

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 5 September 2023

Edinburgh Secure Services and Residential Estate Update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the positive progress in the report and agree to further updates to Education, Children and Families Committee.

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Report

Edinburgh Secure Services and Residential Estate Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the continuous improvements from the last report that went to the Education, Children and Families Committee in April 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 15 November 2022 the Education, Children and Families Committee requested that the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services would:
- 3.1.1 Continue to deliver on the Improvement Plan; updates have been shared with members.
 - 3.1.2 Identify further steps and actions to be taken once engagement was complete: It is an open-door policy for members and colleagues, so further visits are welcomed.
 - 3.1.3 Continue to report at each cycle the ongoing improvement work.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Following a review of children entering residential care in Edinburgh, we identified a significant number of children, around 75%, are accommodated on an emergency basis, including those in Out of Authority placements. We considered the range of residential care offered in Edinburgh, and visited other Local Authority Areas to understand how they addressed the issue of emergency placements. We concluded that the most effective and efficient model was to create an Emergency Reception House where we can expedite assessments of need, return children home where safe to do so, and match children into appropriate accommodation if required.
- 4.2 To create an emergency reception house, we engaged in consultation to look at whether Edinburgh should continue to have an in-house Secure Service or repurpose the building to deliver services differently making better use of our current provision. Edinburgh is the only local authority in Scotland that still delivers Secure Services in-house, all other local authorities, including Edinburgh (through

out of authority placements) procure specialist provisions on a needs basis. There has been a consistent reduction in the need for secure care within Edinburgh; in 2021/22 there was a 48% reduction in the number of children and young people entering secure care and a 33% reduction in the average length of time that children and young people are required to stay in secure. Alongside this, there was a 78% reduction in the use of out of authority secure care for Edinburgh's children. Previously analysis has indicated that outcomes for children and young people in secure are poor and there is a high likelihood of young people returning to secure.

- 4.3 A project group was set up which included representatives from HR, Education, Children's Services and other areas and support was provided by a Project Manager from Corporate Services. Several options were discussed and following lengthy consideration, a new model for enhancing and improving our facilities for children received into care in an emergency was agreed. This was completed on 30 June 2023. Secure Services is currently in the initial stages of being repurposed to an emergency reception house to manage children requiring accommodation in an emergency and minimise disruptions to the other residential houses.
- 4.4 The project group in their findings noted the benefits reported by other local authorities from having an emergency reception house which enables focus on early intervention and direct access to multi-agency/whole system approaches that will enhance the support on offer for family reunification. There are currently a number of different services across the city, delivering early and preventative intervention. Aligning these services enables a pathway which is better equipped to meet the needs of young people and their families, through support which will enable them to stay safely with their families and communities.
- 4.5 Feedback from consultations and discussions with professionals and young people has highlighted that we are not always delivering a clear pathway for emergency placements, by having an emergency reception house, this will alleviate the pressures when requiring to find a placement at very short notice, provide a leaner and more targeted approach to how young people are received into care and demonstrate Edinburgh's commitment to delivering the Promise.
- 4.6 As Secure Services operate at a reduced capacity due to restrictions, the introduction of an emergency reception house will provide an increase in overall placement capacity within the service. This will reduce the need for out of authority placements, and associated disruption for young people and their families. It will also reduce costs and as there will be no reduction in staffing numbers, alleviate some of the current pressures faced by the service to fill vacancies.
- 4.7 It should be acknowledged that prior to the decision to repurpose Edinburgh Secure Service significant progress was made improving the culture and practice within the Service which led to improved outcomes for young people. (See appendix 2 for details)
- 4.8 Whilst Edinburgh Secure Service is undergoing the required changes and adaptations required, the Improvement Plan for the remaining residential houses will continue to support improvement across the wider residential service.

- 4.9 Edinburgh Secure Service took part in the Evaluation of the Promise – Rethinking Restraint pilot. Learning from Edinburgh Secure Services involvement with this Pilot will be implemented within the repurposed emergency reception house and within all other houses across the service. All houses are working towards becoming restraint free and work on achieving this outcome will be guided by the learning from this pilot.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Improvement plan will continue its improvement activity.
- 5.2 During the month of October as part of the Improvement Plan and quality assurance triangulation practice, there will be a focus on audits around staff supervision alongside the use and recording of restraints.
- 5.3 Managers recently met with the Care Inspectorate to give notification and discuss changes to registration; this could take around six months. The key benefit of making this application early will mean it will be allocated to a Registration Inspector who can carry out site visits and advise us on the Building Good Care Homes for Younger People Standards.
- 5.4 The project working group will undertake actions aligned to prepare for opening of the new emergency reception house and the Senior Manager is working closely with colleagues in Estates to discuss the logistics and costs associated with reconfiguration of the building.
- 5.5 Continue to report updates to the Education, Children and Families Committee on progress and a proposed opening date will be provided in due course. Elected Members will be given an opportunity to visit prior to the building becoming operational.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 There are no direct impacts on Equality and Poverty.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 By reducing the number of children cared for in Out of Authority placements there will be a reduction in the carbon footprint from families and staff travelling extended distances to visit children in care.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance, and community impact

- 9.1 The Quality Assurance Service have oversight of the Improvement Plan and support the Service to undertake the relevant improvements required.
- 9.2 Who Care's Scotland and the Care Inspectorate are members of the Improvement Board.
- 9.3 The Care Inspectorate undertake regular inspections of our houses. The outcomes of these inspections are used to help monitor the progress of the Improvement Plan.
- 9.4 There are no implications for existing policies of the council.

10 Background reading/external references

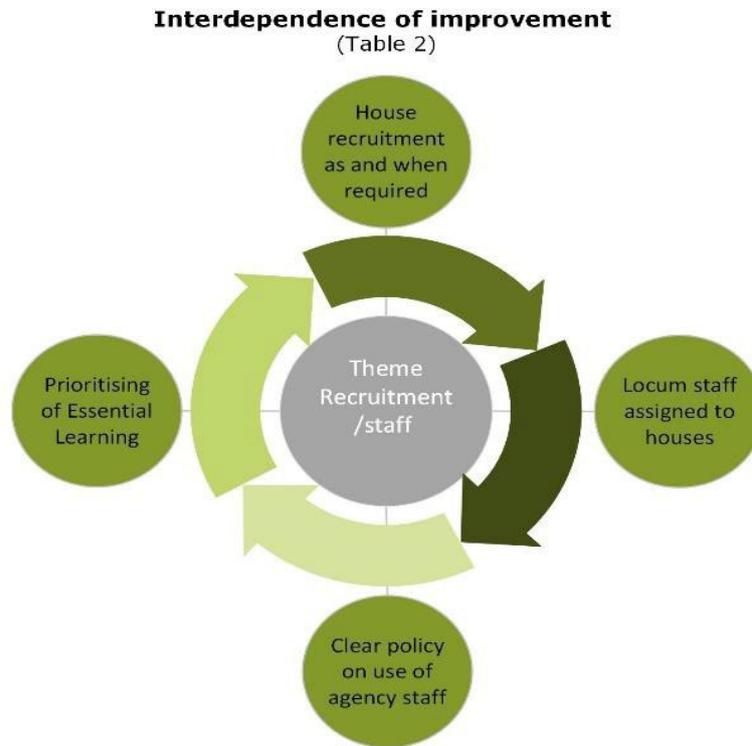
- 10.1 [Tuesday 15 November 2022](#)
- 10.2 [Thursday 31 January 2023 \(Pages 89-106\)](#)
- 10.3 [Thursday 27 April 2023, \(Pages 133-128\)](#)
- 10.4 [Helping to Keep the Promise that Scotland Must Strive to Become a Nation That Does Not Restrain its Children. Evaluation of The Promise – Rethinking Restraint Pilot. Report for Aberdour Child Care Trust and Kibble](#)

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Examples of interdependence of the improvement plan
- 11.2 Appendix 2 - Update on the 123 Milestones for the ESS and Residential Improvement Plan (RAG status)
- 11.3 Appendix 3 - Edinburgh Secure Service, Residential and short break Care Inspectorate grades

Appendix 1

Examples of interdependence of the improvement plan



Milestones across the improvement plan are interdependent on each other. Focusing on the theme recruitment provides a useful illustration of these interdependencies.

Historically recruitment of residential staff occurred as an annual citywide event. Since 2022, our residential managers recruit to vacancies as and when required. This allows for targeted recruitment including matching skill sets for their house.

Consequently, the size of the locum bureau has been reduced and locum staff are aligned to specific houses. This allows houses to provide effective supervision and support to locum staff whilst ensuring locum staff undertake essential learning and practice to the high standards we expect. This also enhances relational approaches with our young people as the number of staff involved in their care is minimised.

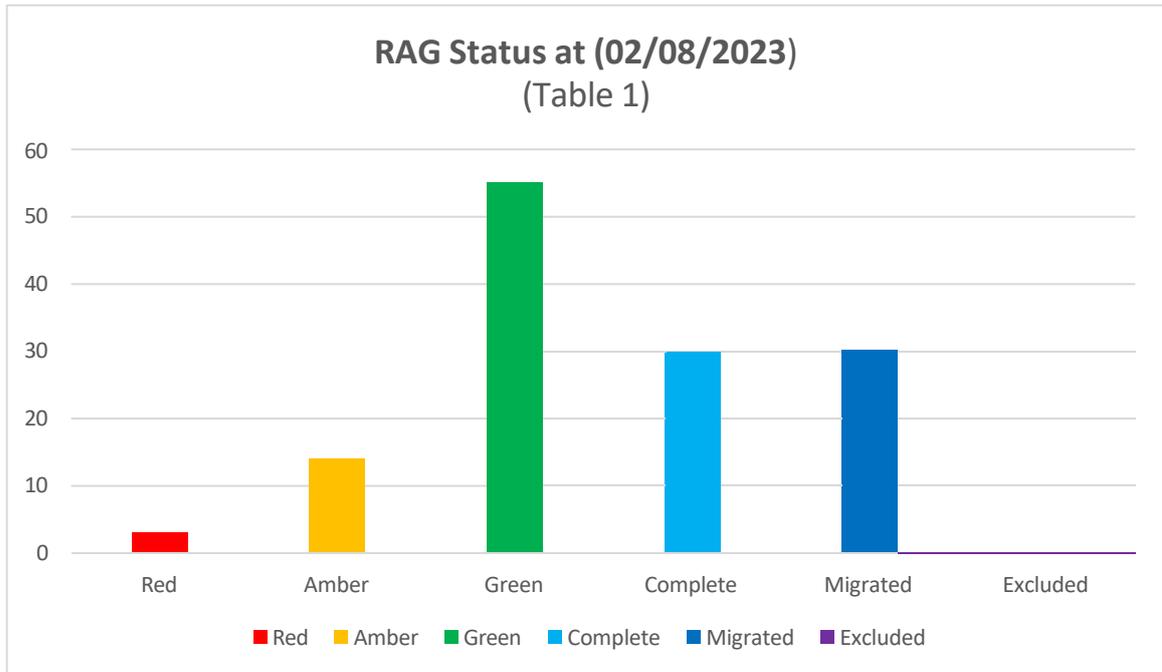
Agency staff are now only used when all other options have been considered. Procedures are in place to ensure all agency staff supplied to the council have the appropriate qualifications and are correctly registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to undertake work in residential childcare. There is an expectation that all staff working in houses will complete all the essential learning required to work in the field of residential childcare. An example of this is the prioritisation of staff completing Child Protection Training and training on the Allegations of abuse against members of staff.

The milestones that have been completed under this theme reflect the determination to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our young people in our care by:

- recruiting the right people at the right time,
- reducing the number of non-permanent staff by aligning a smaller locum bureau staff group to houses,
- reducing the use of agency staff,
- and ensuring staff who look after our children have the right training and awareness to assist young people to develop into adulthood in a safe and nurturing environment.

Appendix 2 - Update on the 123 Milestones for the ESS and Residential Improvement Plan (RAG status)

- Overview of Improvement Plan milestones
- Completed milestones has increased from 22 to 29 since the last report.
- There has been a reduction of Red milestones from five to three since the last report.
- There has been a reduction of one Amber milestone, from 15 – 14 since the last report.
- There are two milestones which are now excluded from the Improvement Plan as these are aligned to Edinburgh Secure Services. They are still active and related to monitoring of CALM accreditation in secure staff group (this will switch to the same milestone covering all other residential staff) and a questionnaire for lead professionals to report on observed culture and dynamic. Now the service no longer operates as a secure house, these milestones are no longer relevant (for example single separation practice which does not occur in any other children's house).
- Seven milestones (1, 10, 19, 20, 21, 84 and 110) have been excluded from the improvement plan because they specifically related to Edinburgh Secure Service.
- Table 1.1 Outlines the RAG Status of the Improvement Plan as of 2 August 2023. The plan remains on track and there is confidence that progress is being made to improve the care we provide to our young people.
- Of the three red milestones (below), two relate to a wider review of Council Policies and Procedures (undertaken in another workstream within the Department, which is out with the control of the improvement plan), and one relates to the completion of complaints training by all staff (which has been impacted by staff absences). Team Mangers in houses are prioritising the completion of this training.



RAG Definitions explained.

Red: The milestone is in trouble/risk of failure and requires senior management intervention or actions required are out with the scope of the improvement.

Amber: The project team are managing within their existing powers and authority levels at the moment. This status means the milestone has missed some targets - but overall, the team can still bring this project to completion within the currently approved tolerance.

Green: The milestone is progressing to plan there are no concerns for senior leadership to worry about and no management intervention is required

Complete: The milestone tasks have been completed. There may still be ongoing assurance activity connected the milestone in-line with the project's quality assurance triangle.

Migrated: Refers to milestones that are duplicates

Excluded: A millstone which is no longer relevant because it was specific to ESS

Appendix 3

Edinburgh Secure Service, Residential and short break Care Inspectorate grades

The Care Inspectorate uses a grading system 6 (Excellent) to 1 (Unsatisfactory) when assessing our registered services against the themes,

- How well we support children and young peoples' rights and wellbeing?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?
- How well is our care and support planning?

An explanation for each grade is given on page 3.

Inspections are unannounced and each will focus on a different theme. The table below outlines the substantive grade for each house based on the last grading given from the Care Inspectorates for each theme.

House	Substantive Grade					Last Inspected
	<i>How well do we support children and young peoples' rights & wellbeing</i>	<i>How good is our leadership?</i>	<i>How good is our staff team?</i>	<i>How good is our setting?</i>	<i>How well is our care and support planned?</i>	
54 Oxfgangs	5	5	5	4	4	05/03/2020
Drylaw	4	3	3	4	5	23/03/2023
Heathervale	3	4	5	4	3	01/02/2023
Moredun	4	2	4	4	4	07/09/2022
Northfield	3	5	5	4	3	12/09/2019
Southhouse	2	5	5	5	4	23/12/2022
Seaview	5	3	5	5	5	21/01/2020
*Edinburgh Secure Service	2	2	3	3	2	30/05/2022
** Edinburgh Secure Services (Close support)	2	4	5	4	4	02/02/2023

*Edinburgh Secure Service is no longer a registered service; therefore, Care Inspectorate reports are no longer available online.

**Edinburgh Secure Service (Close Support) includes registration for Chalmers, Calton, and Alison House

Following inspection houses are required to provide the Care Inspectorate with an Improvement Plan outlining actions that will be taken to address identified areas of concern. As part of the ESS, Residential and Short Breaks Improvement Plan a Multi-

Agency Quality Assurance Group has been set up in Children's Services as part of this groups work going forward all Care Inspectorate Reports and associated improvement plan will be shared and reviewed by this group. This will provide high level management scrutiny and assurance the areas for improvements and requirements are taken forward in a timely manner across all our houses.