

Summary Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA)

| Area for Assessment: | |
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| Name of service or function etc | CHESS (Children's Health, Education and Social Services) Review |
| Which Service does this affect? | Performance Planning and Commissioning |
| Is this a new, existing or revised function? | Revised |
| Summary of findings: | |
| Main conclusions on the likely impact of the function on different equality groups (protected characteristics): | |
| <p>The Children's Health, Education & Social Services (CHESS) was set up to enable looked after children and young people with complex emotional and behavioural needs to be placed with a foster carer as an alternative to residential care.</p> <p>This is in line with the Council's objective to provide local family based placements for looked after children and young people who need a specialist foster care placement, and to achieve good outcomes for those children and young people, making the best use of all resources.</p> <p>A review has been undertaken of the service, which included consultation with relevant stakeholders. This will be used to shape the future delivery of specialist fostering in Solihull, and to determine how specialist fostering services will be delivered to continue to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people in the most cost effective way. This Fair Treatment Assessment has been undertaken to look at the proposed change and consider the potential impact on various equality groups. The Fair Treatment Assessment process has involved looking at all the evidence gathered as part of the review, including consultation with key stakeholders,</p> <p>A key finding of the Review was that the service has a positive impact on the outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children in Solihull, in that CHESS enables children with the most complex and highest need, who have experienced significant placement disruptions, to be placed in a local family based placement.</p> <p>The review recommends retaining a therapeutic fostering service with the aim of achieving change for the most complex young people, to avoid residential placements and enable children to move successfully to permanence with birth family or long term or permanent fostering placements, but does propose changes to the current service.</p> <p>The focus on outcomes for the most vulnerable children is to remain in any redesigned service, but it is acknowledged that proposed changes to the service may risk losing committed and experienced carers and staff, and actions are in place to minimise this risk.</p> <p>The potential negative impacts on particular children in CHESS placements are being monitored throughout the Management Of Change process to ensure that carers and children receive similar levels of psychological support as at present.</p> <p>Staff and carers have been offered support through the process to ensure that the potential adverse impacts of uncertainty and change do not impact on children in CHESS or children who could access a CHESS placement in the next few months while consultation with staff and carers is ongoing.</p> <p>Potentially negative differential impacts in the existing service will be addressed through consideration of the training needs of staff and foster carers, and monitored as part of quarterly outcomes reporting.</p> <p>A proposed new staffing model and structure was part of the consultation process in accordance with the</p> | |

Management of Change policy in both SMBC and Heart of England Foundation Trust. The consultation ended on 15th November, (extended from 12th October) and final amended proposals shared with staff and the unions from 25th November 2011, and taken to Cabinet Member Decision Making on December 8th 2011. These proposals include;-

- retaining a therapeutic fostering service with the aim of achieving change for the most complex young people, to avoid residential placements and enable children to move successfully to permanence with birth family or long term or permanent fostering placements, but does propose changes to the current service .
- The Council to make arrangements for CHES to be managed within the Local Authority as the most cost effective approach that achieves best outcomes for children and young people, and provides local placements.
- Carers and children to receive similar levels of psychological support as at present
- To maintain psychological support to CHES placements, including assessments of new referrals and support at current levels an establishment of 2.00fte lead Clinical Psychologist (band 8b) and 1.40fte Clinical Psychologists (Band 7) are required, reducing from the current 3.8
- Educational support for CHES placements to continue to be provided from the CHES team by a full time, term time Education Worker (0.85 fte) who will receive professional supervision from the Head of the Education for Looked after Children.
- CHES management arrangements to be integrated with the Fostering Service in order to achieve more coherent and consistent leadership of Solihull's fostering services and reduce management costs. The proposal is to delete two posts, the Team Manager Placements (Fostering) and Team Manager CHES, and create a new post of Fostering Service Team Manager.
- The opportunity to 'sell' placements to other local authorities to be explored and a business plan developed.
- Initially to continue with 12 placements, and to consider the development of long term placements, with a framework within which to agree the level of support and fostering fee.
- Further financial modelling and needs analysis has been undertaken to support decisions regarding number of placements, and further work with the CHES team in context of the Integrated Fostering Service will be undertaken to develop the fee and support structure for long term CHES placements and potential fee structure in line with the review of fees and allowances as part of the Fostering Strategy
- CHES service to achieve a minimum average occupancy rate of 85%.
- On-call arrangements to continue unchanged until the Integrated Fostering Service has been established, when the on-call arrangements across the whole of the fostering service will be agreed in line with Emergency Duty Team review outcomes
- Clear criteria for a CHES placement to be consistently applied
- The outcomes for children and young people to be monitored on an ongoing basis; there should be an annual review of the service to ensure that the model is effective and the staffing levels appropriate, taking into account occupancy, outcomes for children and young people, feedback from carers, unit costs and reduction in use of residential placements.

| Actions: | | |
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| Actions identified to address negative impacts identified or to better promote equality, human rights, cohesive and sustainable communities and safeguarding issues: | | |
| Action | Outcome | Timescale |
| The Placement Progress and Outcomes Report to include socio economic issues in future | Young people from low socio economic backgrounds have access to psychological support | By Jan 2012 |
| Further analysis of assessments to be undertaken consider issues of potential gender bias. | All young people who meet the viability criteria access CHESS placements | By Jan 2012 |
| The Placement Progress and Outcomes Report to include race/ethnicity cultural issues in future | Young people from all black and minority ethnic groups who meet the viability criteria have access to psychological support | By Jan 2012 |
| Wider support for mainstream foster carers to be available through integrating CHESS within a wider fostering service | Greater flexibility in fostering placements | Following implementation if proposal adopted |
| The team focus to remain on meeting the needs of children in CHESS placements during the consultation process and implementation phase. | No placement disruption during Management of Change as staff feel contained | September 2011 to March 2012 |
| Follow up letter to CHESS carers and face to face meetings arranged as part of the consultation to help contain CHESS carers | CHESS carers feel supported and contained | September/ December 2011 |
| Consideration to be given to training needs of staff and foster carers in terms of preparedness to deal with issues of race/ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation | All children in CHESS placements have their Individual needs met | January – March 2012 |
| Date Assessment Signed Off | 16 th December 2011 | |