

Budget Development Process 2012/13 – 2014/15

Savings/Income Generation Options

Savings Option	Purchased Services – Agency Placements
Directorate	Social Work
Service Area & ABB Link	Children and Families – Agency Placements

Narrative Description of Savings Option

There is insufficient in house capacity to provide for all of our looked after or most challenging children. The cost of Agency Placements and Residential School provision has increased in recent years. However in recent times the council have been in a stronger position to negotiate with providers who now find in some instances that supply of such placements outstrips demand. We are currently in negotiation with independent providers in order to ensure high quality; best value placements are available for our young people. Our aim is to minimise the length of stay for each young person and to ensure that they are equipped to move on at the right time.

Scotland Excel are currently working with Scottish Government to look at a national framework for the purchase of residential placements and foster placements for children and young people which will help address the practise and financial inconsistencies across the care market. This framework will focus on outcomes for the young people placed.

This year as of 1st July a national framework contract was established for the purchase of secure care accommodation.

The Children and Families team also have to consider early intervention and preventative approaches to supporting children and young people within their homes and communities in order to minimise the need for some children and young people to become Looked After.

Continuing to closely manage admissions and ensure young people leave at the right time, will continue through the central multi-agency panel. Given the significant role of the Children's Panel in admissions, close discussion and engagement with the Children Hearing system is critical too.

The agency placement budget for residential childcare is £4.4M and this budget is regularly put under pressure by the demand for agency placements. A process is in place to manage throughput and ensure placements are maximised and that children are brought home at an appropriate time from them.

In addition, a commissioning strategy is being developed to define priority needs and preferred models of provision and to set out clearly the available funding to implement the strategy

Savings/Income Generation Option Amounts

2012/13:	£156,000
2013/14:	£312,000
2014/15:	£468,000

Details on the Calculation of Savings Option Amounts

By reducing the agency placement spend by of £4.4m in 2010/11 by 3.5% year on year would create savings of £156k in 2012/13. The end of July 2011 monitoring position shows that this is achievable as agency placements are forecasting an under spend of £408k however it must be emphasised that only a few additional placements would erode this underspend quickly.

Details on Staffing Implications and how this will be managed

None

Issues/Concerns Regarding Deliverability of Indicated Savings

The main issue is the statutory duty placed on children and families social work, the unpredictability of demand placed on services and the comparative lack of alternative provision. This will be managed by the panel process and the commissioning arrangements as set out above.

Risk Effect Assessment

	Potential Effect
Effect on Service User	2
Possible reduction in available placements for vulnerable young people at a time when they may require such a service placing them and their families at potential risk.	
Effect on Staff	2
A reduction in agency placements could mean that social workers are required to manage a greater degree of risk in their day to day duties	
Effect on Other Council Services	2
A reduction in agency placements will increase demand upon fostering services and will place additional demands on all community services, health and schools services. The saving identified takes into account those pressures on other budgets .	
Effect on Council's Agreed Priorities	1
A reduction on placements will mean that the needs of Looked After and Accommodated young people will need to be met in other ways.	
Effect on ability to attract External Funding	1
External funding could be sought by the introduction of a charging policy for some families but this would have a minimal effect as most families would not be eligible to contribute..	
Total Potential Effect	8

Measures to Reduce/Address Risks and Minimise Any Negative Impacts

Treat – Adherence to existing policy and procedures to minimise the number of young people being accommodated.

Ongoing development of preventative intervention strategies for front line staff to work in partnership with families to create family and community solutions to meet the needs of their young people e.g. kinship care placements and creative personalised packages of care to meet the individual needs of young people in crisis.

Multi Agency oversight of all residential childcare placements.

Robust management of the market.

Tender programme for a Framework Agreement for Residential Childcare placements Adherence by Dumfries and Galloway Council to the national secure care placement contract for Scotland which came into effect as of 1st July 2011. This will stabilise the market price for all of Scotland.

Development within the next 3 years of a national contract for Residential Schools and Care Services for Scotland to which Dumfries and Galloway will adhere to. Dumfries and Galloway are a member of the steering group taking this development forward.

Impact Assessment Summary

An impact assessment was carried out with stakeholders and providers. There were no negative impacts and low positive impacts on economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability. There was a high positive on health noted

.

Summary of Actions No actions noted