



Blackpool Council



BBCL Foster Care Commissioning Intentions Market Engagement.

Purpose

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire Councils (BBCL) have analysed local foster care sufficiency and explored how they might engage with the market differently in order to improve sufficiency.

This is the first opportunity for the wider market to provide a view on sufficiency and on the commissioning intentions being drawn from our analysis.

Outline of the Engagement Process

We are inviting all providers with whom we have recently placed children, and all those who are on the frameworks we use, and inviting engagement from the wider market.

Providers are asked to consider the content of the Presentation (BBCL Presentation) and the Fostering Market Position Statements (FMPS) for each of the BBCL Councils. As this is a BBCL collaboration you will find that the commissioning intentions within the four FMPSs are the same.

This document (BBCL Market Engagement Response) gives providers an opportunity to comment on:

- our analysis of the current position;
- the draft commissioning intentions; and
- any other element of the documents.

There is also opportunity to identify your interest in being involved in the further development of these projects.

We are keen to benefit from your experience and expertise at this early stage of the process. We expect that views will change as our work together progresses and we both understand the position better.

Any response in relation to costs or fees will be treated as 'Commercially Confidential' and not shared in the subsequent report. All other feedback will be anonymised and collated with the information from the interviews for publication after the Market Engagement.

We feel that most providers will have a view on all of the Sections but it is voluntary, you do not have to feedback and if you do you do not have to provide feedback for each and every Section – feel free to focus on the elements that you feel better placed to discuss or most strongly about.

Please submit the completed document by email to backcypcommissioningadmin@lancashire.gov.uk by 11am on Friday the 24th of July.

This response is structured as follows.

1. Your initial views on the Fostering Market Position Statements, including the analysis on which they are based.
2. Details about you and your organisation.
3. Your views and interest in the commissioning intentions, including the opportunity to opt in for further involvement. Please note: The continuation of the 'Pilots' mentioned in the presentation is included for information purposes only. The pilots will run their course and be subject of evaluation.
 - a) Consideration of the development of a Sub-Regional Placement Provider Arrangement.
 - b) 'Same day' and 'Short Notice' placements.
 - c) Enhanced Foster Care Placements.
 - d) Specialist Placements for Children with Disabilities.

1) Having read the presentation and the Fostering Market Position Statements.

Is the information useful? Y N

Was the difference between the distribution and use of foster placements surprising?

Y N

Do you recognise the need to increase the proportion of 'local placements' (where children are placed within the placing Authority or within BBCL)?

Y N

What further information or analysis would be helpful in informing the development of your organisation?

2) About you and your organisation.

Name:

Role:

Name of Organisation:

Relevant details of Organisation in respect of BBCL:

NW Foster Framework	Y	N
Lancashire Framework		
Cumbria Framework		
Placement Number Total		
Placement Number within BBCL		
Placements made by BBCL (last 12 months)		

Are there any other features of your organisation that you think pertinent? For example, specialist provider locally or elsewhere.

a) Sub-Regional Placement Provider Arrangement

The arrangements for securing foster placements vary across the partner authorities. Lancashire and Cumbria have their own frameworks whereas Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen do not. All four authorities make use of the North West Foster Care Framework.

Analysis shows that the number, location and capability of placements is not wholly reflective of need.

Although there are positive and responsive relationships with some IFAs the current commissioning arrangements have not resulted in a sufficiency of foster care.

We want to achieve the following:

- Increase the number of children placed locally in the existing stock of IFA placements.
- Influence the growth in the number of local or in region IFA placements, so that it reflects the demand of the authorities in terms of location and capability.
- Address the 'under-served' areas.
- Provide additional specialist placements as a 'best interest' alternative to out of authority and residential placements.

Do you think that a sub-regional placement provider agreement would assist in achieving our aims?

Y

N

How should we structure the Placement Provider Arrangement in order that it meets our aims?

What criteria should we use to select a provider for the Sub-Regional Placement Provider Arrangement in order that we maximise the improvement of outcomes for children in our care?

Should we limit the number of providers and if so, how many providers ought we include?

We have started to think about how we might gain preferential and timely access to current placements, this has included:

- KPIs relating to levels of occupancy of foster places in BBCL by BBCL Councils.
- KPIs relating to the recruitment activity in underserved areas.
- Developing processes, similar to those included within the pilots, that improve the understanding of vacancies and the awareness of placement capability.

- A premium price paid for a period of the placement.
- A retrospective financial reward based on the proportion of 'local placements' made.

Will these measures, together or separately, achieve our aims? Y N

Would any of these measures have a negative impact on our aims?

Are there other measures that you feel would help us achieve our aims?

How should we apply these in order to achieve our aims?

Are you aware of these measures being deployed elsewhere (please provide detail)?

The confidence of the providers will be a key factor in the success of the placement provider agreement. How can we garner your confidence?

We want to maximise the benefits of this smaller and more focussed Placement Agreement. Our discussions have explored models that provide additional value for providers including for example, common/ subsidised training programmes or simplified annual price uplift mechanisms.

How can we shape the Placement Provider Agreement to optimise the value to providers?

Assuming we were able to maximise the potential added value to providers, what factors would impact on the price charged by providers and can you estimate the impact of these on prices? (Ideally expressed as both an amount and as a percentage of the weekly fee).

b) 'Same day' and 'Short Notice' placements

Our analysis has found that too often the 'care trajectory' of a cohort of young people is determined by the limited time allowed for placement planning and the impact this has on the number of available placements rather than the care plan. We believe that having a placement option of available time limited placements, with the capability of providing for a range of need, would improve the outcomes for our children and young people. The Councils each provide varying levels of emergency placements and are aware of larger schemes operated internally or externally under contract.

Our discussion has identified the following:

- The relationship between the provider and the local authority is key for the management of the resource.
- The specification needs to allow the provider to deliver levels of support to the carers that reflects the task.
- The financial arrangement has to recognise the costs of maintaining easy access.

Have you experience of providing this or a similar service?

Y

N

What would you advise in terms of:

The structure of the service?

The characteristics of children and young people that can be cared for by the service?

The operation of the service?

How would referral / access to the service be structured?

How would exit from placements be managed?

What would you estimate the weekly price of a placement in such a scheme? (Ideally expressed as a percentage of the current standard weekly price).

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Would you/ your organisation be interested in taking part in further dialogue about this project?

Interested? Mark the appropriate box.	Y	N
Contact Name:		
Role in Organisation:		
Email / Telephone		

c) Enhanced Foster Care Placements

The local authorities have identified a cohort of children and young people aged from 9 to 15 years of age who enter care with complex needs. This group have previously been described as the 'hard to place', but their behaviours are not entrenched, and their best interests would be served by a well-supported foster placement. Some of the young people in this cohort benefit from a carer that had the confidence to offer a placement and the capability of dealing with 'bumps in the road'.

Lancashire County Council have looked at the cohort and identified the following characteristics:

- Most have productive interests and pastimes.
- Most have a teacher and or another adult that describes them positively.
- Most are aged between 11 and 15 years of age.
- The majority are eventually placed with a foster carer – although around 10% are placed in residential.
- They might verbally abuse (30%), be challenging or negative (55%), have been a victim or have an emotional support / attachment issue (27%).
- They are unlikely to have an alcohol or substance misuse issue, to exhibit criminal or anti-social behaviours or engage in risk taking.
- We sometimes need a placement in a specific location so that they stay close to their school or family.

The commissioners are keen to explore how this group of children and young people might be better served, whether this is through additional support offered to the placement or by a more defined project/ therapeutic approach. The commissioners recognise that the solution might share characteristics with other commissioned services.

Do you recognise this cohort of children and young people?	Y	N
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If yes – what do you see as common characteristics and support needs?
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What would you advise in terms of:

The nature of support required?
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The operation of the service – how would referral / access to the service be structured?

Would you/ your organisation be interested in taking part in further dialogue about this project?

Interested? Mark the appropriate box.	Y	N
Contact Name:		
Role in Organisation:		
Email / Telephone		

d) Specialist Foster Placements for Children with Disabilities

Our analysis has found proportionally fewer children with disabilities placed in foster care than in similar areas. Local Authorities have some internal capacity and could invest directly in the expansion of this provision as some other authorities are doing.

In our discussions with providers we identified that timely access to foster care placements at the point of entry to care or at case review is a key issue. Work nationally has recognised approaches have to address the linear nature of the care planning process, parental reticence and a lack of detailed need information. We are looking for providers view on how a service would be arranged to deliver increased foster placements for children with disabilities.

Do you recognise this cohort and the need for this approach?	Y	N
1	1	0
2	1	0
3	1	0
4	1	0
5	1	0
6	1	0
7	1	0
8	1	0
9	1	0
10	1	0
11	1	0
12	1	0
13	1	0
14	1	0
15	1	0
16	1	0
17	1	0
18	1	0
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33	1	0
34	1	0
35	1	0
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37	1	0
38	1	0
39	1	0
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86	1	0
87	1	0
88	1	0
89	1	0
90	1	0
91	1	0
92	1	0
93	1	0
94	1	0
95	1	0
96	1	0
97	1	0
98	1	0
99	1	0
100	1	0

Have you experience of providing such a service or a similar service? **Y** **N**

What would you advise in terms of:

The constituent parts of a specialist foster placement for a child with disabilities?

The characteristics of children and young people that can be accommodated by the service?

The operation of the service – how would referral / access to the service be structured?

Would you/ your organisation be interested in taking part in further dialogue about this project?

Interested? Mark the appropriate box.	Y	N
Contact Name:		
Role in Organisation:		
Email / Telephone		

Thank you so much for taking the time to respond – it is very much appreciated.

Please submit this completed document by email to back cypcommissioningadmin@lancashire.gov.uk by 11am on Friday the 24th of July.

The responses will be collated and combined with the output from individual interviews and form the basis of a report which we will share with all respondents.