

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children Services
Date:	25 March 2013
Title:	Statement of Purpose of the Hampshire Fostering Service Adoption Service and Residential Homes.
Reference:	4669
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, Children's Homes and for Adoption Services require that the registered provider (in the case of a local authority, the elected members) formally approves the Statement of Purpose of Services, and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary, at least annually.
- 1.2. The aim of this report therefore is to present the updated Statement of Purpose of Hampshire's Fostering, Adoption Services and Children's Homes (see Appendices) for approval by the Executive Member, highlighting the key parts of the document that have been revised since it was last presented.

2. Contextual Information

- 2.1 The Regulations and Guidance for Fostering Service, Adoption Services and for Children's Homes state that the service provider (in this instance, Hampshire Children's Services Department) shall compile, in relation to the service, a written statement, referred to as The Statement of Purpose, which shall consist of:
 - a) A statement of the aims and objectives of the service; and
 - b) A statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the service.
- 2.2 The provider is responsible for providing a copy of the Statement of Purpose to Ofsted, the body which inspects the services, and the following key stakeholders:
 - i. Any person working for the purposes of the service;

- ii. Any foster/ adoptive parent or prospective foster/ adoptive parent
- iii. Any child placed within any of the services; and
- iv. The parent of any such child.

2.3A children's version of the Statement of Purpose is also available

2.4 The proposals in this report are expected to support the County Council's corporate priorities as follows:

"Making Hampshire safer and more secure for all" – by enabling as many of Hampshire's children as possible, who are looked after, to remain in their local communities and to fully participate in and contribute to the life of those communities.

"Maximising well-being" – by ensuring that Hampshire's children who are looked after are provided with good quality family based care placements that meet their needs and enable them to move successfully through their transition to independence.

"Enhancing our quality of place" – through provision of high quality services that target those children who are the most vulnerable.

3. Key Issues

Revisions to the Statement of Purpose:

Fostering Services:

3.1 The Fostering Service uses the Statement of Purpose as a competitive positioning tool, which benchmarks local authority and independent services. This is useful in recruitment terms as prospective carers can compare services more easily and is also helpful for placement commissioning.

3.2 References to the Fostering Service and descriptions and diagrams of how the service is structured are presented in a way that is appropriate to the audience who are reading the statement of purpose and understanding how the fostering service operates.

3.3 The structure and approach to training for foster carers has changed to encourage the attendance and scope of training available to foster carers. Core training for foster carers is now entitled 'Essential' training and the tiered structure that existed has been removed. It is anticipated that this will engender a sense of need to be trained and also offer training to all, at all levels.

3.4 The registration body for social workers has been changed in the text to reflect that social workers are now registered with the HCPC and not the GSCC.

Children's Residential Care

3.5 Children's homes must have a Statement of Purpose. The details of which are within the Children's Homes Regulations (2011). This sets out the home's overall ethos, values and principles, which play a core part in promoting children's safety and welfare. They should be child focussed and able to demonstrate how the care offered to each child by the home will address their social, emotional, educational and behavioural needs. It must set out details of the home's aims and objectives and the services and facilities provided and must be regularly kept under review and revised whenever necessary.

3.6 Hampshire has six children's homes for local children whose needs cannot be met within a family environment. They are all mixed sex units and range from 4-7 beds located throughout Hampshire, accommodating a total of 34 children. In addition there is a secure children's home for 16 children. This is a national resource and accommodates children under both criminal and welfare orders.

- Godbey House is located in Hayling Island. This six bedded home accommodates children and young people aged between 12- 17 years
- Glendalyn Children's Home is in New Milton. This seven bedded home accommodates children and young people aged between 12- 17 years
- Milesdown Children's Home is in Winchester. This six bedded home accommodates children and young people aged between 12- 17 years
- The Greenhouse Children's Home is located in Chandlers Ford. This six bedded home accommodates children and young people aged between 12- 17 years.
- The Mead is located in Odiham. This five bedded home accommodates children and young people aged between 12- 17 years
- Cypress Lodge is Hampshire's smallest children's home located in Basingstoke and accommodates four children and young people aged between 12- 17 years.

3.7 Swanwick Lodge is a secure children's home. It accommodates 12 children through a contract with the Youth Justice Board and has provision for a further 4 beds for children who need to be secured for their own safety, under section 25 of the Children Act. Both criminal and welfare beds are a national resource and the home is a self financing business unit. The unit is subject to the same regulations and inspection regime as open children's home but with some additional requirements which are specific to its secure setting.

3.8 The statements of purpose have been updated to reflect any staffing changes as well as the number of children accommodated, such as at The Mead who have reduced their beds from 6 to 5 following refurbishment. All statements of purpose are now aligned to present a more coherent service model including the introduction the Pillars of Parenting, the agreed framework of professional childcare in operation across the service

Short Break Homes

3.7 Hampshire County Council operates three overnight residential short break homes, offering overnight short breaks to children with disabilities. These homes are Sunbeams in Aldershot, Firvale in Basingstoke and Merrydale in Kings Worthy.

3.8 All three Statements of Purpose for these homes have been updated in January 2013. The changes are minor and simply reflect staffing changes and some additional staff training undertaken in 2012 regarding the dispensing of medication and the use of MAKATON; a pictorial communication method.

Adoption Service

3.9 Hampshire's Adoption Service is going through significant change to meet the Governmental agenda for service improvement. Some of these changes will be reflected in the Adoption Services Statement of Purpose, with further changes anticipated next year .

3.10 Since the 1st of September 2012 Children's Plans for Adoption are no longer required to be presented to the Adoption Panel and instead are considered directly by the Agency Decision Maker prior to the final hearing and Placement Order application.

3.11 A new assessment process for prospective adopters will be implemented during 2013. This will introduce a new two stage assessment process to last a maximum of six months for most applicants.

3.12 Hampshire has been trialling the new Prospective Adopters Report as part of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) pilot project and will use this for all new assessments from April 2013.

3.13 At the point of enquiry and assessment of prospective adopters they are being offered the opportunity to consider 'fostering to adopt'. This will enable concurrent placements with adopters who are also approved as foster carers where this is in the best interests of the child.

3.14 The Adoption Service will be developing close working relations with the new National Adoption Gateway. The aim of the National Gateway is to provide a central point for enquiries from prospective adopters and signposting on to suitable adoption agencies. Recruitment information and the need for adopters in Hampshire will be regularly shared with the National Gateway. The National Gateway will also be able to support and link in to local recruitment plans in Hampshire and the other local authorities.

3.15 These changes are all reflected in the revised Statement of Purpose.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the updated Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service, Adoption Service and Children's Homes.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?