

Report to: Lead Member for Children and Families
Date: 14 December 2023
By: Director of Children's Services
Title: Children's Supported Accommodation Approved List – Mini Competitions
Purpose: To seek approval for six mini competitions to be run off the Children's Services Supported Accommodation Approved List which in total exceed £500k per annum in value.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the Council carrying out six (6) mini-competitions to procure services from the Children's Supported Accommodation Approved List; and**
 - 2) delegate authority to the application evaluation panel to assess the bids and determine the most economically advantageous tenders.**
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1 Background

1.1 The Children's Supported Accommodation Approved List (CSAAL) was launched in May 2023 to attract Approved Providers to deliver a range of supported accommodation provision for Care Leavers, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and young homeless. The CSAAL enables Children's Services to direct award individual placements and block contracts, and to run mini competitions for larger contracts.

1.2 As the total value of the six mini competitions is over £500K in total per annum this constitutes a Key Decision.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Whilst supported accommodation placements can be directly awarded to Approved Providers on a placement by placement basis, the possibility remains that other beds within the provisions are filled by placements from other local authorities. In addition, Providers tend to charge more due to the uncertainty of the income stream and the potential for carrying the cost of voids.

2.2 Block contracts secure a set number of beds that can only be used by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Children's Services and, due to the certainty of income over a period of time and the competitive nature of the award, the price for those beds is expected to be cheaper. Block contracts therefore offer the combination of a guaranteed minimum supply and greater stability of provision over a number of years at a reduced cost.

2.3 The potential for winning block contracts is also a driver for providers to join the CSAAL, thereby helping to develop the market and the range of provision available locally.

3 The Mini Competitions

3.1 It is proposed that six (6) mini competitions are launched in January 2024, with the aim of contracts being awarded and mobilised from 1 April 2024 start date for a duration of 3 years plus a 2 year allowed for extension (which does not have to be awarded but is helpful to have in scope if the demand requires a continuation of the provision and the budget is available). The proposed mini competitions are for the following block contracts:

- A) A three (3) bed high-intensive supported accommodation for 16/17 year old Looked After Children (LAC), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and young homeless, with provision for 2 members of staff onsite 24 hours a day, seven days per week with sleeping night. This provision is to be situated in Hastings. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension.

- B) A three (3) bed high-intensive supported accommodation for 16/17 year old Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young homeless, with provision for 1 member of staff 24 hours a day, seven days per week with waking night. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension.
- C) A two (2) bed high-intensive emergency supported accommodation for 16/17 year old Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young homeless, with provision for 1 member of staff 24 hours a day seven days per week with waking night. This provision is to be situated in Hastings. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension.
- D) A two (2) bed high-intensive emergency supported accommodation for 16/17 year old Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young homeless, with provision for 1 member of 1 member of staff 24 hours a day, seven days per week with waking night. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension.
- E) A four (4) bed medium-intensive supported accommodation for 16/17 year old Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young homeless, with provision for 1 member of 1 member of staff 24 hours a day, seven days per week with sleeping night. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension.
- F) A three (3) bed high to medium intensive supported accommodation for 18-21 year olds with enduring Multiple Complex Needs, with provision for 1 member of staff 12 hours a day, seven days per week. This contract will be for 3 years with an optional 2 year extension. Housing Benefit will apply to those eligible to claim for it, which would reduce the cost of the service, but it is impossible to estimate the potential net cost to Children's Services.

3.2 The costs for these contracts have been calculated by taking a mid-range estimate of costs for each of the different packages of support and applying a 3% uplift in years 3 and a further 3% uplift in year 4 to cover inflationary increases and other cost pressures. These increases are likely to be required to ensure the ongoing quality and sustainability of provision.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 Although developments are in train to reduce the overall number of children and young people coming into care, current data and trends suggest that there will continue to be a notable cohort of Care Leavers, UASC and young homeless who will require high-intensive care and support, for longer periods of time, and which for some will endure into adulthood.

4.2 Awarding these block contracts will contribute to the delivery of our sufficiency needs for this cohort by securing a guaranteed minimum supply and greater stability of provision over a number of years at a reduced cost, rather than if we were to direct award equivalent individual placements.

4.3 The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the Council carrying out six (6) mini-competitions to procure services from the Children's Supported Accommodation Approved List; and
- 2) delegate authority to the application evaluation panel to assess the bids and determine the most economically advantageous tenders.

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None