

OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME RECORD OF OPERATIONAL DECISION



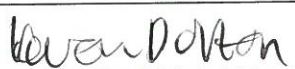

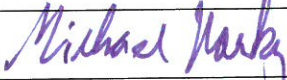
TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Date: 29 th November 2018	Ref No: CS 564				
Type of Operational Decision: <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Executive Decision</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Council Decision</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> </table>		Executive Decision	X	Council Decision	
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Status:					
Title/Subject matter: Appointment of a social worker to support delivery of Outcome 1 of the Looked After Children Project (CYP Transformation Programme) - Increased pace in progressing permanency for children and young people who are looked after (Special Guardianship Orders)					
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance – Is the decision:					
(i) within an Approved Budget	Yes - CYP Transformation Programme funding (GM Transformation Fund) from January 2019 for two years				
(ii) not in conflict with Council Policy	No, not in conflict with Council Policy				
(iii) not raising new issues of Policy	No, not raising new issues of Policy				
Details of Operational Decision Taken [with reasons]: Appointment of a social worker to support delivery of Outcome 1 of the Looked After Children Project (CYP Transformation Programme) - Increased pace in progressing permanency for children and young people who are looked after (Special Guardianship Orders) <p>The LAC Project within the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme is committed to reducing the number and cost of children looked after in Bury. It identifies three outcomes which will deliver this goal. One is greater pace in progressing permanency options for children and young people who are looked after. Special Guardianship Orders are critical to this.</p> <p>Discussion with senior managers within Children's Social Care has identified a number of issues constraining the progression of Special Guardianship Orders in Bury. The most critical is the capacity of the fostering team to undertake carer assessments. Bury's Fostering team manager reports at the end of November that her team is working with 54 Family and Friends (F&F) carers. A number of SGO assessments are underway however team members have full caseloads, constraining the number of SGOs which can be progressed as assessment capacity is insufficient to meet demand. This situation is not in the interests of children, young people or their carers who wish to progress to a more permanent caring arrangement. Nor is it in the interests of the local authority.</p>					

Though the direct financial benefit of progressing SGOs is limited, because payments continue after the SGO is granted, an SGO reduces Bury's responsibilities as Corporate Parent and the associated costs. These include the time spent by social workers and other professionals delivering the local authority's statutory duties for looked after children. As a proportion of F&F carers live distant from Bury (e.g. in Cornwall and Essex) there are significant additional costs associated with travel and accommodation for both supervising and children's social workers.

To resolve the issue of constrained capacity, funding for an additional social worker within the Fostering team to undertake SGO assessments has been included in the LAC project budget from January 2019 for two years. The associated cost will be £45,621 (including on costs). During the two year appointment it is anticipated that 20 additional assessments will be completed. From 1st April to end October 2018 eight children and young people were discharged from care on SGOs. With an additional worker in post, it is expected that for the same period next year the figure will be 14. In order to ensure the stability of SGOs once granted, a proportion of the social worker's time will be committed to running a peer support group for SGOs.

The additional capacity is for a time limited period during which a 'backlog' of cases will progress to SGO, permanently reducing the number of F&F carers supervised by the fostering team. This will release capacity within the team which can contribute to sustaining future SGO activity, once the Transformation funding comes to an end. This capacity will also go towards meeting increased demand for new carer assessments which is expected in response to increased carer payments and marketing and recruitment activity.

Equality Impact Assessment [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	No, the impact will be positive as the decision will progress permanency for looked after children and young people providing them and their carers with greater certainty and stability.	
Decision taken by:	Signature:	Date:
Executive Director or Chief/Senior Officer		3/12/18.
Members Consulted [see note 1 below]		
Cabinet Member/Chair		5/12/18
Lead Member		
Opposition Spokesperson		18/12/18

Notes

1. It is not generally a requirement to consult with any Members on Operational Decisions but where a Chief Officer considers it necessary to consult with the appropriate Cabinet Member and/or Lead Member, they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained to confirm that he/she has been consulted.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**