

Innovative Commissioning for Children & Young People in Birmingham

Social Impact Bonds and Step Down Fostering

NCAS Conference, 11th October 2017

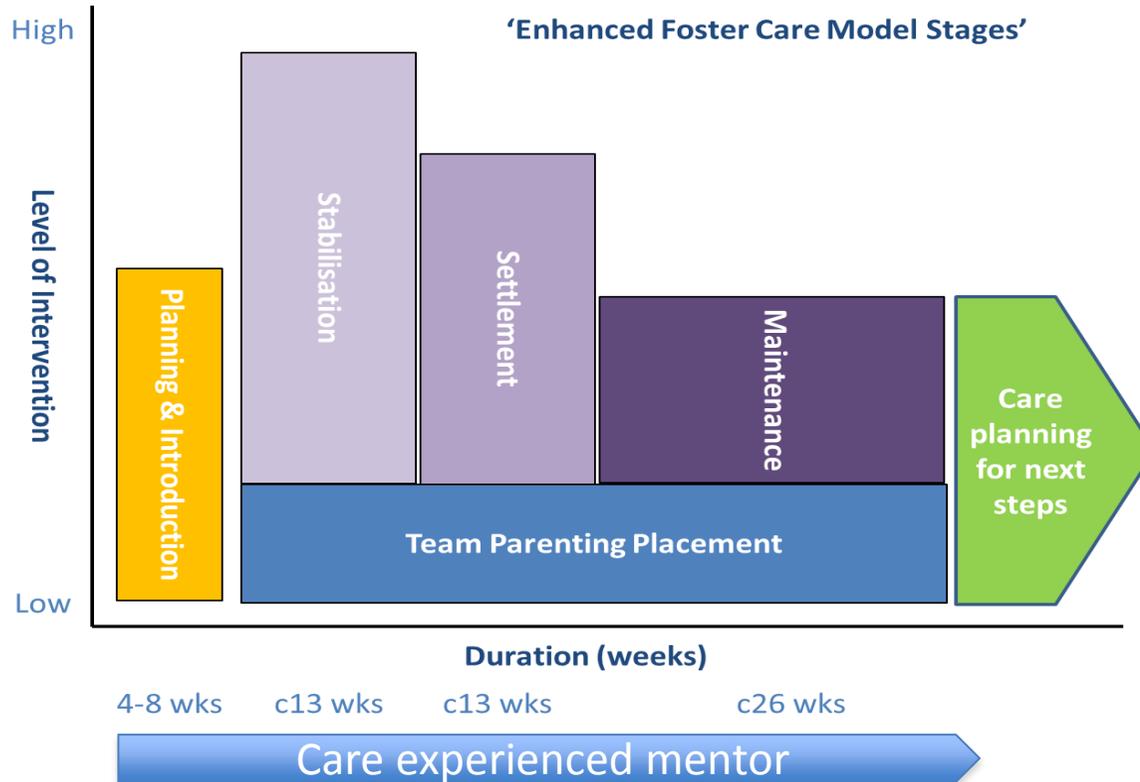
The challenge in Birmingham

- Largest local authority in Europe: 1.2m people
- 280,000 children under 18yrs
- 1,868 Children in Care (> national average)
 - 68% placed in foster care and 9% in residential care
 - £25m spend on external residential placements
(177 young people)
- Advent of Children's Trust - April 2018

The old way wasn't working

- In 2012, we had 182 young people in residential placements – roughly 10% of all Children in Care in Birmingham
 - These young people were experiencing poor life outcomes:
 - Contact with police, substance misuse, poor educational attainment, poor mental health
 - 13% experienced 3 or more placement disruptions
 - It was also very expensive for the Council:
 - These 182 young people accounted for 40% of our annual £65m Children in Care budget
- Clear need to find a new way to transition these children from residential care into foster placements

An innovative solution: Therapeutic Fostering



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Delivered by Outcomes for Children, this intervention aims to:

- Place young people at the centre of decision-making
 - Re-introduce young people to family life
 - Provide stability and a platform for attachments to develop
 - Build the young person's resilience
 - Provide space and time for therapeutic interventions to work
 - Offer additional support to foster parents
- This drives better outcomes for the young person
- e.g. improved behaviour, education attainment, emotional health and well-being

An innovative model: The SIB structure

- Outcomes-based contract (payment-by-results)
- Bridges provided up-front capital and support
- BCC pays provider for achieving certain milestones
 - Reduces up-front cost to BCC
 - Gives provider greater flexibility to invest in finding the right families and to adapt the programme to changing needs
 - Also gives provider a strong incentive to over-deliver
- Centre for SIBS/Social Outcomes Fund contribute 11% towards cost of each placement/ outcome payment – c. £130k to date
- Diverting children from residential care creates clear cost saving

Improving outcomes: Results to date

- 55 referrals into the scheme to date – 26 actual entrants
 - 12 “Graduations” (completed 52 weeks continuous placement)
 - 5 remained with foster carer post “graduation”
 - 7 moved on – either returned home or went to supported accommodation
 - 5 currently in placement, 12 new referrals being matched and 3 new entrants, starting Oct/ Nov
 - Over 10,000 beds nights avoided

Improving outcomes: Rees Centre evaluation

- Average 70% stability rate achieved across 22 placements - greater than experienced prior to the programme.
 - Evidence of improved school attendance, improved behaviours, reduced self-harming
 - c. £40,000 cost savings achieved for each young person that completes Step Down and does not return to residential care (in Y1)
c. £880,000 cost savings for 22 young people on the programme between Oct 2014 - Dec 2016 (in year 1 of their placement)
 - A further £600,000 cost savings for the ten YP who successfully remain in placement following “graduation”(post 52 weeks)
- Total cost saving to BBC of **£1.7m** to date

Improving practice: Lessons learned

- Fostering works for children with complex needs - if they are child-centred & driven by young people's needs
- Targeted carer recruitment critical (and new foster carers can be as talented and resilient as experienced carers)
- Engagement with social workers is key:
 - How to do planned moves, strengths-based referrals, placements matching, changing the dialogue
- Early involvement of operational leads in project design and commissioning is crucial
- Peer Mentors are valuable in building bridges with young people
- SIB process adds impartiality, accountability and challenge

Questions

Next steps

- Project transfer to Birmingham Children's Trust - opportunity to develop and continue with the model
- Use the model to help improve SW practice and planning for children in care.
- Dedicated social worker for the project - now seconded to Placements Team
- Complement the model with other ways of 'stepping down': Supported Accommodation and reunification home
- Currently developing Step Down Fostering to move disabled children from residential care
- Continue to develop payment by results model

For more information

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-chances-fund>

<http://golab.bsg.ox.ac.uk>