

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 16 January 2024

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Lansdowne Secure Children's Home Progress Update

Purpose: To provide brief update on Lansdowne Secure Children's Home

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note the progress update.

1 Background

1.1 A decision was taken in December 2022 to temporarily pause services at Lansdowne Secure Children's Home to support restructuring of the offer and ensure sustainability.

1.2 All staff were temporarily redeployed following consultation; this has provided valuable learning and the opportunity to share skills across other residential children's homes and the Connected Families team.

1.3 A Subject Matter Expert (SME) was employed to support Lansdowne's redesign. Support has also been provided through partnerships with the Secure Accommodation Network (SAN), the Department for Education (DfE), NHS England (Health Commissioners), East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Education Services and an Independent Education Advisor. Care experienced young people including some previously resident at Lansdowne have provided extensive support with recruitment and are helping to build staff induction and children's welcome packs.

1.4 The SME Report in April 2023 identified key areas for development including recruitment/capacity, staff development, practice/behaviour models and infrastructure; the report also identified opportunities to enhance the service through a wider curriculum offer, moving across to digital record management and identifying options to develop the site. A brief update on these areas of focus is provided below. The SME continues to support with advice, guidance and sharing networks.

2 Progress

2.1 **Structure / Recruitment:** The new Lansdowne structure provides a strengthened Senior Management Team which will support practice and ensure a more resilient service. The Looked After Children's Service successfully recruited a skilled Service Manager/Registered Homes Manager who will provide leadership across a multidisciplinary team including Care, Education and Health staff. Support Services (facilities, data, housekeeping) have been enhanced to ensure the smooth running of this complex facility.

2.2 The Care teams are led by two Deputy Service Managers focussed on Operations and Care Planning respectively. These newly appointed managers bring experience across forensic mental health, probation, youth custody, residential care and social pedagogy. They will support an experienced team of Duty Managers, Team Leaders and Support Workers as well as staff focussed on Care Planning and Reintegration.

2.3 **Education** at Lansdowne was previously provided through an Academy Trust. As part of the restructure, we have brought the school under the line management of the Service Manager. The new Head of Learning has developed an ambitious, creative curriculum and has appointed an experienced team to deliver this.

2.4 **Health** services at Lansdowne are commissioned through NHS England but also sit within the revised management structure; consultation is ongoing to ensure a holistic offer including increased Speech and Language provision whilst retaining existing psychology expertise and access to universal services.

2.5 **Policies:** all policies have been reviewed and are being made available online; work to develop a consistent approach across the national secure network is planned for 2024.

2.6 **Incident Management:** The Looked After Children's Service has reviewed its approach to behaviour, incident management and physical restraint. Staff have received Safety Intervention training from the Crisis Prevention Institute and there are now 6 CPI-SI licenced in-house trainers who will support practice, target emerging behaviours and upskill the workforce. This model will be rolled out across East Sussex children's homes as well as at Lansdowne.

2.7 **ClearCare (electronic care management system):** In line with Ofsted guidance and best practice we are moving away from paper-based systems to digital record keeping, this will enhance management oversight, regulatory compliance and reduce inefficiencies. The system also provides powerful analytical tools and promotes children's voices across their record. The system will be tested during January and February prior to full roll out.

2.8 **Estate:** The pause allowed for a full evaluation of the structure of the building and site. Safety issues were identified with fire doors which necessitated significant work to ensure compliance. This work is on track and will not delay reopening. The SME is working with ESCC to develop business proposals and bids for DfE improvement funds, for example to develop a music studio, safer Multi-Use-Games-Area, increased parking and updated media units. These bids are supported in principle by Ofsted, Atkins (estate partners) and the DfE.

2.9 **Business Model:** Children's Services have assessed the market and revised charges accordingly. East Sussex children who require secure accommodation at Lansdowne will be tracked in line with costs avoided. The High Dependency Unit was previously underutilised which will be addressed going forwards.

3 Next Steps

3.1 Ofsted visited Lansdowne on 20 December 2023 and confirmed that subject to registration of the Registered Homes Manager (RHM) the home is ready to reopen. The Service Manager's RHM Application is with Ofsted, we expect confirmation of registration by mid-January which will enable the current restrictions to be lifted.

3.2 Recruitment to remaining support staff posts is underway to ensure that we can scale up to capacity over the next twelve months.

3.3 The Service Manager and SME have met with the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit and are starting to look at referrals in anticipation of accepting children from mid-January.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note the update.

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MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None