entering care, however we believe there is a more holistic approach needed to support adolescent children from reaching that edge of care service.</p> <p>Alongside the concerns of 16+ Year Olds presenting as homeless. We want a service that will support children who: are concerns regarding extra familial harm – including CCE, CSE, Missing; at risk of serious violence/crime; edging towards or on the edge of care who have experienced trauma and early adverse childhood experiences; presenting with mental health concerns and diagnosis; have drug and alcohol concerns.</p> <p>Our ambition is to have a service that provides the right support at the right time to enable young people to be well, free from harm at home and in their communities whenever it can be made safe to do so; Applies early intervention and prevention to prevent needs escalating; Focusses on positive outcomes in relation to health, well being, inclusion/EET and successful transitions to adulthood; Is swift and intensive support to prevent entry to care, custody or homelessness; Effectively supports successful reunification for young people who have had a period in care.</p> <p>We want to Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Improvement Lead to Develop an Adolescence service model informed by national research and evidence of what works well and in line with agreed principles to achieve agreed outcomes. This individual would work collaboratively with all stake holders including staff and CYP, using detailed analysis of local data to inform our future model – including demand and financial modelling. • Develop and support implementation of transition plan with information created on the pathway, process and operational guidance for new service <p>We Believe this will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable a smooth transition to new ways of working • Reduce Repeat -referrals, CIN, CPP plans • Ultimately reduce the number of Adolescence entering care
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<p>What are the anticipated benefits of this project?</p>	<p>Combined with each of the identified benefits for each of the implementation activities tomorrow a Summary is detailed below on Financial Opportunity and an understanding on where Outcome and Ofsted Response benefits are detailed above.</p>
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OPPORTUNITIES

Area	Description	Outcomes		Ofsted	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Placements	Increasing the Net Number of Foster Carers	£3.84m	£10.1m	✓	✓
Placements	Supporting those in ESA Accommodation to leave the service care at 18	£345k	£690k	✓	✓
CIC Prevention for Adolescence	Reducing the number of Adolescence starting in our care and needing an ESA Placement	£1.42m	£2.82m	✓	✓
Staffing Recruitment and Retention	Supporting in recruiting more staff and increasing staffing support to stabilise workforce	Indirect Cost Avoidance	Indirect Cost Avoidance	✓	✓

Overall Funding Requirements

What is the overall cost of the project?	Increasing Staffing Recruitment and Retention and Training to improve Consistency				
	Sub Activity	23/24 Funding	24/25 Funding	Must Have	Describe the exact benefit of this funding
	Recruitment & Retention– specialist HR programme lead	27,388	27,388	MUST	Employment of an HR Specialist for 12 months (BG12) Funding will support employment of HR specialist to undertake end to end review of all recruitment and marketing for social work job roles nad led on creation of new pathway and resources
	Recruitment & Retention - Marketing budget	25,000	-	SHOULD	Funding will support creation of marketing materials – banners, leaflets, online resources – that can be used at events such as universities, careers fairs, and online to attract candidates to Bristol and better convey our offer
	Recruitment & Retention – Clinical supervision model scale up	16,000	-	SHOULD	Funding will fund trained external clinical supervisors costs 200 hours of clinical supervision and its coordination across the workforce to reduce vicarious trauma and burnout increasing retention, reducing sickness, increasing emotional reflexivity and consistency of systemic and relational social work offer
	Recruitment & Retention – Programme Development lead for International social work recruitment	31,384	62,769	MUST	Funding will support employment of Programme Development lead for International Social Work for 18months (BG14 Grade) to design and deliver programme for inducting and onboarding internationally recruited social workers in their pre-employment and first year in practice in Bristol
	Recruitment & Retention – Scale up of International Social Work Programme	99,995	-	SHOULD	Funding will support recruitment of 5 more social workers from abroad in cohort one supporting long term investment in stabilising the workforce over the next 2 years
	Recruitment & Retention – Funding Systemic training for 3 Clinical Systemic Social Work Leads. Course starting in September 2024	-	69,000	MUST	Funding for course fees for Level 2 and MSc years for Systemic therapy training. Funding for clinical supervision required through the systemic therapy course. This will enable us to have trained individuals in Systemic Practise to support our workers with Clinical Supervision
	Recruitment & Retention – Practice Framework development lead	31,398	31,398	SHOULD	Funding will support employment of programme lead (BG14) for 12 months to review our practice framework resources and training programme building on the last three years of learning. Develop revised practice framework document and training programme primarily a new suite of online training to support the induction of new staff coming into the workforce and refreshing staff who trained 3+ years ago in systemic. Develop the new clinical model in anticipation of the new leads starting (likely this

person will be the path finder for the Clinical Leads role)

Increasing Internal Foster Care Provision

Sub Activity	23/24 Funding	24/25 Funding	Priority	Describe the exact benefit of this funding
Mockingbird - Fostering Network fees/licence	£64,000	£32,000	MUST	These are the set amounts that a LA has to pay to the fostering network to join the Mockingbird Programme. It is based on the numbers of approved carers that you have
Mockingbird - Staffing	£26,000	£53,000	MUST	This is the senior practitioner who will over see and manages the programme
Mockingbird - Activities	£7,000	£15,000	MUST	To fund activities for children in the cluster
Recruitment process – Process & Governance Specialist	£56,000		SHOULD	This will fund an individual to be brought in on a short term contract on an estimated £700 a day for 80 days across 6 months.
Recruitment process – Digital Analyst	£56,000		MUST	This will fund an individual to be brought in on a short term contract on an estimated £700 a day for 80 days across 6 months.
Recruitment Process – Digital Presence Expert	£35,000	35,000	MUST	Funding will support a range of digital enhancements to our fostering recruitment including digital content and increased/wider media marketing
Therapeutic environments pilot - Occupational Therapist Time	£3,500	£3,500	SHOULD	Funding will support the further development of trauma informed care for children to enable children to remain within their foster homes and to facilitate other children to step down from expensive placements back into local homes in Bristol
Therapeutic environments pilot - Training	£4,000	£4,000	SHOULD	Funding to support above, with additional training for staff and Foster carers in trauma informed care.
Therapeutic environments pilot - Staffing	£27,000	£54,000	SHOULD	Additional Staffing to support Pilot. Funded as a BG12 Role for 18 Months
Therapeutic environments pilot - Grants	£10,000	£25,000	SHOULD	Grants provided to Foster Carers to enable minor changes to home environment to support Therapeutic work

Reducing spending on External Placements

Sub Activity	23/24 Funding	24/25 Funding	Priority	Describe the exact benefit of this funding
Market Efficiency Pilot	£56,000		SHOULD	This will fund an individual for 80 Days at an estimated £700 per day to support the acceleration and testing of proposals to grow a

combined Market Analysis Team to embed consistent review of high cost placements and transition to outcomes based contracting for every child. This will prevent drift for children and support readiness for next steps.

The early adopter will need to evidence impact and will then be presented within the modelling for a People Services Commissioning Hub. Financial benefits could be significant and a push on this without a team in place last year netted £4M of efficiencies.

Preventing 16/17 Year olds Entering Care

Sub Activity	23/24 Funding	24/25 Funding	Priority	Describe the exact benefit of this funding
Adolescence Specialist	£34,000	£34,000	MUST	This funding will employ an experienced Service Manager (BG14) for a 12 month period to develop an Adolescence service model informed by national research and evidence of what works well and in line with agreed principles to achieve agreed outcomes. This individual would work collaboratively with all stake holders including staff
Housing Pathway Consultant	£18,750		MUST	There is approximately 6 months to impact the specification for the Youth Homelessness pathway and all the services that sit around it. Focused and time limited expertise in this area will review and contextualise the resources, processes and systems that we have in place through Children's Services and Housing Options which would be supportive of the re-commissioning. The benefit outcomes will be that young people at risk of or homeless will receive the support they need rather than the support that is available. This will reduce numbers of 16 and 17 year olds entering care through s20 where their primary issue is homelessness.

Total Funding Request

Opportunity	23/24 Funding	24/25 Funding
Staffing Recruitment & Retention	£231,165	£190,555
Improving Internal provision	£344,500	£221,500
Adolescence Service	£52,750	£34,000
Total	£628,415	£446,055
		£1.12m

Does the LA have a well evidenced, achievable, proposal that demonstrates that the funding will achieve its aims? Will the funding drive long- term improvement through changes in the way services are run? How will progress be measured? Please describe this, citing supporting evidence.

The opportunities will sit within the wider Our Families programme governance. The full Governance Setup can be found in **Appendix B** The Path to Delivery:

A robust governance is key to the delivery of the programme and associated improvements and opportunities linked to ILACs improvement plan and enhance diagnostic. This board includes oversight of quality assurance and performance, Governance will be split into two areas:

- Our Families Programme Board
- Working Groups (each workstream has a workstream lead with project resource to deliver the day-to-day deliverables)

The Programme Board has a key role in supporting the Executive Director Sponsor (Executive Director of Children and Education) in setting the direction for the programme, decision-making and providing both challenge and approval on issues affecting the progress of the programme. The Programme Board will not only have Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education & Equalities, Children and Education Director representatives and corporate business partners such as Finance, HR, ICT, Change Services but will also include key stakeholder representatives from Internal Assurance, Housing, Adult Social Care and Public Health. The Board will report to Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) in accordance with CLB governance and terms of reference.

The board meets six-weekly, and reports to CLB every five-weeks as part of the council's wider transformation programme portfolio governance.

For each of the planned activities there has been identified individuals to own each workstream and the below plans demonstrate the timescales of key activities and the desired actions in that timeframe.

Opportunity – 1. Staffing Recruitment and Retention

FULL DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND EVIDENCE BEHIND THE OPPORTUNITY CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX C – EVIDENCE PACK FOR STAFFING RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Activity	Deliverable/Success Metric
1.1 – Recruitment Process Modelling	Increased Applications for SW Roles
1.2 - Marketing budget	Increased Recruitment
1.3 – Clinical supervision model scale up	Increase Social Worker Satisfaction through annual social work survey
1.4 – International SW Programme	Increase retention rates of ISW (comparative to other LAs in region)
1.5 – Scale up of International Social Work	Increase ISW Recruitment Numbers
1.6 – Systemic SW Training	Increase percentage of statutory social work service learning reviews graded Good or

	Outstanding Reduce percentage of repeat child protection plans Reduce percentage of repeat referrals
1.7 – Practise Framework Development	Increase social worker attendance on practice framework training Increase social worker satisfaction on health check in training attendance and engagement

Opportunity – 2. Increasing Internal Provision

FULL DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND EVIDENCE BEHIND THE OPPORTUNITY CAN BE FOUND IN Appendix D- Evidence Pack for Internal Provision Workstreams

Activity	Deliverable/Success Metric
2.1 – Mockingbird	Constalation setup (Deliverable) Increased carer Satisfaction Decreased Carer Terminations
2.2 – Recruitment process	Increased Enquiries
2.3 – Digital Analyst Resource	Increased Conversion at each stage
2.3 – Recruitment digital enhancements	
2.4 – Therapeutic environments pilot	Increased carer Satisfaction Decreased Carer Terminations
2.5 – Market Efficiency Pilot	Development of sustainable model for market analysis and negotiaion to lead into Commissioning Hub

Opportunity – 3. Reducing Adolescent CYP Starting in Care/Reducing External Supported Accommodation Spend

FULL DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND EVIDENCE BEHIND THE OPPORTUNITY CAN BE FOUND IN Appendix E - Evidence Pack for Adolescence Service and Housing Pathway Workstreams

Activity	Deliverable/Success Metric
3.1 - Adolescence Service Design	Full plan for new service focus areas (Deliverable) Plan for new service team shapes (Deliverable) Plan for new service transition (Deliverable)
3.2 - Housing Pathway Redesign	Model for housing collaboration (new pathway deliverable) Increased number of joint assessments Decreased time for young people waiting for assessments Decreased 16/17 YO Starts Decreased ESA starts

Decrease in forecast costs in ESA

Overall Risks

Key Risks	Mitigation
Recruitment timescales are short to enable full spending within year	Costing have referenced a 3-month Recruitment period which may be reduced
Rates are not set in stone for specialist individuals	All roles have been costed Plans have taken into account a top-level figure seen across other Local Authority plans and previous service experience of £700 per day for contracted staff

Is the funding sustainable? Please describe how, citing supporting evidence.

Activity	Description on Sustainability of Funding
1.2 – Recruitment Process Modelling	This funding would be a one off piece where the output will be handed over to the service as a BAU process to follow in future campaigns
1.2 - Marketing budget	This Funding is an increase on existing budgets to support the trial of alternate marketing. This funding will not be required in future years as this work should identify more effective use of current funding
1.3 – Clinical supervision model scale up	Funding has been identified through our core learning and development budget. This will increase the funding whilst the clinical leads are recruited and implemented stabilising the workforce through the move to a new operating model and then will be sustained through the clinical lead role
1.4 – International SW Programme	This will be one off funding to produce a training programme that will be handed over to BAU teams for further roll out
1.5 – Scale up of International Social Work	This Funding is to boost an in progress project and will provide a boost to current recruitment without the need for further funding beyond new roles that will be part of the establishment moving forward
1.6 – Systemic SW Training	This funding will follow a train the trainer model and will support the initial training for individuals that we would then expect to see rolled out to further individuals through BAU processes
1.7 – Practise Framework Development	This Funding would be a one-off piece to develop new training for our teams and would then be delivered through both Team and online training sessions BAU
2.1 – Mockingbird	The funding would enable the service better to begin the Mockingbird model which would increase foster homes for children in Bristol through better retention and attracting more new carers and care transferring from IFAs. This would release funding to sustain the model in the future.
2.2 – Recruitment process	This Funding would be One off and focus on reviewing the end to end process and defining the digital Business Intelligence requirements for further work and would not be required long term
2.3 – Digital Analyst Resource	This Funding would be One off and focus on delivering the data requirements to improve data visibility of Fostering Recruitment process and marketing effectiveness and would not be required longterm. Any BI tool created will be worked alongside current BI resource build sustainably within our current systems
2.3 – Recruitment digital enhancements	This Funding would be One off and focus on a redesign of our online presence and would not be required in this format in future years
2.4 – Therapeutic environments pilot	Developing more attuned therapeutic environments would mean that more children would be able to remain with Bristol Foster Carers and would facilitate other children stepping down from children's homes places into therapeutic family care. This would come with a saving which could be used to sustain this work.
2.5 – Market Engagement/Negotiation	This funding would support the short term engagement needed and is expected to remain short term with the new commissioning process coming into place in 2025
3.1 - Adolescence Service Design	This will be a one-off short term role to design the team and create the output design for a future Adolescence Service
3.2 - Housing Pathway Redesign	This will be a one-off short term role to review current pathways and support the recommissioning of the housing pathway and would not be required longterm

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What are the consequences of not providing the LA with funding? Please describe how, citing supporting evidence

Increasing Staffing Recruitment and Retention and Training to improve Consistency

Sub Activity	Describe the Risks of not granting this line of Funding
1.1 – specialist HR programme lead	Benefits of BCC investment into staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions. Need end to end cycle of recruitment across all the programmes of recruitment which is a 12 month cycle
1.2 - Marketing budget for creation of marketing resources for careers and attraction and to trial/compare strategies of job advertisement	Benefits of BCC investment into staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions
1.3 – Clinical supervision model scale up	Benefits of BCC investment into staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions
1.4 – Programme Development lead for International social work recruitment for 18months (BG14)	Benefits of BCC investment into international staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions
1.5 – Scale up of International Social Work Programme for 5 more social workers in cohort one	Benefits of BCC investment into staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions
1.6 – Funding Systemic training for 3 Clinical Systemic Social Work Leads. Course starting in September 2024 (unless place becomes free this year at Tavistock)	Will enable BCC to create clinical lead roles as part of our restructure who will be responsible for driving consistency and embedding the systemic practice model. Without this investment we will continue to rely on external organisation who will be unable to have the reach across our organisation to create the consistency of practice through the practice framework that we require
1.7 – Funding for 12 months staffing for Practice Framework development lead (1 BG14)	Benefits of BCC investment into staff recruitment and retention may not be maximised. Without stable workforce benefits of transformation and creating conditions for practice will be challenging to achieve in respect of all wider ambitions

Increasing Internal Foster Care Provision

Sub Activity	Describe the risks of not granting this line
Mockingbird Setup	Without the Mockingbird
Recruitment process	Without an adequate review of the required data, information, processes and governance we will be unable to make a sustainable change to the way we set up our marketing campaigns. Leading to further spending on marketing that does not have adequate measures of success and effectiveness tracked. Reducing our sustainable ability to increase our Fostering Capacity.
Digital Analyst Resource	Without this funding, there will not be an embedded toolset to use in subsequent years, leading to a lack of sustainment of this work and a possible need for additional marketed costs and process mapping costs.
Recruitment digital enhancements	Without our ability to test out further digital recruitment elements we will be unable to spread our

	awareness to new modern ways, falling further behind the forward thinking Independent Fostering Associations and continuing to struggle with recruitment
Therapeutic environments pilot	Without training up therapeutic environments within our in house foster caring provisions will mean that higher need placements will need to remain in high cost, Out of Authority placements, where the ideal scenario would be for individuals to stay within Bristol in a home environment

Challenging OOA Costs

Sub Activity	Describe the risks of not granting this line
Market Engagement/ Negotiation	The demand into our Placements team and the increased number of quality assurance issues requiring strategic team oversight will prevent the efficiency work from embedding properly. The financial risk is in excess of £4M which was achieved with limited resource last year.

Preventing 16/17 Year olds Entering Care

Sub Activity	Describe the risks of not granting this line
Adolescence Specialist	Without additional resource to design our future service, timescales on the setup of a more effective service for the Children and Young persons in Bristol will be delayed, leading to more children continuing to not receive the ideal support and entering care where we could have worked differently to prevent this
Housing Pathway Consultant	The re-commissioning of the pathway is currently proposing an as is replacement with very few amends. Without some external expertise, it will be difficult to bring a comparative and impartially informed view to influence another Service sitting in another Directorate, and this will be a tanker to turn around, leading to ever-increasing costs.