

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday 13 December 2016

Cessation of Placements in the Guthrie Unit - St Katharine's

Item number 7.4

Report number

Executive/routine

Wards

Executive Summary

This report seeks to update committee on the reduction in the usage of secure accommodation by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Due to this reduction and the impact of an English High Court judgement which has had the effect of ceasing demand from English authorities for places in Scottish secure units, it is proposed that the Council take the decision to implement the cessation of secure placements in the Guthrie Unit within the St Katharine's campus.

Links

Coalition Pledges [P1](#)

Council Priorities [CP3](#)

Single Outcome Agreement [SO3](#)

Cessation of Places in the Guthrie Unit – St Katharine’s

1. Recommendations

The Education, Children’s and Families Committee are asked to:

- 1.1 Agree that new secure placements for the Guthrie Unit will cease.
- 1.2 Agree the savings achieved from the closure are offset against the income target.
- 1.3 To note the risk and associated costs of buying independent secure beds.

2. Background

2.1 Edinburgh Secure Service consists of two campuses, St Katharine’s Centre and Howdenhall Centre which provide residential care and education for young people at risk.

2.2 Services provided at each campus are as follows:

St Katharine’s Centre

- Guthrie – Six bedded secure unit for young people who are likely to abscond and place themselves at risk, injure someone or harm themselves unless they are kept in secure accommodation.
- Chalmers – Five bedded close support unit for young people who need intensive staff support in a residential setting but whose presenting level of risk does not require secure care.
- Alison – Three bedded throughcare and aftercare unit supporting older young people who are in the process of moving on from a secure or close support unit towards some more independent form of accommodation.

Howdenhall Centre

- Braid – Six bedded secure unit, criteria as Guthrie.
- Calton – Five bedded close support unit, criteria as Chalmers.

2.3 In addition to the residential provision, an education service for the young people is provided across both sites.

2.4 Edinburgh is the only local authority in Scotland which provides its own secure accommodation. Communities and Families managers are of the view that this readily available local provision has become a barrier to achieving the shift in the culture and practice needed to achieve and maintain our current target, last

confirmed by the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 12 April 2016, for reduced use of secure accommodation.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The City of Edinburgh Council currently has Six Edinburgh young people in secure units and two young people from other Councils.
- 3.2 Agreed Children's Plans in place at the moment make it is possible that all of the City of Edinburgh Council's young people who require secure accommodation can be placed within one six bedded unit by the end of the year.
- 3.3 A recent High Court judgement in England called into question the legality of placing English young people in Scottish secure units. Up until now, a substantial number of secure beds were sold to English and Welsh authorities.
- 3.4 An outcome of this judgement is that a high number of beds have been vacated – recently this was 16 out of 90 beds in Scotland in addition to vacancies within our City of Edinburgh units - which creates an overprovision of secure accommodation across the country, meaning that some providers will cease to provide or go out of business.
- 3.5 In this financial year, 65% of the income Edinburgh has received from the sale of secure beds has come from English and Welsh authorities. By comparison, all sales in 2015/16 were to Scottish authorities. This disparity from one year to the next reflects the inconsistent and unreliable levels of demand and the associated financial risks this brings to the Council.
- 3.6 The view of Senior Managers within Communities and Families is that our in-house provision of 12 secure beds constitutes a barrier to meeting our target and over recent years the average use of secure care has remained at approximately 12 beds. Senior Managers with delegated responsibility for authorising secure placements report that the relatively easy availability of local beds leads to regular pressure from other agencies and from our own staff to resort to secure placement when there is a risk present.
- 3.7 All staff employed in the service can be re-deployed to other posts in residential care due to existing posts which were held vacant due to the transformation programme within the Council. This will have the additional benefit of boosting levels of permanent staff and decreasing use of agency workers.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Secure usage will be reduced to the level already agreed by the Council.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The expenditure budget to operate the Edinburgh Secure Services campus containing the five units set out in 2.2 is £4.744m. This includes £73k of business support costs and £97k of property related costs. In addition PPP costs of £1.339m relate to the Howdenhall units.
- 5.2 The costs relating directly to the Guthrie secure unit are estimated to be £1m for Communities and Families and £24k for business support. Property costs are estimated to be approximately £15k.
- 5.3 The service has an income target of £1.016m to be delivered from selling secure beds to other local authorities. The net impact of this is that on average 3.5 of the 12 secure beds at Guthrie and Braid units are budgeted to be sold resulting in available capacity for the Council of 8.5 beds.
- 5.4 As stated in 3.5 above the majority of sales of secure beds this year have been to English and Welsh authorities. The recent ruling by the English High Court has a potentially significant impact on our ability to achieve the income target if these lost sales cannot be made up from sales to Scottish authorities. The resultant available capacity in the Scottish secure estate following the ruling creates significant uncertainty around the Council's ability to sell 3.5 beds a year. The service has already seen the impact of this with limited demand from Scottish authorities since the ruling creating a budget pressure this year which is being managed from savings across Communities and Families. The risk for the Council is that if it achieves its target of using no more than six beds it will not be able to sell the remaining capacity and will have a pressure of £1.016m from unachieved income.
- 5.5 The impact of ceasing admissions to the Guthrie unit is that Edinburgh will be left with six secure beds at the Braid unit. Based on past secure usage it is anticipated that all six beds will be utilised by the Council resulting in no income being generated. Therefore, the cost savings of £1m generated from the Guthrie unit would offset the unachieved income target resulting in a net zero effect. Business Support and property savings of £24k and £15k respectively will be generated and will go towards the approved savings in these areas.
- 5.6 The service does anticipate that there may be the need to purchase secure placements in the future and is currently identifying options to create this purchasing budget. However, as stated in 3.6 above the reduction in provision within Edinburgh from 12 to 6 beds is expected to remove the relatively easy availability of secure provision and help support the change in culture and practice that has resulted in average usage in recent years being 12 beds.
- 5.7 Depending on the future use of the Guthrie unit there may be short-term cost implications of the unit being empty, these being rates and security costs. The associated costs will be identified when plans for the unit are confirmed and will be funded from existing revenue budgets.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Following the recent High Court judgement in England there is a high risk that a number of beds across the Scottish framework (and in Edinburgh) become regularly vacant and the income received is sustainably less than experienced.
- 6.2 Due to the purchase cost of an independent secure placement, there is also the need to reduce the overall usage to be cost effective.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 A full Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment will be carried out.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There will be no impact on Sustainability.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Early engagement with Police Scotland has been positive.
- 9.2 Consultation with staff has commenced.

10. Background reading/external references

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P1 Ensuring every child in Edinburgh has the best start in life
Council Priorities	CP3 Right care, right place, right time
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3 Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendices	