

Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 19/06/2023
Subject: Unregulated Placement Commissioning and Oversight Arrangements	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2 and 3
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
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Summary

This report provides an update on the Corporation's current placements activity within Semi-Independent Supported Accommodation (SISA) settings. SISA supports children to build the necessary skills to live independently as they transition into adulthood and represents the majority of the Corporation's Children's placement brokerage activity. It is provided as accommodation-based support setting or via a standalone property with floating support provided.

The report outlines the current and proposed programme of contract management and monitoring for 16- and 17-year-olds, in preparation with Ofsted's regulatory framework and for the overall programme for young people placed up to the age of 25.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At present, providers of SISA are not regulated by any professional body. This is set to change with the introduction of National Standards in 2024, which will see Ofsted regulate provision for 16- and 17-year-olds.

2. There are many providers of SISA and this is an area that has grown considerably to meet the level of need from local authorities.
3. As part of the independence and leaving care transitioning pathway for children in care, 16- and 17-year-old young people assessed as being suitable, are placed within SISA settings. Initially, this will be within accommodation-based schemes, which are usually properties consisting of three to four rooms with shared facilities and with 24-hour support staff. Weekly levels of individual support are tailored in accordance with the young person's care plan and averages at approximately 10 hours per week. Support at this stage often centres on meeting further educational and vocational needs.
4. As young people reach the age of 18 and have developed the skills towards becoming fully independent, the accommodation pathway strategy progresses on to standalone properties, such as bedsits or studio flats. Floating support is delivered by key worker support staff, averaging at five hours per week. Young people often request property locations within the vicinity of their college or support networks. As with those young people placed within accommodation-based support settings, key worker support continues to focus on further or higher educational needs, with a greater emphasis on tenancy sustainment and daily living management of finances as the young person gears towards becoming fully independent.
5. SISA services are delivered to the young person as a wraparound package – that is, accommodation with support by one provider. The provider often sources properties via commercial tenancy agreements with Lettings Management agencies or directly with independent property landlords and sublets the property to the Corporation via an Independent Placement Agreement. The provider's own staff delivers the support to the young person.

Current Position

6. The Corporation currently purchases individual children's placements via the Commissioning Alliance Careplace System framework. In addition to SISA service provision, via a set of Dynamic Purchasing Vehicles (DPV), this framework provides Children's Residential Home placements and Independent Fostering Agencies.
7. From the framework's entry point and throughout the agreement, providers are required to fulfil the standard selection criteria mechanisms of the DPV. They must outline their service experience and suitability, policy and procedural framework, and their methodology to meet the key deliverables and outcomes and provide continual assurance for all placement activity conducted by the City.
8. In addition to the first layer of quality assurance (QA), the internal monitoring approaches in SISA placements include:

- **Monitoring meetings with SISA providers:** Contract monitoring meetings review the overall quality and standards of delivery, costs, and execution of support plans in line with the Early Intervention and Prevention Services Outcomes and Indicative Indicators:
 - Young people’s involvement
 - Safeguarding
 - Staffing, subcontractors and volunteers
 - Policies, procedures, service developments
 - Service timescales
 - Service signposting
 - Safety, health and wellbeing
 - Potential, independence, involvement and choice
 - Educational/vocational support
 - Tenancy sustainment and management of finances
 - Community access

Meetings take a risk-based approach. Risk criteria includes placement volume per provider, placement cost and complexity, and reputational risk. Provider meetings will occur quarterly, half-yearly or annually. Monitoring criteria focuses on a generic and overarching company-wide review of the provider’s staffing and service operational capabilities and accommodation/housing management.

- **Scheme visits:** Scheme visits are aligned to the criteria outlined above. These visits concentrate on the provider’s staffing and service operational capabilities and accommodation/housing management at local scheme level.
 - **Senior Management Team review programme:** Senior managers undertake up to two visits to schemes per year.
 - **Young Inspectors programme:** A pilot for care leavers to visit SISA providers was carried out in January 2023. This took place with Pathfinders.
9. To date, the Corporation currently has 47 care leavers residing within unregulated SISA. The majority (92%) of this cohort are aged 18 years or over. The age breakdown is as follows:

Age	Amount
16	1
17	3
18	5
19	12
20	11
21	12
22	0
23	2
24	1

10. The SISA service provision is delivered by 14 providers:

Provider	No of placements
MyLife	23
GrowHaus	6
Pathfinders	5
Jordan Xavier	3
Abiding Ltd	1
Dilligent Care Services	1
Eleven Ds Ltd	1
Leaving Care Solutions	1
Netpex	1
Own Life	1
Phase II Care	1
Silver Birch Care	1
Step Ahead	1
SP Homes	1

11. Of the 47 placements, six are based outside London, and 41 are delivered across nine geographical areas within London:

Geographical area	Number of properties	Number of providers
Central	1	1
North	2	2
North-East	3	2
North-West	16	4
East	5	4
South	4	4
South-East	8	3
South-West	1	1
West	1	1

Options

12. As part of a more cohesive monitoring approach, recommendations developed by the recent QA audit of Semi-independent providers have been incorporated within Commissioning's overarching Children's Placement Monitoring programme and are set out below. This programme will also ensure that it incorporates and mirrors Ofsted's implementation of a regulatory system and inspection framework for 16- and 17-year-olds within supported

accommodation to ensure a standardised approach across the full age range of care leavers.

Proposals

13. The monitoring processes set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 above are to be further enhanced, developed and implemented as follows:

- Continuation of the use of the Careplace Provider Monitoring, QA and contact management functions as the initial and overarching QA level. This includes the use of the newly developed Commissioning Alliance Quality Assurance Portal, collating and analysing quarterly key performance indicator (KPI) information from providers.
- Continuation of the internal monitoring and QA process. Provider and scheme visit meetings will continue to be scheduled in line with their respective risk rating. Wherever possible, Commissioning will aim to coordinate scheme visits with social worker placement reviews.
- Ensure that the internal monitoring programme integrates with the development of Ofsted's regulatory framework for 16- and 17-year-olds within SISA, incorporating requirements into the monitoring process.
- Strengthen the feedback loop between the provider meetings, the Commissioning and QA monitoring programme and individual social worker placement reviews into the Children's Social Care Placements Home Panel and the Children's Strategic Placement and Sufficiency Group to ensure that key individual placement issues are addressed. This approach will also strengthen the connection with the wider QA, Senior Leaders and Young Inspectors programmes.
- Commissioning will liaise with the Commissioning Alliance Lead Commissioning Organisation, member authorities, and host borough authorities where the Corporation's young people are currently placed. Commissioning will identify authorities currently commissioning the 14 SISA providers to develop a sharing arrangement for information and monitoring.
- Scope the possibility of establishing a City of London SISA provider network forum to promote and enable the sharing of provider best practice, further understanding of commissioning requirements and provider market abilities, and mechanisms to incorporate the views, experiences and feedback of young care leavers.

Key Data

14. No key data to present.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications to the monitoring programme. However, as part of the standing agenda within the Commissioning monitoring programme with providers, Commissioning will log and track any related cost implications that providers may cite relating to the Ofsted inspection framework and impacts on future placement provision.

Resource implications

16. The Commissioning and QA monitoring programme will be managed within existing resources.

Legal implications

17. The Commissioning monitoring programme will incorporate the development and implementation of the Ofsted regulatory system and inspection framework requirements for 16- and 17-year-olds within supported accommodation.

Risk implications

18. Not applicable

Equalities implications

19. Not applicable

Climate implications

20. Not applicable

Security implications

21. Not applicable

Conclusion

22. The SISA monitoring programme outlined above will continue to build on the existing monitoring arrangements to further enable a standardised monitoring approach across the service provision. This will ensure that young people receive the best levels of quality and service provision to support them as they transition into fully independent adults.

23. The proposed additional elements will provide a mechanism to evolve and enable the Corporation, other local authorities, providers and care leavers to work more collaboratively.

Appendices

- None

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