



SERVICE SPECIFICATION

SERVICE FOR:

Floating Support for Vulnerable Children & Young People (C&YP) and their Family/Carer

Background and Introduction

- 1.1. MKCC wishes to commission Floating Support to prevent C&YP coming into care, provide placement stability, and support 'Care Leavers.' This could include, homeless and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) C&YP who could be subject of 'Child in Need' under Section 17 and section 20 of the Children's Act 1989.
- 1.2. MKCC is now using a web based Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), provided by (Access HTTL Ltd) previously known as 'Adam,' to procure Floating Support Services for Children and Young People (C&YP) and their family
- 1.3. There is an acknowledgement that developments in legislation and practice may result in amendments or extensions of expectations within the lifetime of this contract and Providers will be expected to meet these changes.
- 1.4. Due to external factors and/or physical/emotional stresses some families/carers across the city encounter difficulties and their coping mechanisms are depleted. Often this affects their ability to continue to safely care for a child and, in such circumstance they do not, at a time, have wider resources that can be called upon.
- 1.5. When a young person becomes 16+ and is preparing for independent living they will need a level of support to maintain their tenancy/accommodation.
- 1.6. This service specification sets out the council's requirements for flexible Standard and Enhanced Floating Support
- 1.7. This specification is aimed at young people under the age of 18 and Care Leavers.

2. Local Needs

- 2.1. MKCC Approach: Putting people at the heart of our services and adapting our services through listening to those with lived experience.
- Early intervention to ensure that households receive the right support at the right time to prevent breakdowns in family situation, placement disruption and/or homelessness.
 - Focus on an individual or households' strengths.
 - Listen to those with experience of care.
 - Support people to succeed with the right provision in the right area at the right time.
 - Provide high standards of communication, co-ordination and partnership working.
- 2.2. Based on Government Participation Data for 16/17-year-olds, it is anticipated that the number of those in care in Milton Keynes will increase by approximately 3% per year. It is anticipated that demand will also be influenced by: Council policy, local population growth and potential increase in the number of UASC allocated to Milton Keynes via The National Transfer Scheme. MKCC LAC numbers have seen a sharp increase in recent times and is now in line with the national average rate per 10,000 population.
- 2.3. Significant national developments over recent years have contributed to pressures to increase care numbers and in particular case law following the "Southwark judgement" underlines the requirement to offer Section 20 accommodation to all homeless 16/17-year-olds.
- 2.4. As of 31st March 2025, there were 509 children in care, although the majority are in foster care, 56 children are in residential, of which 5 are in-house provision and rising. The children leaving care remains fairly stable. There are also a number of young people who are living in their own accommodation and in supported accommodation preparing for independent living.
- 2.5. There are a number of C&YP in care either in fostering, residential or supported living who have had a number of placements which has broken down due to various reasons. If support was offered earlier in the placement this could have resulted in a different outcome.
- 2.6. There are a number of C&YP and their family/carers who find it difficult to maintain routine with their day-to-day life - mostly associated with emotional and mental health, substance and/or alcohol misuse, a history of criminal activity, anti-social behaviours and/or risk of child sexual exploitation leading to challenges in day-to-day living, becoming vulnerable and destabilising their present living accommodation/placements.

- 2.7. The length of time that a young person will require support from the service will be dependent on the individual's age, needs and personal circumstances. The likely duration of the support will be highlighted in the referral but may be subject to change as a result of the care planning review process.
- 2.8. MKCC has liaised with Bedford and Luton as part of Cross Regional Network to ensure consistent responses across the region.

3. Purpose/Aim

- 3.1. Floating Support is intended to be flexible and offer varied support and intervention to young people aged under 18 to meet their needs (standard/enhanced) and offer a wraparound provision.

This could include, but is not limited to: -

- Tenancy/accommodation maintenance,
- Stabilising an existing placement,
- Integrate support in the community or step down back to family home,
- Improve family stability to prevent a young person coming into care,
- Establish and improve methods of communication,
- Implement support plans to manage behaviours to reduce incidents, risk of exploitation, trauma, harm, and sexualised behaviour,
- Improve social integration when forming and maintaining relationships.

4. Description of Service

- 4.1. MKCC believes that the 'Voice of the Child' is critical to effective development and delivery of services. C&YP's views and feedback has been included within the development of this specification, with their involvement being a key theme throughout.
- 4.2. We want Providers on our DPS to share our passion and be willing to work with us to innovate, develop and improve the service. We should jointly strive for, and evidence better outcomes for the C&YP and also seek financial sustainability for both Providers and the City Council.
- 4.3. The young person will be supported to engage with their local community to enhance self-esteem and establish positive supportive social networks, in keeping with their interests, strengths and contribution they can make. This could include local interest groups, community projects, local cafes, and faith groups, based on the care plan.
- 4.4. The service will work in close partnership with various community, statutory and voluntary organisations, including Housing, Education, debt advice, DWP, mental/physical health services, property owners and neighbourhood police to ensure young people have the right support to achieve required outcomes.

5. Service Values

5.1. Values for this service are to: -

- Promote a collaborative, strengths / assets-based approach to achieving people's agreed outcomes, working with the wider community and other agencies to achieve this.
- Promote the creation of a safe living environment.
- Acknowledge and respect a person's gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, religion, and disabilities.
- Promote equality, inclusion and operate non-discriminatory practices.
- Treat all clients with courtesy, dignity, and respect.
- Ensure that clients' needs and best interests are at the heart of the service.

6. Service Model

The support provided by DPS Providers will include:

- Identify pressure points within families and placements, and work with parents and care providers to develop successful strategies to overcome them. Approaches should be empowering, enabling, and about setting boundaries.
- Providers will ensure as far as possible within the timescales, that appropriate skills are transferred to carers /family so that dependency on the specialist service is reduced or avoided.
- Providers will help the young person and their carers/ family to identify, build and strengthen their own local support network.
- Support will normally be provided where the young person is residing.
- Support should be arranged to meet the child /family's need and therefore may be required out of office hours.
- Support will be time limited, depending on the needs.

Standard support hours

- 6.1. Young people accessing this support may already have agreed supported hours delivered by their placement provider as part of their care/accommodation package. However, there may be additional hours needed for in-reach to a family home or existing placement to provide stability and respite for families/ carers, or outreach as young people move into their own accommodation under their own tenancy, integrate into the community to make the transition to full independence.
- 6.2. Providers will be required to register with the appropriate regulatory body.

- 6.3. Support hours delivered will be working directly with the Young Person and do not include administration, report writing and attendance at meetings. Costs of these activities should be included within Providers' tendered hourly rate.

Presenting Needs (Standard)

- 6.4. Young People who have some additional needs that require additional support and intervention to manage.

(List below which is not limited but offers examples): -

- Healthy relationships
- Drug and alcohol awareness
- Anti-social behaviour and youth crime
- Cultural orientation
- Financial or Debt
- Parenting skills
- Internet safety
- Self-esteem
- Education, training, work experience and volunteering
- Applications for asylum, benefits, higher application, jobs etc.
- Local activities such as sports, leisure etc.

Enhanced Support hours

- 6.5. This is over and above standard support, so the skills and experience of the staff will need to match the specialism required to meet the need of the Young Person. 1:1 support hours will be used to work directly with the Young Person and do not include administration, report writing and attendance at meetings. Costs of these activities should be included within Providers' tendered hourly rate.
- 6.6. As the nature of this is specialist it is highly likely that there will be regulatory requirements either due to the nature of the service or the specific qualifications and registration of the staff required to deliver the service.
- 6.7. Providers are required to be registered with the appropriate regulatory body.
- 6.8. The staffing ratio and number of support hours will be determined based on the needs of the individual Young Person and will be agreed at the point the package is commissioned.

Presenting Needs (Enhanced)

- 6.9. Young People who have complex needs and require additional specialist support. The Young People who will have:

(List below which is not limited but offers examples): -

- Been involved or at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation,
- Trauma and harm,
- A high level of emotional health needs which could include step-down from secure mental health provision, persistent self-harming, suicidal, eating disorders, inc. mental health needs and/or diagnoses that requires additional specialist support to manage,
- Aggression, violence and/or threatening behaviour to Employees and Carers and/or others,
- Involved with crime and the criminal justice system,
- Significant levels of missing and/or high level risk taking behaviour,
- Social integration difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships,
- Sexualised behaviour,
- Not engaging in education, employment, or training (EET),
- Young People may have had multiple Placement breakdowns,
- High levels of behavioural incidents,
- Could be an alternative to secure provision,
- Stabilising placement,
- Difficulties in engaging with services,
- Poor communication.

7. Service Outcomes

7.1. All C&YP achieving the specific individual outcomes set out in their relevant statutory plan (e.g. CIN/CP Plan, Care Plan or Pathway Plan), however the service outcome is to: -

- Sustain their tenancy by trained and skilled staff to deliver independent living set given timescale,
- Develop skills and knowledge to maintain accommodation and feel confident that they are ready to take on a tenancy or other more independent accommodation,
- Improve understanding of how to improve and maintain their physical wellbeing,
- Develop a better understanding of how to access welfare benefits where required,
- To engaged in training, employment, education, or activities such as volunteering, in accordance with their support plan,
- Access leisure, sport, cultural activities, hobbies, and relevant community groups to meet their individual need,
- Manage their behaviour in a positive way
- Stabilise placement with family/ Carer and minimise change of placement,
- Feel safer and reduce vulnerability to all forms of exploitation including physical, sexual, emotional, or financial,
- Have a better understanding of how to improve and maintain their emotional and Physical wellbeing,
- Improved self-esteem and confidence and can function effectively,

- Reduce involvement in criminal activity,
- Establish a support network; contact with friends, family or new social opportunities that are safe and positive.
- To be able to exit the social care system, either by reintegration into the family/community or to move to independent living after leaving care.

8. Individual Outcomes

- 8.1. The service will enable C&YP to make a successful transition to live independently or work in partnership to remain at home. Contributing to delivery of the package of support set out in young person's relevant Plan, and helping the children and young person to achieve specific outcomes in relation to:
- Money Management
 - Education, training, and employment
 - Personal Health and emotional Wellbeing
 - Life Skills.
 - Risk Management
 - Stabilise placement
 - Reduce number of placements
 - Criminal activities
 - Resilience
 - Improve Communication with others
 - Manage behaviour
 - Increase new social /leisure opportunities
- 8.2. All packages of support will be reviewed on a regular basis with a key worker, C&YP and the Provider with the option to adjust based on the present need.
- 8.3. Providers must ensure that they use the appropriate outcome framework to deliver outcomes required.

9. Referral and Access

- 9.1. The service will be required to accept referrals from Children's Services teams, managed by the Community Resource Team through the DPS.
- 9.2. The DPS is the only accepted referral route for packages of floating support. Packages must only be accepted by Providers outside this route if commissioned by the out of hours Emergency Social Work Team (ESWT) to support young people in crisis outside normal working hours. Where any such packages are commissioned, they will be awarded via the DPS to the incumbent Provider the next working day.

- 9.3. Providers will be expected to offer an assessment within 3 working days of referral.
- 9.4. Providers will assess referrals, identify risks, identify support required to reduce risks (creating support and risk management plans in partnership with young people, their social workers and any current caregivers), and carry out time limited support to improve family resilience, independence, and success.
- 9.5. Variations to packages will only be accepted if approved by the relevant Children's Services Head of Service and varied through the DPS portal.

10. Outcomes and Performance Indicators

- 10.1. As a minimum, performance indicators will include the following:
 - 90% of young people supported successfully to maintain their tenancy for a minimum of 6 months and improve their behaviour.
 - 80% of young people demonstrate progress towards achieving outcomes in relation to, education Employment and Training, health, budgeting emotional and physical wellbeing.
 - 70% of young people demonstrate progress towards achieving outcomes in relation to offending, substance misuse, reduce vulnerability from abuse, Improved self-esteem and confidence and function effectively and establish a support network

11. Safeguarding

- 11.1. Providers must comply at all times with:
 - a) The Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board web based Inter Agency Policy and Procedures April 2016 and subsequent revisions, developed in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
<http://www.mkscb.org/policy-procedures/>
 - b) The Milton Keynes Council Safeguarding Children and Adults Corporate Policy Statement 2011 (revised 2015) and subsequent revisions.
- 11.2. All staff and volunteers must be trained to follow the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children reporting procedures and training should be updated at least annually.
- 11.3. The Authorised Officer must be notified immediately of all instances of suspected abuse pertaining to the contract.
- 11.4. Providers shall obtain and maintain Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks in respect of each member of staff or volunteer working with C&YP.

12. Performance Management Framework

12.1. The contract will be monitored through:

- Three-monthly monitoring information provided by the Provider collected through Workbooks
- Three-monthly performance review meetings
- Quarterly Quality and Compliance Review Meetings

12.2. In addition, ad hoc review meetings may also take place in the following circumstances:

- Where monitoring information indicates performance that is below the minimum standards agreed between Milton Keynes City Council and the Provider, MKCC Authorised Officer will implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to support remedial action(s).
- Where monitoring information indicates performance that is below the minimum standards agreed between the Council and the Provider prior to the commencement of the contract.
- Where the Provider has advised the Authorised Officer of issues relating to Safeguarding concerns.
- Where service users or other key stakeholders have raised concerns directly with the Council.
- Without affecting any other right or remedy available to it, the Council may terminate the Provider with immediate effect by giving written notice if the Provider fails to meet at least 90% of the service level targets over any consecutive six months' period.