



An integrated approach to stable, permanent, family homes for children in care

Application for funding for Feasibility Study by Suffolk County Council in partnership with Childhood First (IFA), Raedwald Trust (Education), East & West Suffolk CCG (Mental Health Commissioner), Ashley Academy Trust

Outcome

1. Delivery Model (40%, 750 - 1000 words)

Context

There is a strong **track record of good outcomes** for children in Foster Care in Suffolk:

- Suffolk has a large number of foster care placements; 374 children in in-house foster care placements, 123 kinship placements and 143 purchased foster care placements
- Our focus on foster care as the best environment for children to grow up in means we have only 7.7% of children in Residential Care placements. This is a lower proportion than our SNs, RNs and England.
- Our focus on stability and permanence means that 74% of our children are in the same placement for more than 2 years, better than SNs, RNs and England.

There is a strong **track record of innovation** in our Foster Care Service:

- 2 Mockingbird Hubs operational and working well
- 51 children Staying Put with their former foster carers
- Systems and processes supporting over 100 kinship and connected person carers

Our Looked After Children services demonstrate **good value for money**:

- Our s251/turn weekly costs (£530) are lower than our SNs (£592), RNs and England

Key Challenges

While our services are strong, we are ambitious to do better for our children and to overcome key challenges we face, several of which are commonly shared with other LAs

- At any point in time we have circa 10 complex placements where young people have significant mental health and emotional well-being difficulties with self-harming and challenging behaviours arising from this. A smaller number with the most challenging needs are placed in solo, non-family based, placements with 2:1 care owing to insufficiency of high tier foster carers either in-house or from the market.
- Our large geography, uneven distribution of well-matched foster carers and diverse demography, (where some areas of the County are amongst the poorest in England), has resulted in 39% of our children being placed more than 20 miles from their home. This creates challenges in maintaining contact with families and in achieving reunification
- The inclusive practice of secondary schools, 93% of which are academies, is variable with exclusions often being associated with the need for entry to Care and difficulties for children in foster care (One academy has recently been graded

as inadequate due to poor inclusive practice)

- The cost of the circa 150 purchased foster placements we have at any one time is approaching £900/week on average. This is placing considerable strain on CYP budgets limiting other early help programmes

Summary Proposal

This funded feasibility study provides us with an important opportunity to work in partnership with some key stakeholders to address the challenge of an improved support network around foster carers to **increase capacity, confidence and capability** for our Children in Care facing greater challenges. We would define these as **Tier 4 & 5 placements** (complex, challenging and risk-taking behaviours; self-harming, substance misuse, sexually harmful behaviour or complex, multiple and severe disabilities).

To provide a sufficiency of stable, loving homes for Tier 4 & 5 placements we know we need to have specific, additional on-going skills development and support for carers and supporting professionals, provide responsive emotional well-being support to both children and carers, achieve continuity of support between home and school and have equally skilled continuity with respite support:



Our proposal is to conduct a feasibility study to determine :

- i) What is working well and what needs to be improved to achieve a sufficiency of resilient foster carers at Tier 4 & 5 based on dynamic, needs-led modelling
- ii) How, why and whether the developments we envisage (below), and further options that will emerge in discussions with stakeholders and in researching solutions, will have a reasoned chance of success in addressing the challenges we have outlined to improve foster care stability. The planning to implement these developments will take place within the feasibility study phase.

- Partnership with Childhood First IFA to develop existing Suffolk Foster Carers and recruit new foster carers using the 'Integrated Therapeutic Fostering' qualification to increase the number of Tier 4 and 5 Foster Carers
- Partnership with the Raedwald Trust to increase the number of Fostered Children, particularly at transition points in years 5/6 & 10/11, that will benefit from therapeutic education outreach support, the intensity of which can vary according to need.
- With the support of Academy Trust sponsors, target 'Trauma Informed Approach' training for Foster Carers and Care Professionals and particularly targeting key



staff in schools (including to provide alternative approaches to the practice of internal isolation in schools and the provision of a 2 day therapeutic programme of study as an alternative to a fixed term exclusion),

- Contribute to the co-design and re-development of an integrated, responsive emotional well-being / mental health offer for children in care and consultative psychology support for carers.
- To undertake a needs-led, targeted recruitment for Tier 4 and Tier 5 full-time and respite foster carers so the right care options are in the right place in the county. This will, in part, building on our success in targeting professional groups with transferrable skills (Health and education staff, youth workers, probation, police)

Aspirational Targets

Subject to the rigour that the feasibility study would bring, and co-design work with stakeholders, we would seek to:

- Improve the experience of fostered children and foster carers through a strengthened cohort of Tier 4 and 5 skilled and resilient carers backed by responsive, intensive support that is consistent across home and school
- Reduce the incidence of foster care placement breakdown by 30% by 2021
- Minimise exit from foster care to semi-independent living by 16-year olds in the period leading up to or during exams (we know that foster care is a much better learning environment than independent living)
- Step down 5 children per year from residential care to foster care
- Increase the number of Tier 5 Carers from IFAs and in House and increase the number of In-House Tier 4 carers by 10 per year, inclusive of absorbing demand pressures for growth in foster care from rising number of children in care
- Eliminate the use of unregistered placements through a sufficiency of Tier 5 solo placement foster carers
- Reduce the need for 5 of the 32 beds in Children Homes by 2021 through having a sufficiency of foster carers able to meet this need

Benefits and delivery of the Feasibility Study

- To develop a dynamic model driven by our new Liquid Logic System, (which encompasses both children and carers), to produce an agreed, needs-led analysis of the need for foster care in Suffolk over the next 5 years
- Establish a Reference Group of Foster Carer representatives and also a Reference Group of Young People to provide ideas, active challenge and support
- To develop a partnership agreement with both Childhood First (IFA) and Raedwald Trust to deliver the proposals above
- Work in partnership with Childhood First to develop Integrated Systemic Fostering to support children and young people who have experienced serious emotional and psychological trauma, and who struggle to function effectively and safely in less specialised social settings, such as mainstream foster families and schools.
- To work with Ashleigh Academy and key stakeholders on how to most effectively implement and realise the intended benefits from the Trauma Informed Approach Training
- Alliances in Suffolk are seeking to move into a Most Capable Provider process in June 2019 which will enable the opportunity re-design mental health support for children, families and young people and integrate with other children and family services as part of a holistic offer of support. This proposal seeks to initiate this as an 'early adopter' within the Fostering Service and builds on an existing model of integrated mental health support that already exists in our Suffolk Youth Justice



Service. We will co-design the principles, expectations and foster care user stories to inform the redesign working with the Foster Carers Network, Children in Care Council and the Children and Young People Action and Transformation (CAT) group.

- Review changes to the Skills-Based Tier payment system to realise the intended increase in Tier 4 and 5 placements and respite provision
- Apply project management disciplines and appoint a dedicated project manager to ensure the elements of the feasibility study are delivered and knit together resulting in an agreed, costed, SMART implementation plan including; i) an agreed Theory of Change and supporting scenarios to set milestones for the realistic achievements of targets ii) a Survey Monkey consultation about the proposed service developments / options iii) a risk management plan.
- This work will provide a model approach that Local Authorities and other Foster Care providers can review and apply to their own local circumstances. SCC have a successful track record of sharing best practice.

Partnering & Stakeholder Working Capability & Shared Learning

Please see Section 3

Delivery Capability

Our track record of innovation including developing compelling business cases and following them through to benefit realisation is evidenced in:

- Our Innovations Programme funded Signs of Safety Programme *“The way the local authority has implemented and rolled out its preferred method of social work is exemplary”* (Ofsted),
- Concept to delivery of the Social Impact Bond funded Functional Family Therapy Service with multi-partner governance and a 20% outcomes payment contribution via Big Lottery Fund
- 2 Mockingbird Hubs now successfully running and on-track

Feasibility Study Costing

We anticipate a cost of £95,381 including a 15% contingency to complete the proposed delivery for the Feasibility Phase of this programme



2. Effective Implementation (25%, 750 - 1000 words)

Feasibility Study Outline Plan

	Activity	Lead	Completion milestone	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20
1	Mobilisation									
1.1	Meeting of bid team and key stakeholders to review successful bid and any feedback, finalise core and extended project team members and partners' roles and responsibilities, establish project governance and arrange meeting schedule, assign workstream leads and agree an accountable sponsor	GB, CJ, TC, RK, MC								
1.2	Allocate and backfill Project Manager	RK	PM allocated							
1.3	Allocate and backfill Business Analyst	GB	BA allocated							
1.4	Allocate and backfill Liquid Logic Reporting capability	GB	Capacity secured							
1.5	Initial Draft Project Initiation Document as key point reference Objectived Deliverables Resources Governance Communications Risk & Issue Management	GB, PM	Initial PID Agreed (living document)							
1.6	Establish Reference Group of Foster Carers, Terms of Reference, Forward Plan	RK, JI	Group Constituted							
1.7	Establish a Young Person's Reference Group, Terms of Reference, Forward Plan	JI	Group Constituted							
2	Workstreams									
2.1	Build a dynamic model driven by our new Liquid Logic System that encompasses both children and carers to produce agreed scenarios of needs-led analysis for foster care in Suffolk over the next 5 years	GB, BA	Model Validated							
2.2	Develop Partnership Agreement and plan with Childhood First (IFA) to develop existing Suffolk Foster Carers and recruit new foster carers with relevant skills using the 'Integrated Therapeutic Fostering' qualification	TC, PM, RK, RS	Agreement & Plan							
2.3	Develop Partnership Agreement and plan with Raedwald Trust to increase the number of Children in Care that benefit from therapeutic education outreach support, the intensity of which can vary according to need.	MC, PM, AR	Agreement & Plan							
2.4	Plan delivery of 'Trauma Informed Approach' training for key professionals in schools with Academy Trusts & School Stakeholders	MC, SG, PM, BO+D2	Plan agreed							
2.5	Produce a package that informs the redesign of mental health services for Children in Care and their Foster Carers working	SB, PM	Objectives and working principles							
2.6	Review changes to the Skills-Based Tier payment system to realise the intended increase in Tier 4 and 5 placements and respite provision	RK	Assessment completed							



3 Impact Assessment			
3.1	Agree aspirational targets	GB, CJ, RK, PM	Initial targets agreed 
3.2	Produce an agreed Theory of Change and supporting scenarios to set milestones for the realistic achievements of targets for the workstreams	PM, BA, MC, GB, RK, CJ, TC	Refined targets agreed 
4 Governance			
4.1	Update Corporate Parenting Board	CJ	Updated 
4.2	Brief & Update Corporate Parenting Management Team	CJ	Updated 
4.4	Core Project Group Meetings including Workstream Leads	PM	
4.5	Extended Project Group Meetings	PM	
5 Evaluation			
5.1	Feasibility Study Report	All	 
5.2	Review and Share Learning with Stakeholders and Regional LAs	All	 



Risk & Contingency

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Timely mobilisation and maintaining momentum over summer holidays	Low	Project Group and Partners on board
Failure to secure PM	Low	New PM joining team – able to prioritise
Failure to secure BA	Low	BA becoming available Skills in Core Project team and ability to call on Intelligence Hub
Development of new Liquid Logic reporting	High	Advance notice / Bulk of data can be collated from existing reports
Engagement of schools	Medium	Leverage from Virtual Head. Align with the Safer in Schools Strzategy which has been to Local Safeguarding Childrens Board
Engagement of Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust	Medium	Can be prioritised by CCGs
On time delivery of a Feasibility Study report and implementation plan by 10 January	Low	Finish drafting the report pre-Christmas

Stakeholder Engagement

It will be important to follow the core principles embedded in the definition of co-production we have adopted in Suffolk: *“Co-production happens when service providers and service users recognise the benefits of working in true partnership with each other. This process is adopted ‘from the start’, when planning, developing, implementing or reviewing a service. It means that all the right people are ‘around the table’ right from the beginning of an idea, and that they are involved equally to;*

- *Shape, design, develop, implement, commission and review services.*
- *Work together right from the start of the process, through to the end.”*

As such, one of the first tasks will be to establish the Foster Carer and Young People groups. There is a good history of co-production and engagement so it is anticipated this will be embraced.

Partner Engagement

Initial discussions and a review of the bid have been held with:

Childhood First - Roger Stephenson (Business Development Director), Barbara O’Reilly (Clinical Director)

Raedwald Trust - Angela Ransby (CEO)

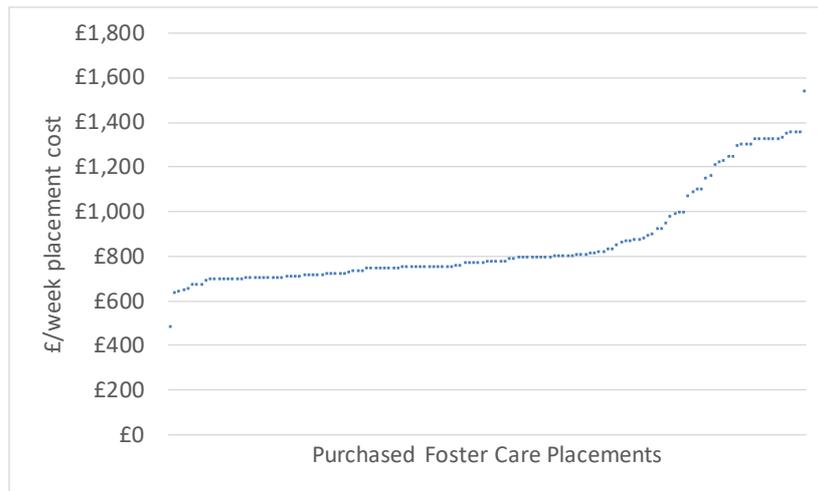
Ashley Academy Trust - Sally Garrett (Head)

CCG Alliance - Sara Blake (Assistant Director)

Letters of support are attached from key partners.

Indicative Financial Sustainability (subject to development in the feasibility study)

The costs of the 150 Suffolk Purchased Foster Care Placements are plotted on the following duration curve. The average cost is approaching £900/week with a median cost of £750.



A gross saving of circa £200/week per placement should be achievable through the conversion of 10 Purchased Foster Care Placements to Tier 4 equivalent in-house placements or the opportunity cost savings arising from avoiding the use of 10 additional Purchased Foster Care placements

A gross saving of £500/week+ per placement would be achievable if we are able to recruit and deploy additional Tier 5 equivalent carers

Combined and aggregated over time, these cost savings have the potential to achieve a breakeven versus the cost of the investment within a short to medium term financial planning horizon. Across the whole public sector including Care, Health and Justice, the lifetime value of the avoided costs of a child in Care that is able to settle and thrive in a fostering environment is very substantial.

Impact

The over-arching deliverables for the Feasibility Phase of work are:

- Delivery of a dynamic model that encompasses both children and carers to produce an agreed, needs-led analysis of the need for foster care in Suffolk over the next 5 years. Key principles are that this should be transparent, driven by latest data from Liquid Logic and easy to amend in-house so that it can have enduring use in informing our recruitment and retention activity and budget commitments
- Delivery of a Feasibility Study report and implementation plan that will evidence that the developments we envisage, and other options developed during discussion with stakeholders, will have a reasoned chance of success in achieving outcomes and cost effectively addressing the challenges we have outlined, and are supported by a well thought-through theory of change

A number of aspirational targets for implementation were set out in Section 1 which will be subject to review and refinement within the Feasibility Study:

Summary Targets	Baseline / Measure	Method (to be further considered)
Improve the lived experience of fostered children and foster carers		Development and formalisation of the Mockingbird Hub carer / Supervising Social Worker role in providing regular temperature checks at home and school
Increase the number of Tier 5	143 at	Placement Type recorded in Liquid



Carers from IFAs and in House and increase the number of In-House Tier 4 carers by 10 per year	31/3/19	Logic
Eliminate the use of unregistered placements	5 at 31/3/19	Placement Type recorded in Liquid Logic
Reduce the incidence of foster care placement breakdown by 30%	2-3 per month	Create reporting in Liquid Logic
Re-integrate children into family-based placements and reduce the need for Children Homes by 5	32 at 31/3/19	Monitor
Increase the proportion of children remaining in foster care at the age 16 transition point and increase the number gaining a qualification		
Improve attendance of children in tier 4 and 5 foster care	92% at 31/3/19	Absence data collection by the Virtual School
Improved the progress 8 score of children in tier 4 and 5 foster care	-1.35 in 2018	GCSE results analysis by the Virtual School



3. Stakeholder Engagement (10%, 500 - 750 words)

One of the first tasks will be to establish

- Foster Carer Group (Drawn from the Suffolk Foster Care Association and Foster Carers employed by key IFAs in Suffolk)
- Young People Group (Drawn from our Senior and Junior Child in Care Councils – Chat 2 Change (C2C) and Brighter Futures, the Our Voice Care Leavers Group and the Children and Young People Action and Transformation (CAT) group)
- A reference group of wider stakeholders (e.g. Child Social Worker, Foster Carer Supervising Social Workers from both the Suffolk In-House Agency and Purchased Foster Care Providers)

Agreed Terms of Reference and meeting and governance arrangements for these groups to ensure their views are fully understood and taken into account will be an early deliverable. We will also make use of Survey Monkey and video blogs for wider consultation.

Suffolk benefits from a small Engagement Hub whose purpose is to work with service users, to enable the voice of children and young people to be heard by decision makers, to facilitate co-production and engagement opportunities, and to provide information expertise. They also ensure that other services and partners are supported to become key players in co-production work. We will make full use of this expertise.

Examples of co-production and wider working with stakeholders

- The development of the 'You Said, We Did' process by C2C has enabled them to monitor the impact of their work and provide evidence to children in care about how their involvement and feedback has made a real difference. The 'Top Tips for Social Workers' has been showcased nationally.
- Developing and implementing the Staying Close Scheme in partnership with a private sector children's home group. DfE have indicated they are very pleased with our progress, particularly the staffing model and benefits tracking
- The CAT group has directly contributed to the Emotional Wellbeing Hub and mental health training for professionals.
- Ofsted have highlighted that; *"Leaders (in Suffolk) have forged strong partnerships with services across the local area and with the Suffolk Parent Carer Network (SPCN). The local authority and the CCGs made the bold decision to radically transform the services to children and young people with SEND. The radical changes have successfully made the cultural shift from professionals working in isolation to genuine partnerships to design, plan and deliver services."*

Sharing Learning with other LAs and Universities

Suffolk will be keen to share our findings and experience with the feasibility study with other LAs. We have a strong track record of working closely with Eastern Region LAs including frequent peer reviews and shared learning and with Universities on both research and evaluation and work:

- University of Essex (Positive Choices, predictive analytics)
- University of Suffolk (Gangs)
- UEA (Safeguarding)



4. Quality Assurance (10%, 500 - 750 words)

Applying Evidence Based Practice

Integrated Therapeutic Fostering Evidence (Expert Involvement; Barbara O'Reilly Clinical Director, Childhood Trust IFA) - iST is a systemic therapeutic intervention, with potential for integrating individual psychotherapy where necessary. Within the context of a shared network around the child, iST focuses in particular on a structure of overlapping psychodynamic groups and supervisions, aimed at facilitating individual and group self-awareness and change, at behavioural, emotional and psychological levels. iST is particularly suitable for children and young people who have experienced serious emotional and psychological trauma, and who struggle to function effectively and safely in less specialised social settings, such as mainstream foster families and schools.

The Foundation course in iST has been assessed as the equivalent to the TSD for foster carers, which is a statutory requirement for all foster carers. Following this, participants study towards the Certificate in iST, a one year, work-based training course. From here, the Institute continues to provide relevant training and CPD, underpinned by integrated systemic therapy, as participants progress towards becoming therapeutic foster carers.

The Institute of iST is a Training member of UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) through the College of Child & Adolescent Psychotherapies (CCAP) giving the licence to accredit students with the Psychotherapeutic Counsellor title. The integrated Systemic Therapy programmes provide a work-based, practice-centred training and qualification in integrated Systemic Therapy practice, leadership and management and the training provides career paths for suitable qualified individuals working with children and young people who have complex emotional needs.

Raedwald Trust therapeutic education outreach support - Raedwald Academy Trust supports children in care who may be vulnerable to losing their place at a mainstream setting. The support intends on enabling them continued access to a full offer of education from a mainstream school. It currently benefits 40 carefully selected looked after children who receive a support package which are specifically tailored to their needs. Feedback from Headteachers has been positive and feedback captured from the young people involved illustrates that this initiative is building confidence and increasing self-esteem. There are successful case studies of young people thriving following permanent exclusions for previous settings, maintaining places that were previously considered fragile and reintegrating following period in Pupil Referral Units. (Expert Involvement – Angela Ransby, CEO)

Trauma Informed Approach training for key professionals – Schools that have engaged in Attachment and Trauma training see reduction in their use of Fixed Term Exclusion and have devised alternatives to using exclusion to manage behaviour. (Expert Involvement: Sally Garrett, Head Teacher Ashley Academy Trust)

Information Sources



Source	Frequency
Number of In-house and Purchased Care Foster Carers, their designations, Tier Alignment, geography, age, number of children cared for, placement duration, stability	Baseline and monthly from Liquid Logic
Tier Alignment definitions that benchmark the competences of Foster Carers and in turn set Foster Carer Fee Schedules	Standing definition
Current and projected demography of the whole Suffolk Child in Care population	Baseline and as part of a model that can be updated as scenarios are developed
Voice of Foster Carer Group and Young People group including specific feedback on the planned interventions / service changes	Baseline and bi-monthly for the duration of the feasibility study
a Survey Monkey consultation about the proposed service developments.	Ready to go subject to moving beyond the Feasibility Phase
Confidence ratings for options in the feasibility study	Apply Signs of Safety scaling to highlight movement and change

5. Value for Money (5%, 250 - 500 words)

Value for Money

Please see financial sustainability in Section 2

Budget Breakdown

Budget Line	Cost Estimate
Bid Review and Initial Setup	3,500
Project Manager	25,000
Business Analyst	10,000
Liquid Logic Reporting capability	3,750
PID	350
Establish Reference Group of Foster Carers, Terms of Reference, Forward Plan	625
Establish a Young Person's Reference Group, Terms of Reference, Forward Plan	625
Needs-led model and analysis in addition to Business Analyst	3,500
Partnership agreement and plan with Childhood First (IFA) to develop existing Suffolk Foster Carers and recruit new foster carers with relevant skills using the 'Integrated Therapeutic Fostering' qualification	2,100



Develop Partnership agreement and plan with Raedwald Trust for therapeutic education outreach support	2,640
'Trauma Informed Approach' training planning	2,800
Co-design input into the redesign of mental health services for Children in Care and their Foster Carers	5,250
Review Skills-Based Tier payment system	1,400
Agree aspirational targets	1,050
Theory of Change and supporting scenarios	875
Update Corporate Parenting Board	175
Brief & Update Corporate Parenting Management Team	175
Core Project Group Meetings including Workstream Leads	6,125
Extended Project Group Meetings	6,000
Feasibility Study Report and secure stakeholder agreement	3,500
Review and Learning	3,500
Contingency	12,441
Total	95,381