

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the Coat of Arms of the Government of Yukon. The crest includes a crown with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a diagonal cross, top-right: a stag's head, bottom-left: a sailing ship, bottom-right: an eagle), and a banner at the bottom with the motto "A NE FOR A".

Agenda Item 9

Residential Child Care Provision

Falkirk Council

Title: Residential Child Care Provision
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 26 January 2021
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report aims to provide an update on current Children's Residential Service provision in Falkirk and to seek approval for proposed budget re-alignment and noting proposed registration variation of Wallace Crescent Children's house.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to: -

- (1) agree to realign overtime and sessional staff costs to establish an annual budget of £239,400 which supports the creation of 6 FTE residential posts;**
- (2) note the proposed variation of Care Inspectorate registration of Wallace Crescent Children's House to support local long-term care provision for young people.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Falkirk Council Children's Services currently operate two 5 bedded children's residential houses. Tremanna, which is situated in Slamannan; and Wallace Crescent, situated in The Braes.
- 3.2 Tremanna has operated as a long-term children's house since it opened in 2006. Tremanna staff and residents have developed a highly effective model of practice centred around lasting relationships between staff and young people, during and beyond the length of their time in care.
- 3.3 Wallace Crescent was established in 2010 as a short-term assessment care provision, where children are accommodated from family or foster care placements for up to 12 weeks before either being supported to return home or move to a longer-term care option.

- 3.4 Currently, many young people unable to return home are placed in residential provision outwith the Falkirk area. Being placed at distance from family, friends and school can negatively impact on good outcomes for looked after children. External placements result in significant cost to the Council.
- 3.5 Both Tremanna and Wallace Crescent are consistently positively evaluated by the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.6 Since opening, each house has had a shortfall of 3 FTE staff to cover annual leave and to allow managers to work detached from the rota.
- 3.7 The Care Inspectorate has made recommendations that managers should be freed from being part of the rota to enable them to fully undertake their management tasks.
- 3.8 Residential managers key responsibilities include:
- Ensuring qualified and experienced staff are available to meet the varying and complex needs of the young people in their care, at any time during the day and night.
 - Chairing 'Team Around The Child' meetings and attending Looked After Children Reviews to ensure young people's plans are progressed, for example in relation to education and training, moving on to semi independence or rehabilitation home.
 - Undertaking regular risk assessments; weighing up risks, rights and needs, for example in relation to new admissions, contact with family and friends.
 - Reporting significant events to the Care Inspectorate- for example hospital admissions.
 - Embedding trauma informed practice by providing regular professional support and supervision to enable staff to reflect on their practice and the impact it has on the children and young people in their care.

Where managers do not have dedicated time to undertake these tasks, day to day care commitments leads to conflicting priorities.

- 3.9 The shortfall of dedicated staff to cover annual leave and staff absence leads to both a reliance on casual staff, impacting on consistency of care for young people, and on demands on staff to work over-time, impacting staff fatigue, well-being and quality of care.
- 3.10 Where demand for residential care placements exceeds Falkirk Council provision, placements are commissioned. This comes at significant cost to the Council, with residential childcare costing on average £3900 per week, but up to £6500 per child

- 3.11 Children's Services currently commission 48 external residential placements through the Scotland Excel contracting framework with independent providers. This figure does not include placements in residential school and secure care.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The Independent Care Review, which began in February 2017, listened to the experiences of over 5,500 people, including Falkirk's care experienced young people and workforce. The work of the review resulted in "The Promise", setting out a view of what the new approach to care for Scotland's children should be. The Promise strongly emphasises the importance of love and life-long relationships between children and carers and the need to reduce the number of placement moves for young people.
- 4.2 The proposal to change the model of care from short to long term at Wallace Crescent, and to invest in sufficient permanent staff for both houses, supports these important elements of "The Promise".
- 4.3 Children's Services Closer To Home Strategy aims to reduce the reliance on external residential placement provision and ensure local placements are available for children who need to be cared for outwith a family setting. A specific Closer To Home project entitled 'Young People at the Centre of Residential Care' is managing implementation of the proposed changes which will enable more young people to reside long-term in local placement provision.
- 4.4 Preventative services to manage risks to children and reduce the need for care are being further embedded across the service, alongside the promotion of family placements, both with extended family and foster care as alternatives to residential provision where possible.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Formal consultation with residential staff, managers and Trade Unions is planned over the first 5 months of 2021. The scope of the consultation will include any changes in work patterns for staff and the proposed variation to the Care Inspectorate registration for Wallace Crescent.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 The use of overtime and sessional employees to ensure required care and support within our residential houses has existed as an overspend, without an identified budget, for many years. The creation of a budget to be offset against annual spending on sessional staff is proposed to enable the appointment of 6 FTE staff.

Resources

- 6.2 There are no other resource considerations.

Legal

- 6.3 There are no legal considerations.

Risk

- 6.4 There are no risks to the Council.

Equalities

- 6.5 Children requiring residential care are amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities. The proposals will increase access to safe, nurturing care within the local area and allows ongoing access to education and other local resources and amenities.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 In increasing the effectiveness of local resources, the requirement for staff and children to travel excessively for education and employment and access to friends and family will be reduced, lessening environmental impact. Providing additional permanent employment will also assist the local economy.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to agree to the creation of a budget to support the improvement in staffing and management cover as detailed in this paper.
- 7.2 Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to note the proposed variation of usage of Wallace Crescent to support young people locally, both improving outcomes and creating efficiencies.

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Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

None