

Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation

Child Placements and Residential Care

Scope

Scrutiny Chair: Councillor David Harrington	Contact details:
Scrutiny Officer: Graham Birtle	Contact details:
Lead Officer: Shaun McLurg	Contact details:
Independent Officer: Jim Bell	Contact details:
Finance Officer: Paula Hunt	Contact details:
Select Committee: Children and Young People	Type of Review: EIT Review
1. What services are included? Children's Placements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In house Fostering Agency.▪ In house Residential.▪ In house Adoption Agency.▪ In house residential and respite provision for children and young people with special/additional needs.▪ Externally purchased foster placements.▪ Externally purchased adoption placements.▪ Externally purchased residential placements.	
2. The Thematic Select Committee's / EIT Project Team overall aim / objectives in doing this work is: To identify options for future strategy / policy / service provision that will deliver efficiency savings and sustain / improve high quality outcomes for SBC residents. Providing residential, fostering and adoptive placements for children is a low-volume, high cost and high reputational activity. The issue to explore is whether the Borough is meeting the assessed needs of the individual children, i.e. is the available provision (either in-house or purchased) sufficient, are we getting value for money, and is there potential for commissioning the services in a more cost effective way without compromising the focus on achieving the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes. The current national context is one of promoting a mixed economy, and moving increasingly towards LAs working in partnership with external providers. Although we purchase external placements this is usually on a spot basis because there are	

no available in-house resources. The exception is the planned purchase of placements for children with special educational needs.

3. Expected duration of enquiry? What are the key milestones?

Cabinet – 1 February 2010

4. In addition to analysis and benchmarking costs, performance, assets etc, what other processes are likely to be required to inform the review? (e.g. site visits; observations; face-to-face questioning, telephones survey, written questionnaire, co-option of expert witnesses etc).

- Seeking the views of children and young people
- Consultation with staff involved in providing the placements e.g. residential staff
- Consultation with staff in Placements Team (Adoption and Fostering)
- Consultation with fieldwork staff
- Questionnaire/interviews with parents
- Questionnaire/interviews with sample of in house foster carers and adopters/prospective adopters
- Review of recent consultations that may have relevant information e.g. consultation undertaken for the refresh of the Children and Young People Plan
- Research review

5. How will key partners and/or the public be involved and at what stages?

- n/a to seek views of the public
- key partners could include schools
- may be appropriate to seek views of Independent Residential providers, Independent Fostering Providers and Voluntary Adoption Agencies from who we have purchased placements

6. Please give an initial indication how transformation will enable efficiencies and improvements to be delivered by this EIT review?

- Inform a view about the balance of internal and external placements
- Inform the commissioning plan e.g. in respect of negotiating better prices, especially in relation to volume/jointly commissioning with other LAs which is linked to quality rather than availability at short notice
- Inform the revision of the Looked After Children Strategy
- Inform the development the Aiming High for Disabled Children Strategy