

## Appendix 2

### Options, Analysis and Proposal

The Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS), London Councils, NHS and London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) have expressed unanimous support for the development of secure children's home provision and developed a business case for secure children's home provision in London. This business case, which is available on request, has formed the basis of a successful bid to the DfE and funding has been allocated to develop the required provision for London children.

The proposed provision will be designed specifically for London, with purpose-built accommodation. This will reduce the risk of beds needing to be held vacant after a high-risk child is placed there in order to maintain a safe environment. The provision is being designed with co-located step-down facilities with wrap-around support, which is an innovative approach to supporting the children post-placement. This will enable a smoother transition and a return to the family or to the most appropriate long-term placement that will meet the child's needs. This will also prevent use of emergency placements following a 72-hour placement in secure, when the local authority may not have enough time to identify best next placement or prepare child and family for safe return home. This can lead to placement breakdowns or return to care, which incur avoidable costs and impact detrimentally on outcomes for the child.

The business case to address the need for SCH, considered a range of options as listed below:

- Do nothing
- One small Secure Children's Home (8-12 places)
- One large Secure Children's Home (20-24 places)
- Two small Secure Children's Homes (8-12 places each)
- Enhancing existing resource
- Specialised community team
- Step-down facility
- Specialised open facility

These were evaluated through stakeholder engagement and assessment against the following criteria:

- Impact on early intervention and prevention
- Accessibility of a secure placement
- Continuity of care and relationships
- Care and education in the placement
- Transition from secure to community
- Value for money

- Initial investment
- Deliverability

This options analysis has led to the recommendation for Secure Welfare Children's Homes provision for London with capacity for 24 placements, alongside facilities for step-down accommodation and support to support the children after placement. The key reasons are summarised below:

- Provision for 24 places would meet the demand in London
- Step-down provision would enable better exit planning and work to take place to support children and young people within the community, reducing the likelihood of repeat placements in secure welfare
- Step-down facilities will enable more holistic support to be provided to prevent unnecessary transitions into secure provision for children and young people on the edge of a secure placement

The following options were rejected for the reasons given:

- Enhancing existing resource - rejected due to the complexity of allocating resource to disparate CAMHS, social care and YOT teams across London and the lack of a joined-up approach across London.
- Specialised community team - rejected due to the risk of duplicating the role of Community Forensic CAMHS teams and fragmenting care pathways.

In February 2022, DfE confirmed the funding to take a proposal forward for SCH provision in London with 24 places, alongside step-down provision. The step-down provision will provide for much improved transition after placement. Over £3 million has been allocated for development, with capital of over £50+ million expected subject to completion of the development phase. The development funding is currently being held by the London Borough of Barnet on behalf of all London local authorities. DfE is reviewing progress against gateway milestones, one of which is the commitment of local authorities in London. This report seeks that commitment.

The DfE development grant will cover the PLV's costs during the development period, therefore local authorities will not be required to make a financial contribution to the running of the PLV until the SCH provision launches. During this development phase, PLV members will work collaboratively to agree how the SCH provision will be run and managed. This includes:

- developing and approving the pricing strategy and revenue model for generating financial income;
- developing the practice model and operating model including but not limited to:
  - the approach to working with children, young people and their families,
  - safeguarding and risk management arrangements,
  - quality assurance arrangements,
  - the commissioning approach / staffing model,

- the process for managing referrals and placement allocation.
- Inputting into and approving a refreshed business case which will
  - revisit and update the 'case for change',
  - provide up to date and well-developed costings, informed by the final model of practice and operating model,
  - identify the benefits that will be delivered by the new model (financial and non-financial),
  - consider the most suitable route for appointing a service provider.

During the development period, member local authorities will also explore alternative models for covering the cost of running the PLV that does not require annual subscription.