

PLEASE INDICATE TIME REQUIRED TO PRESENT THE PAPER:

Children's Commissioning Committee

AGENDA ITEM NO:

Item for: Decision

3 November 2021

Report of:	Charlotte Ramsden
Date of Paper:	20/07/21
Subject:	Investment required for Next step (leaving care)
In case of query Please contact:	Phil Varghese Next Steps Leaving Care Manager
Strategic Priorities:	Please tick which strategic priorities the paper relates to:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quality, Safety, Innovation and Research
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Integrated Community Care Services (Adult Services)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Children's and Maternity Services
	Primary Care
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enabling Transformation
Purpose of Paper:	
<p>This business case outlines the proposal for investment for Salford leaving care. Salford Leaving Care service is a Statutory service which provides support to our most vulnerable young people in Salford, our Looked After Children. As Corporate Parents are responsible for ensuring the care and support, we provide is equal if not exceeds the care a parent would give. Our Next Steps Leaving Care team provide a supportive relationship to our young people and as such additional resource is required to enable effective management of caseloads and to maintain the quality and reputation of the leaving care team in Salford.</p> <p>The definitions of categories of children entitled to care leaving support and reviewed by the Relevant and Former Relevant Review Officer are:</p> <p>Relevant children (under 18) and Former Relevant young people (Over 18) as defined in section 23A(2) of the 1989 Act.</p> <p>The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must:</p>	

- take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the relevant child [section 23B(1) of the 1989 Act]
 - prepare an assessment of the relevant child's needs with a view to determining what advice assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide them
 - prepare a pathway plan [section 23B(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
 - keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23E(1D) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
 - take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child, and if they lose touch with them, to re-establish contact [section 23C(2) of the 1989 Act] continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23C(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
- Request for additional funding for:

1x Relevant and Former Relevant Review Officer

2x Pathway Advisor

1x Administration Support

(Funding is available from a one off refund from Lincolnshire City Council.)

Further explanatory information required

<p>HOW WILL THIS BENEFIT THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF SALFORD RESIDENTS OR THE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP?</p>	<p>Salford care leavers will benefit significantly from additional investment in the leaving care service to maintain the quality outcomes for this vulnerable group.</p>
<p>WHAT RISKS MAY ARISE AS A RESULT OF THIS PAPER? HOW CAN THEY BE MITIGATED?</p>	<p>There is a risk that if additional investment is not secured and the service will not cope with the increasing demand of duty</p>
<p>WHAT EQUALITY RELATED RISKS MAY ARISE AS A RESULT OF THIS PAPER? HOW WILL THESE BE MITIGATED?</p>	<p>An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the Procurement process if the additional funding is agreed</p>

<p>DOES THIS PAPER HELP ADDRESS ANY EXISTING HIGH RISKS FACING THE ORGANISATION? IF SO WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DOES THIS PAPER REDUCE THEM?</p>	<p>Under investment in leaving care services across the City creates risks for care leavers and future OFSTED ratings</p>
<p>PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PAPER.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
<p>PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY CURRENT SERVICES OR ROLES THAT MAY BE AFFECTED BY ISSUES WITHIN THIS PAPER:</p>	<p>The Salford leaving care service known as Next Step</p>

Footnote:

Members of the Service and Finance Group will read all papers thoroughly. Once papers are distributed no amendments are possible.

Document Development

Process	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Comments and Date (i.e. presentation, verbal, actual report)	Outcome
Public Engagement (Please detail the method i.e. survey, event, consultation)		y			
Clinical Engagement (Please detail the method i.e. survey, event, consultation)		y			
Has 'due regard' been given to Social Value and the impacts on the Salford socially, economically and environmentally?	✓			Will impact on care leavers who the LA is a corporate parent for.	
Has 'due regard' been given to Equality Analysis (EA) of any adverse impacts? (Please detail outcomes, including risks and how these will be managed)	✓				
Legal Advice Sought		✓			
Presented to any informal groups or committees (including partnership groups) for engagement or other formal governance groups for comments / approval? (Please specify in comments)	✓			Leadership team on 7 th June 21 Lead member	

Note: Please ensure that it is clear in the comments and date column how and when particular stakeholders were involved in this work and ensure there is clarity in the outcome column showing what the key message or decision was from that group and whether amendments were requested about a particular part of the work

Business Case

Investment case for Leaving care

Version Control Log

DATE	SECTIONS	NAME	COMMENT
200721	Contents	Phil Varghese	
060821	Executive Summary, Finance Section	Debbie Blackburn/Phil Varghese/Chris Mee	Additions following SFG

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This business case outlines the proposal for investment for Salford leaving care. Salford Leaving Care service is a Statutory service which provides support to our most vulnerable

young people in Salford, our Looked After Children. As Corporate Parents are responsible for ensuring the care and support, we provide is equal if not exceeds the care a parent would give. Our Next Steps Leaving Care team provide a supportive relationship to our young people and as such additional resource is required to enable effective management of caseloads and to maintain the quality and reputation of the leaving care team in Salford.

2. Background

2.1 The definitions of categories of children entitled to care leaving support and reviewed by the Relevant and Former Relevant Review Officer are:

2.2 Relevant children (under 18) and Former Relevant young people (Over 18) as defined in section 23A(2) of the 1989 Act.

The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must:

- take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the relevant child [section 23B(1) of the 1989 Act]
- prepare an assessment of the relevant child's needs with a view to determining what advice assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide them
- prepare a pathway plan [section 23B(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
- keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23E(1D) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
- take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child, and if they lose touch with them, to re-establish contact [section 23C(2) of the 1989 Act] continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23C(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

2.3 To comply with the – Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations (Volume 3: planning transition for care leavers, January 2015) the R&FRRO is required to arrange a review in the following circumstances:

- A review has to take place every 6 months (minimum)
- Where a relevant child moves to unregulated accommodation (i.e. accommodation that is not regulated under the Care Standards Act 2000 and is not inspected by Ofsted), then the first review of the pathway plan must take place as soon as is practical after 28 days.
- Any change in the young person's accommodation. This will be particularly important for any relevant child – as the local authority remains responsible for the accommodation and maintenance of this potentially very vulnerable group of young people.
- Given the serious implications for a young person's future, EG: where a young person has been charged with an offence and there is a possibility of their being sentenced to custody.
- Risk losing their (suitable) accommodation or otherwise threatened with homelessness.
- Where professionals are concerned about the parenting capacity of a relevant or former relevant young person, with there being a possibility that their own child may need to become the subject of a multi-agency safeguarding plan.
- Where a young person asks for a review of their plan.

- 2.4 In order to meet the above Statutory regulations and to maintain the quality and reputation of the leaving care team in Salford additional posts are required. A major part of this is recognising and dealing with the increasing pressure across the whole team at a time of growing numbers of service users and the ever-increasing expectations of central government. For example, we are still feeling the impact of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, whereby more young people will be remaining open to the service post-21.
- 2.5 The service are currently working with 347 young people which continues to increase year on year which adds further pressure upon the staffing with limited capacity and flexibility.
- 2.6 At Next Step we pride ourselves with retaining high levels of education, employment and training.

The OC3 return for 2019/2020 Next Step was working with 347 young people:

In ETE –	76.4%
NEET -	23.6%

This is a pleasing return when compared with the national average 46% for care leavers in ETE.

The OFSTED returns also include suitable accommodation figures and the 2019/2020 data was 95.5%).

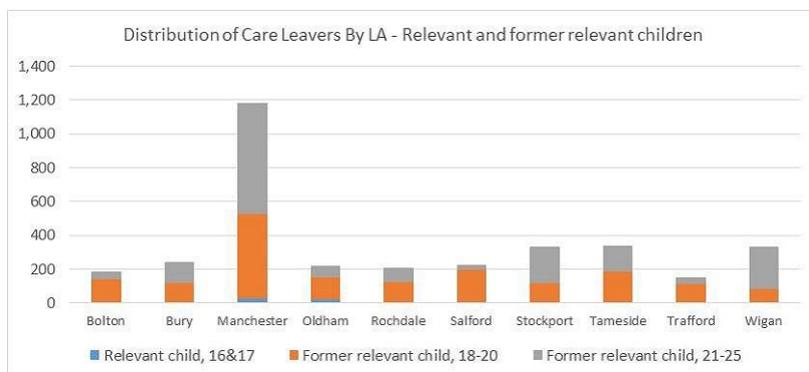
Contact remains high with 98.9% of our young people remaining in contact with the service (1 young person was deported and no longer is in contact with Next Step, while the other was deceased).

- 2.7 The current 14 FTE workers are at capacity and equates to 24.7 cases each.
- 2.8 With the ambition for the 2 current ASWs to reduce their full caseloads to 10 in line with the proposed ASW model this will mean reallocating 20 cases across the team. Such allocations are impossible within current commitments and certainly will have an adverse effect upon the leaving care service outcomes and statistical data return for OFSTED.
- 2.9 This does not account for the increasing numbers of those becoming eligible for the leaving care service.
- 2.10 Over the last few years we have experienced a steady increase in the number of young people meeting the leaving care service criteria.
- In November 2017 we were working with **284** young people
 - In November 2018 we were working with **318** young people
 - In November 2019 we were working with **347** young people
 - In January 2021 we are working with **348** young people
- 2.11 This accounts for an **22%** increase over a 4 year period, it is realistic to anticipate the number of those meeting the service criteria will continue to rise due to a number of factors:

- The number of those coming through the front door and remaining in care has risen over previous years and meet the leaving care criteria. Although we appear to see a slight reduction coming into care there remains a large cohort of young people already meeting the leaving care criteria.
- Those subject to Southwark cannot be predicted and currently there are 3 young people subject to this status that are due over to Next Step before February 2021. This is despite the success of route 29 and other interventions, notably as the legacy cases continue to meet the leaving care criteria.
- The number of spontaneous unaccompanied children arriving in Salford continues to increase year on year and present to the front door and remain in care post 13 weeks.
 - In November 2017 the leaving care service were working with **30** young people with previous asylum claims and having met the leaving care criteria.
 - In November 2018 the leaving care service were working with **53** young people with previous asylum claims and having met the leaving care criteria.
 - In November 2019 the leaving care service were working with **72** young people with previous asylum claims and having met the leaving care criteria.
 - Current data evidences we are working with **67** young people with previous asylum claims and having met the leaving care criteria, there are a further **3** due to come over to Next Step pending age assessments.

This accounts for a **140% increase over a 3 year period.**

- 2.12 The definitions of categories of children entitled to care leaving support and reviewed by the Relevant and Former Relevant Review Officer can be found on the following link https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf
- 2.13 The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must *keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23E(1D) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]* and take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child, and if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact [section 23C(2) of the 1989 Act] continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23C(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]
- 2.14 Since the introduction of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the implementation of; 'Extending Personal Advisor support to all care leavers to age 25' (February 2018) the opportunity for care leavers to remain allocated to a worker continues to increase case load numbers. The extra burdens money provided by central government has provided some alleviation towards caseload allocations as this financed an Aftercare worker 3 year post but due to the increased demand the post has been quickly absorbed with a full caseload.
- 2.15 The graph below identifies Salford as the GM authority with the least numbers of allocated post 21 care leavers within its service. The leaving care service was working with 30 care leavers aged beyond 21 in October 2019, to date this has increased to 42. We are confident the completion of the need assessment is robust when a young person makes a request for a service post 21 and there is identified outstanding work, however it is becoming increasing frequent and returners are well informed about their 'right' to request a service and allocation of a worker.



2.16

2.17 The pressure to comply and maintain such a 'good' service is becoming compromised. The single R&FRRO is reviewing **247** young people and there is an expectation these are reviewed every 6 months as a minimum. This means the postholder is expected to undertake **494** reviews per year, which is impossible due to capacity. This does not account for the changes of placement.

3. Risks associated with lower levels of staffing

3.1 **Risk of placement breakdown and placement instability** - young people not seeing their worker as often as dictated by the DFE guidance and when the young person really needs such support when required particularly at their hour of need which would mean Pathway Plans are not updated in a timely manner and not able to reflect risk factors and how this can be mitigated. If aged between 16-17 and a young person requires care:

The average cost of in-house residential placements in Salford is £3,854 per week (adjusted for average occupancy rates). Even without the additional cost of possible placement breakdown, this represents over a £207,000 cost avoidance over 12 months, were this alternative path to have been followed. Demand drives costs up. Increased staffing capacity will also allow more quality time to work with young people to 'step down' from expensive residential placements to lower intensity cheaper and more local provision

3.2 **Increased risk Mental Health and Wellbeing** - Prior to the impact of Covid the mental health needs of care leavers were a priority which has been exacerbated since the covid environment being experienced today. The additional posts will allow the young people to participate in their pathway planning in a meaningful way with workers who are provided with manageable caseloads and supporting young people to access the support they need: including the support of universal services (for example mental health issues, education support, etc.) when needed and this will reduce the increasingly expensive, intensive services when they are perhaps too late. Evidence from a separate piece of work undertaken by the Lowry (March 2021) for 16+ provision the 25 young people who did engage with the consultation have reported

'significantly increased loneliness and isolation and heightened challenges with mental health. The young people have articulated that they found it difficult to access support from services during the pandemic and as services continue to be stretched their challenges continue to increase'

National research on the typical cost of CAMHS support suggests that the average cost per case of support offered through a Generic Multi-Disciplinary CAMHS Team is £5,300 (The Unit Costs of Health and Social Care (PSSRU, 2017))

3.3 Increase in risky behaviours of CSE, gang involvement, drug use or other offending behaviour – manageable caseloads mean having flexibility to respond to young people in a timely manner to avoid drift and delay.

Costs associated with low-level criminality can quickly build up. Any involvement in violence (even of a less serious nature) has an estimated impact of £2,600 to public agencies, and a societal impact equivalent to £6,700 (impact on the economy and victims' wellbeing). More serious violence carries a fiscal impact on public agencies rising to £3,800, and a wider societal impact equivalent to £15,800.

The risk is that the team will be unable to allocate new cases due to tolerable caseloads numbers being exceeded. Increasing workloads and other pressures will no doubt result in stress and anxiety levels increasing and leading to staff sickness. We know that when this happens, this puts additional demands on the remaining team members. A further consideration is OFSTED compliance.

4. Proposed Provision

Additional funding is required to support the team and additional Relevant and Former Relevant Review Officer and 2 Pathway Advisors with admin support are required.

Without the additional R&FR Reviewing officer post it is impossible to ensure all care leavers and their pathway plans are reviewed in a timely fashion. This includes ensuring they reside in safe accommodation and access the appropriate support.

Young person to have more qualitative time with the review officer and develop their future plans alongside their allocated worker, when co-produced this supports the YP and enables clear joint planning which is the most effective way to care plan for young people who can participate.

Both the additional R&FRRO and pathway posts would alleviate the need for additional pressure on other services such as a crisis intervention and adult mental health.

With the additional Pathway post (2) being granted this would alleviate the current pressure while delivering the ASW model and absorbing the increasing numbers of young people.

We are also at a point whereby staff are at caseload capacity and managers are struggling to identify space within caseloads for allocation. We are currently working with 347 young people which continues to increase year on year which adds further pressure upon the staffing with limited capacity and flexibility. The current 14 FTE workers are at capacity and equates to 24.7 cases each.

Additional administrative officer which could be funded to account for the increase of work and allocation of duties. This would allow work to be distributed more efficiently and will take pressure off the admin team as service demand is increasing. This allows the Social workers to concentrate their time on quality time with the YP rather than administrative tasks.

The additional posts will mitigate the increasing service user numbers and allow the maintenance of a recognised excellent service across Greater Manchester which supports YPs and diverts them from critical services where possible.

The current R&FRRO postholder reviews the pathway plan for any young person who is a care leaver post 16 up to the age of 25. This work includes identifying areas of development and opportunity towards purposeful lifestyle and activities.

5. Proposed Funding for the service

	<u>Annual Cost</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>21/22 Prices</u>					
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<u>Staffing Cost</u>		-	-	-	-	-
Review Officer - 1 FTE	56,000	28,000	56,560	57,126	28,848	170,534
Pathway Advisors - 2 FTE	96,000	48,000	96,960	97,930	49,454	292,344
Admin Support - 1 FTE	28,500	14,250	28,785	29,073	14,682	86,790
Total Cost	180,500	90,250	182,305	184,128	92,985	549,668
<u>Funded By</u>						
One off resources from other LA Refund		(90,250)	(182,305)	(184,128)	(92,985)	(549,668)

To be met from Integrated Fund		-	-	-	-	-
Nb Assumes a 1st October 2021 start date and 3 year investment to 30th September 2024						

Funding for these posts will be for a three year period and will be met from a refund from another local authority in relation to placement costs refunded

This will allow support the care leavers to live in a be better prepared and supported to live independently with the following attributes:

- ▶ Have improved access to education, employment and training
- ▶ Experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure
- ▶ Receive improved access to health support
- ▶ Achieve financial stability

2 Role of other services

2.1 In Salford we have a wide range of provision and excellent multi agency working which will complement the commissioned provision.. In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for people using services, it will be an essential requirement of the provision to build strong relationships with partners which sit outside of the provision, but within the wider complex needs system to meet the needs of a local offer.

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

To support the short term investment from existing resources to reduce pressure and demand on the service

5. Recruitment and Social Value

5.1 The procurement process for the lead provider model will ensure our social value principles are adhered to and the provider would be expected to commit to optimising the social, environmental and economic well-being of Salford and its people in everything that we do, thinking long-term – turning investment into long-lasting outcomes, working together across sectors to provide Social Value outcomes, having values including inclusion, openness, honesty, social responsibility and caring for others, having a clear and current understanding of how Social Value can make Salford a better place