

Update on Midlothian Residential Houses

Report by Joan Tranent, Head of Children's Services, Education, Communities and Economy

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on:
- I. The requirements of Part 9, 10 and 11 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
 - II. The additional funding received by Midlothian Council to meet the secondary duties and responsibilities in relation to care leavers.
 - III. How Midlothian Council intend to use the additional funding to support existing provision and future planning commitments.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 received Royal Assent on the 27th of March 2014 and contains several changes to how children and young people in Scotland will be cared for.

- 2.2 Under Parts 9-14 of the Act, there are a number of significant changes to the range of duties and powers that affect those in care and care-leavers. Specifically;

- Part 9 – provides for a clear definition of Corporate Parenting, and defines the bodies to which it will apply and what can be expected from them.
- Part 10 – refers to the new Aftercare duties and outlines that young people who leave care after the age of 16, (from April 2015 onwards) are entitled to local authority support until age 26.
- Part 11 – introduces continuing care – an entitlement to stay in a care placement when they reach 16 years of age (foster, residential and kinship) with the right to stay in that or a similar care placement until the **age of 21**.
- Local Authorities supporting looked after young people will also have to provide 'advice, guidance and assistance' to care leavers up to the **age of 26**.

- 2.3 The Act is premised on reducing the inequality and poor outcomes that currently exists between care leavers and their wider peer group; such as lower educational qualifications, higher instances of mental health issues, early pregnancy etc. all of which is well documented.

3 Financial Information

To ensure implementation of the key changes in the 2014 Act, Scottish Government assigned additional funding to all Councils. Midlothian Council's allocation of the funds are as follows:

Additional Funding

2015-16

Looked after Children up to 25	£83,000
Eligibility for Aftercare	£12,000
Continuing Care (eligibility to stay until 21)	£65,000
Continuing Care – Kinship Allowance	£58,000

Total **£218,000**

2016-17

Looked after Children up to 25	£ 65,000
Eligibility for Aftercare	£ 22,000
Continuing Care (eligibility to stay until 21)	£117,000

Total **£204,000**

4 Local Resource Provision

- 4.1** In preparing for the 2014 Act we provided additional staffing capacity to the Through Care team to enable them to become more outward-facing and work with an increased care leaver group; residential care; foster care; kinship care and care at home etc.
- 4.2** Funding is also used to support the associated costs of developing our Young Champions.

5 Future Resource Proposal

- 5.1** Midlothian has been at the forefront of continuing to care for our young people in advance of the legislation coming into force and our commitment towards this 'staying put' agenda has meant a number of young people have chose to stay in their care placements longer. We have seen an increase in all areas including kinship, foster care and residential care homes.
- 5.2** While our practice is in keeping with the national and local policy direction, we need to acknowledge that young people choosing to stay in care longer will significantly impact on our ability to provide placements to children entering into the care system.
- 5.3** Our current residential provision includes 3 x 4 bedroom houses. We have sought and been granted Care Inspectorate registration for a 3 bedded flat provided by Melville Housing in Bogwood Road, Mayfield. The flat was originally provided to Hawthorn Children and Families resources to allow the service to carry out assessments.
- 5.4** The **core-cluster approach** would consist of a 'cluster' of buildings; e.g. using the Melville flat and the residential home at Lady Brae, Gorebridge to allow 16-18 year olds to live there, thus having the younger children residing in Woodburn Court, Dalkeith and Pentland Way, Penicuik. Lady Brae and where appropriate the flat shall help support young people to live independently and teach them relevant life skills whilst continuing to offer emotional support. This allows us to utilise our buildings more effectively.
- 5.5** The recent commissioning of external staff in one of our residential homes was costly both in terms of the financial implication and the negative impact it had on community relationships. Instead of commissioning external staff we propose that we increase our existing workforce to provide dedicated support to ensure the safe and effective running of the 'cluster' buildings.

- 5.6 The provision of our own staffing means that we are able to direct their efforts and we have the flexibility to extend our contract the workforce depending on the needs of care leavers. The fluid nature of the services will provide an opportunity to explore the wider implications for care leavers in relation to further sublets, group vs. Individual living etc.

- 5.7 We will assess and evaluate the effectiveness of this model after 2 years.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 While we cannot accurately predict the increase in young people electing to stay put we can anticipate a significant increase, particularly in relation to foster care and our residential care homes.

- 6.2 To ensure the growing numbers of young people are supported within the 'core-cluster' environment we will use the remainder of the additional funding to assign dedicated staff on call and support the 'cluster' buildings.

- 6.3 This increase to the current resources would enable Children and Families to drive the changes contained in the 2014 Act through provision of a dedicated team of Children's Practitioners primarily based within Lady Brae, Gorebridge who are able to provide 24 hour support to a range of care leavers living within our local community.

4 x FTE Children's Services Practitioner = **£135,000**

- 6.4 The increase in the current TCAC structure to support the increased work load within this area of work will incur an additional **£12,495** with workers changing roles and one previous pathway co-ordinator qualifying to become a social worker.

Previous Staffing

Through Care Team

2 x Pathway Coordinator

1x Children's Services Practitioner = £97,557

New Staffing Requirement

Through Care Team

2 x Social Worker

2 x Children's Services Practitioner = £110,052

7 Risk

- 7.1 There is a requirement to report back to Scottish Ministers in relation to the use of the funding and the expectation is that the total monies are used for the purpose as described.

7.2 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

7.3 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

- Giving children and young people the best start in life and improve life chances for children, young people and families.
- Improve outcomes for children and young people by continuing to implement Getting it Right for Every Child and putting in place changes required by the laws.
- Improve outcomes for vulnerable or at risk children and young people.

7.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The policy work will be linked to the Key Performance Indicators identified within the Service and Community plans.

7.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The legislative and policy requirement / implications are underpinned by the preventative spend agenda. In addition to improving outcomes for young people through staying in care longer, there is a reduction in the longer-term associated costs of alternative accommodation and placements.

7.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the key parts of the legislation have involved wide consultation with a number of stakeholders.

7.7 Ensuring Equalities

The commitment of a dedicated resource / team to drive change will reduce the current inequalities that exist between care leavers and their wider peers.

7.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The rationale for the legislative and political change is to ensure outcomes for care leavers are improved.

7.9 IT Issues

Not applicable as there are no identified IT implications arising from this report.

8 Recommendation

It is requested that Cabinet:

- Note the content of this report regarding meeting the requirements of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Parts 9-14.

Date: 09 May 2016

Report Contact:

Joan Tranent, Head of Children's Services

Tel No 0131 271 3721

joan.tranent@midlothian.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None