
Report Title	Pilot in-house delivery of Kickstart Futures Service	
FAO	Care Leaver Project Board Chair ● Tendai Dooley, Assistant Director ● Michael Taylor, Head of Corporate Parenting	
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Ambitious for Sutton priorities	● An inclusive place for everyone ● An efficient and well run Council	
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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. In the role of Corporate Parent, the council strives to ensure delivery of its vision “For children in care to grow up in a loving community and achieve their full potential”. The recommendations in this report support the borough’s Ambitious for Sutton priorities to be An Inclusive Place for Everyone, by striving to improve the lives of care experienced young people ensuring they have the opportunity to live in Sutton or nearby, and to be An Efficient and Well Run Council, making best use of the Council’s assets and resources.
- 1.2. As part of the Council’s review of key worker service provision delivered to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UASC) and care experienced young people this year, this paper sets out a recommendation to trial a 12 month pilot of in-house delivery to 3 properties within the KickStart offer alongside a commissioned service model.
- 1.3. In support of the 2022 - 2024 Government’s vision for children’s social care, [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#), this proposal trials an approach which would bring together the roles of Personal Advisor and Key Worker. This would reduce the number of professionals allowing for more intensive, responsive and meaningful interventions in support of young people’s transition to an independent adulthood.
- 1.4. The pilot proposal set out in this paper is projected to deliver full year 2025/26 savings of between £30,135 (employ 1 grade 7 post) to £79,722 (absorb within existing establishment), depending on the need for changes to staffing establishment as part of the Children’s Transformation Programme. This is compared to the commissioned model delivering support to these properties and with the new role taken at grade 7 mid point, with 30% on-costs.
- 1.5. The pilot will provide the Council with valuable insight into the delivery of independent living support to inform the specification and optimum service models for delivery of these services in the future.
- 1.6. This paper sets out the social care service and commissioning considerations to deliver this pilot and requests approval from the Assistant Director - Children’s Social Care and Head of Corporate Parenting to proceed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To approve the development and delivery of a 12-month in-house service pilot of Personal Advisor provision in three London Borough of Sutton properties supporting 11 care experienced young people.

- 2.2. To approve commissioning work to secure necessary approvals for continued commissioning of a floating support service provision to the remaining seven properties in Sutton's Kickstart portfolio supporting up to thirty-two care experienced young people for a further term of two years (one year plus one year extension provision) up to the value of £334k.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY INFORMATION

KickStart Futures Programme

- 3.1. The post-16 supported accommodation offer for UASC and care experienced young people is made up of several components to support young people's pathway to an independent adulthood. These are set out in Fig 1 below.

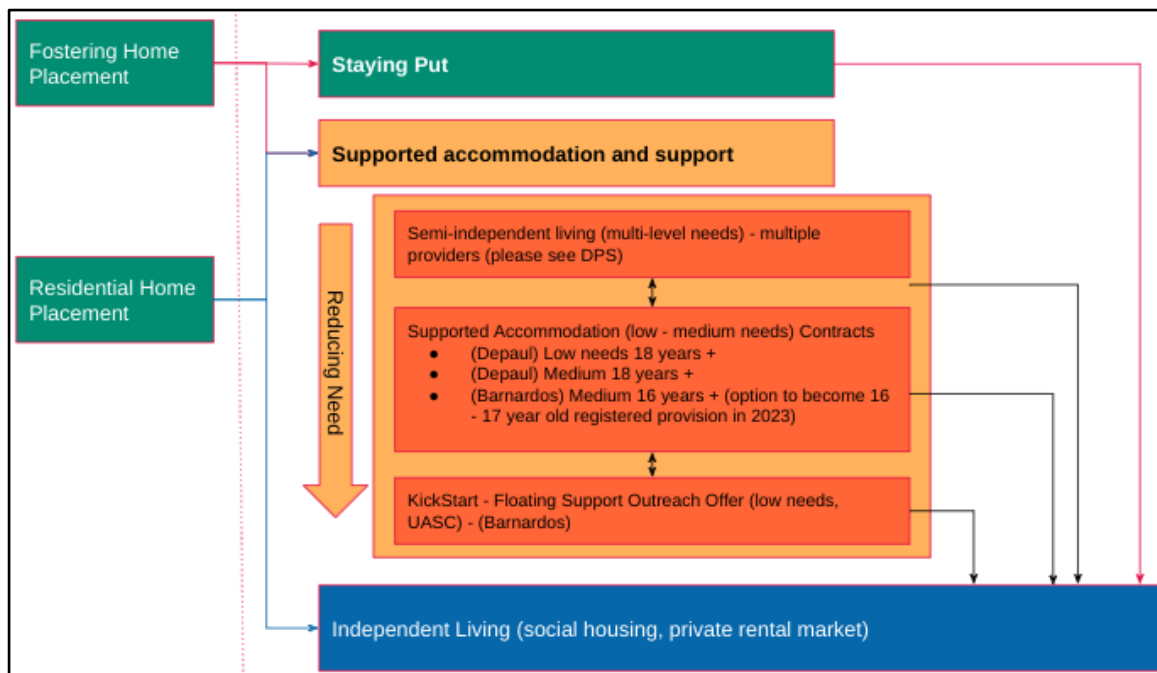


Fig. 1 Supported Accommodation Offer for UASC and Care Experienced Young People

- 3.2. KickStart Futures is a collaborative service model which utilises London Borough of Sutton assets to deliver high quality accommodation with floating support to care leavers with low support needs who are either;
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking young person awaiting a decision from the home office; or
 - In employment, as an affordable alternative to Supported Accommodation.

The service is designed to support young people transitioning to independent adulthood by helping them to develop essential skills for independent living. It offers personalised guidance in areas such as budgeting, accessing welfare benefits, securing and maintaining employment, pursuing education or training, and acquiring practical life skills like cooking and home maintenance. KickStart Futures Floating Support provides a more cost-effective alternative to traditionally expensive outsourced semi-independent living services due to the use of London Borough of Sutton property assets and flexible key worker support.

- 3.3. The properties are not staffed 24/7 and support is delivered via 1-2-1 key work sessions, tailored to work towards meeting personal objectives, and via group sessions with the whole household. The overarching objective for all young people is to work towards developing the knowledge, skills and confidence to live well independently.
- 3.4. KickStart Futures has demonstrated positive outcomes for the young people accommodated and delivered significant savings to the authority against alternative provision. The programme was shortlisted for an LGA Award in 2023 for our innovative and collaborative approach to improving the experiences of our children in care.

Commissioned Service Model

- 3.5. Barnardo's are commissioned at present to provide independent living support to care leavers with low to medium needs in the Kickstart portfolio. The service model has delivered strong value for money for the council as care leavers are accommodated in Council owned housing in the borough and the level of independent living support can be varied in line with each young person's needs. Barnardo's has delivered support services during this contracted term which are flexible in consultation with children's social care staff, resulting in responsive, cost effective services for the Council.
- 3.6. The contract for provision of flexible key worker support was awarded to Barnardo's to start 1 April 2020 for an initial two-year term with provision to extend by up to three years (a maximum five-year term). The initial property portfolio at the start of the contract included two properties comprising ten units. Since then, the portfolio has expanded to eight properties with thirty-one units supported by Barnardo's. After utilising the full extension provision for the contract in terms of contract term and property coverage, the contract with Barnardo's will expire on 31 March 2025.
- 3.7. Barnardo's contract payments are made as per an agreed hourly key worker rate, dependent on the agreed and reported key worker hours delivered. There have been some inflationary increases throughout the five year term of the contract; the 2024/25 rate is £27.80 per hour.

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- 3.8. The total contracted spend with Barnardo's for the KickStart Floating Support service in 2023/24 was £115,478.

Review of Current Service Model

- 3.9. Several critical areas have been identified for review and improvement within our current service provision. First, there appears to be a duplication of roles and responsibilities between Key Workers and Personal Advisors (PAs). This overlap creates confusion and inefficiencies, as young people do not have a clear, single point of contact, which is crucial for their support and continuity of care.
- 3.10. There have also been notable challenges with the delivery of services by Barnardo's, raising concerns that extend beyond their specific remit to the broader 18+ accommodation and support services. This situation prompts the question of whether we are meeting our responsibilities effectively and whether improvements can be made.
- 3.11. Additionally, there is an issue regarding key work hours not being delivered when young people are disengaged, despite contractual obligations requiring payment for these hours. This creates financial inefficiencies and highlights the need for better engagement strategies or contractual adjustments.
- 3.12. In the past, the lack of timely monthly reports has compromised our oversight and limited our capacity to intervene or provide support when needed. We have focused on resolving these reporting issues to ensure proper accountability and care. The introduction of the Monthly Reports Submission Process has helped mitigate these challenges, as the CSC Commissioning Team is now able to monitor submissions more effectively, with Barnardo's now compliant.
- 3.13. The London Borough of Sutton has also proposed to enhance partnership working by offering Barnardo's staff the opportunity to co-locate and collaborate at The Quad. This idea was initially suggested by Barnardo's during their service review as part of the recommissioning needs analysis.
- 3.14. From conducting the phone survey with the young people residing in the offer, in support of the thesis regarding the duplication of roles, it became evident that many of the young people were often unsure about the distinction between their Personal Advisor and their Barnardo's Key Worker. They seemed unclear on the differences between the two roles.
- 3.15. Previously, the management of young people's rent arrears and housing benefit claims was identified as an issue. However, this has improved significantly through closer collaboration with the London Borough of Sutton's welfare team and the enhancement of

Key Performance Indicator processes, supported by the implementation of the Rental Arrears Tracker.

- 3.16. Broader service improvements were implemented based on recommendations from the service improvement process conducted by the CSC Commissioning Team. Identified themes (Record Keeping, Communication/Partnership Working, Performance Reporting, Void Management, Policy Standards/Governance) were addressed through agreed actions with Barnardo's, which were closely monitored. Under new management and the execution of these recommendations, the service has reported improved outcomes, and Barnardo's has officially exited the remediation process.

4. RECOMMENDATION

In-house Pilot

- 4.1. It is proposed to pilot an in-house model delivered by the CLA / LCT service to 3 properties (11 young people) within the KickStart portfolio for a 12 month period.
- 4.2. A [Service Specification](#) has been produced which details how the floating support could be delivered if delivered in-house. This is based on the creation of a new role 'KickStart Personal Adviser' which would carry out the statutory duties of the PA role, in addition to delivery of keywork support. The Service Specification outlines the key parties, detail of the KickStart Personal Adviser role, housing management, out of hours and cover arrangements, referrals and moving into KickStart, leaving KickStart and the property portfolio.
- 4.3. The pilot would be delivered by one KickStart Personal Adviser, recruited via a secondment opportunity to existing Personal Advisers within the Leaving Care Service. It is anticipated that additional management capacity would not be required for the pilot given the number of young people's cases (11) in scope.
- 4.4. Personal Advisers typically hold a caseload of around 24 young people, and the KickStart Personal Adviser for this pilot would hold a caseload of 11 young people. As the role will be recruited via a secondment opportunity to Personal Advisers within the service, this would leave 13 cases to be reallocated. It has been confirmed that these cases can be reallocated within the existing establishment without additional resources.
- 4.5. The properties identified for the pilot are Belmont Road, Throwley Way and Cobham Close. These HMO-style properties are designed to accommodate a mix of young people who are in employment, and young people who are awaiting a decision on their claim for asylum from the Home Office. Throwley Way and Cobham Close properties are currently supported by the commissioned Barnardo's offer and Belmont Road is a new London

Borough of Sutton property which has been developed over the summer for expansion of the offer from late 2024.

Commissioned Service Implications

- 4.6. During the term of the pilot, a flexible key worker support service will still be required for the other seven properties in the Kickstart portfolio in which 32 care experienced young people are accommodated and supported.
- 4.7. Due to the improvements made to the Barnardo's service over the last year to support improvements to collaborative working and ensure delivery of a flexible and responsive key worker support service, it is recommended that the Council continues to commission Barnardo's for the term of the pilot.
- 4.8. Continuing to commission the Barnardo's service with a reduced number of properties (nine to seven properties) in the Kickstart portfolio will:
 - Ensure service continuity for UASC and care experienced young people currently in placement in these properties.
 - Allow for direct evaluation of the impact of the in-house model compared to the commissioned offer to other care experienced young people in similar circumstances accommodated within the KickStart portfolio.
 - Provide value for money and alignment with other commissioned supported accommodation services to support pathway planning . The London Borough of Sutton undertook an open competitive tender process in 2022 for provision of supported housing placements for low to medium needs care experienced and vulnerable homeless young people in Sutton. Depaul UK and Barnardos were successful in achieving the highest scores (70% quality; 30% price) in this procurement exercise and were awarded associated contracts for an initial period of four years.
- 4.9. The current Floating Support contract with Barnardo's will expire on 31 March 2025 and all extensions to this contract have been exhausted. The Commissioning service would seek approval for a direct award or equivalent, based on a reduced number of properties, of a contract to Barnardo's to continue to deliver floating support for the duration of the pilot with provision for a further extension of up to 12 months as required. Anticipated spend for this period will fall above £100k and so, Strategic Director approval of a Delegated Decision Notice would be required.

- 4.10. Projected Barnardo's expenditure for 2025/26, assuming the removal of two properties within the current KickStart Futures portfolio to be delivered in-house is £167k (or £334k for the potential two-year term). Please note, this assumes a 2% inflationary increase in the hourly rate charged from 1 April 2025. Ref. Table 1.

Monthly Hours (based on Aug 2024)	Hourly Key Worker Rate (2025/26 - includes 2% inflationary uplift)	Monthly Spend	FY Spend Projection
491.5	£28.36	£13,936.97	£167,243.69

Table 1: 2025/26 Projected Commissioning Spend (Barnardo's)

Evaluation

- 4.11. The pilot would be evaluated throughout the period, with key performance indicators defined in advance of the pilot commencing. Performance indicators would include impact on young people's outcomes, readiness for independence and move on to live independently. We would also be interested in levels of engagement against the established model.
- 4.12. The service model would also be scrutinised during the pilot to inform the decision on the future delivery model for the KickStart portfolio, and associated costs. Consideration will be given to:
- Resource requirement. Given the new role profile, it is unknown how many young people a KickStart Personal Adviser could competently support and how many Advisers would be required to cover the service.
 - Management requirement. In addition to managing the KickStart Personal Advisers, a level of management oversight will be required for the entire service.
 - Cost. Dependent on the number of KickStart Personal Advisers and Management capacity.
 - Referrals. We would seek to minimise changes in Personal Advisers, therefore more consideration needs to be given to early identification of young people for KickStart, and the referral process.
 - Development of service model. Design of an 'Independence Programme' to help identify where a young person is at as they move towards independence, and areas which require support. How keywork support can be delivered in a way which is effective for our young people, which may be different to the stipulated weekly hours per young person of the current model.

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- Effectiveness against commissioned service.
- 4.13. At the end of the 12 month period a final evaluation will be conducted with recommendations on the future service model for the Kickstart portfolio.

5. BENEFITS TO SUTTON AND ITS RESIDENTS

Improved Outcomes for Care Experienced Young People

- 5.1. Stable Homes, Built on Love, places a strong emphasis on the *parent* in Corporate Parenting, and on strong relationships. It is felt that this proposal supports this, by reducing the number of professionals involved in supporting our young people by launching a new role which encompasses Personal Advisor statutory duties and keywork. The KickStart Personal Advisor role will have a smaller caseload which will allow for intensive support and meaningful intervention, and young people will not feel overwhelmed by multiple professionals involved in their support. We will have deeper insight into our young people's journey towards independence, will be able to identify at an early stage when they are ready to move on to independent living and provide them with the direct support to settle in.
- 5.2. It is intended for the 'Independence Programme' to be developed in draft ahead of the pilot, and refined in collaboration with the young people accommodated. This programme can be rolled out to all of our young people beyond the KickStart offer.

Improved understanding of supported accommodation delivery

- 5.3. Regardless of the outcome following the pilot, Children's Services and Commissioning would gain valuable insight into the operation of Floating Support services which could inform wider commissioning initiatives, including services such as the Young People's Accommodation and Support Service, and Semi-independent accommodation. This level of insight would enable the Authority to be more prescriptive in our expectations of these providers in the development of service specifications, and individual plans for young people. Learning from the pilot would also support our quality assurance processes including collaborative problem solving where there are service concerns.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Legal and Procurement Implications

- 6.1. Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment), or TUPE, may apply to the services provided currently by Barnardo's staff to Throwley Way and Cobham Close. Legal

services advice will be requested to determine TUPE eligibility as informed by a comparison of the new in-house service specification with the commissioned service specification and liaison with Barnardo's.

- 6.2. The extension provisions of the current contract with Barnardo's for provision of floating support to the Kickstart portfolio are exhausted. Commissioning will liaise with Procurement and Legal services to confirm the contracting options and the preferred route and any associated compliance implications given Public Contract Regulations and the Authority's Contract Standing Orders. This will include consideration of the following routes:
- A direct award of a new contract;
 - A non-permitted extension of the current floating support contract; or
 - A variation to the contract held by Barnardo's for provision of housing support for young people will be required.

Finance Implications

- 6.3. The in-house service specification for the pilot service is modelled on a full time grade 7 post which, taken at grade midpoint and inclusive of 30% on-costs equates to £49,587 p.a.. Please note, this does not include additional management provision.
- 6.4. The comparable full year cost of a commissioned floating key worker service, based on current rates paid to Barnardo's, to cover the three properties cited would be: £79,722¹.
- 6.5. Full year savings of the in-house pilot are therefore projected to be £30,135 where the grade 7 needs to be added to the Children's Social Care establishment, and as high as £79,722 where the work can be absorbed into existing establishment and no change to establishment is required.
- 6.6. Where the in-house service could be started with the completion of capital works at Belmont Road from as early as October 2024 within the existing establishment for 2024/25, a saving of up to £14,974 could be delivered in-year 2024/25 against commissioning the support from our established providers. This would be in addition to the savings already budgeted for the launch of this property.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1. Where approval is given to proceed, Commissioning will work with the CLA / LCT management team to deliver the actions set out in Table 2.

¹ Calculation of comparative commissioned Key Worker service: 11 YP on 5 hours / week @ £27.80/hour (based on 52.14 weeks).

Actions	Indicative Dates
Agreement to proceed with development of delivery of in-house pilot model and commissioning work to ensure service continuity in 2025/26.	September 2024 (Care Leaver Project Board)
Secure legal and procurement advice and sign off of contracting recommendation and TUPE considerations.	September 2024
Personal Adviser identified to support Belmont Road property.	September 2024
Launch of Belmont Road property.	End October 2024
Contract liaison with Barnardo's and development and Strategic Director sign-off of delegated decision notice for continued contracting.	October - November 2025
Sign-off of KickStart Personal Adviser Job Description (with grade evaluation complete).	October 2024
Recruitment of KickStart Personal Adviser (recommended via secondment opportunity).	December 2024
Formal notice to Barnardo's of 2025/26 contracting decision.	December 2024
Decommissioning of Barnardo's service at Cobham Close and Throwley Way and handover of case files to LCT Team.	January - March 2025
Commencement of KickStart Personal Adviser role.	March 2025
Sign-off of evaluation measures.	March 2025

New service model launches.	1st April 2025
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Table 2: Delivery milestones with indicative timeline

8. CONSULTATIONS

Consultees	Yes/No	Officer	Date of Comments
Finance	Yes	Matt Tizzard, Finance Business Partner	
CLA / LCT Team	Yes	Emily Reynolds, Service Manager (CLA/LCT Team)	
Commissioning	Yes	Kieran Reynolds Commissioning Manager, Post 16 Support and Accommodation Lucy Pennie Commissioning Lead, Children's Social Care	10/09/2024

CHANGES SINCE PROPOSAL APPROVED

Properties

- Lenham Road - 3 homes with Responsible Tenant (15 hours per week)
- Cobham Close - 3 homes (16 hours per week inc 1 hour group work per week)
- Belmont (new property) - 4 homes (21 hours per week inc 1 hour group work per week)
- Financial impact - Savings reduce to £22,887.60

Commissioning

- Provider has requested fee uplift of 8%. Recommend counter-offer of 3% to £28.67, which includes:
 - Harmonisation of rates with supported accommodation rate (£0.31 or 1% increase to £28.11 based on 2024/25 rates); plus
 - 2% annual (2025/26) fee uplift
 - Savings recalculated to £25,155.69 (including impact of changing properties)