Lots 1 and 2

Registered Children’s Homes

Block Contract

**Service specification**

**Glossary of key terms**

**Behaviour Support: -** A system set up and used to understand behaviour of young people, that can be challenging. This system will then be used by services as part of a multi-agency process to support young people to help manage their behaviour and/or to provide suitable interventions to help the young person in these circumstances.

**Children Act: -** Legislation which allocates duties to local authorities, courts, parents and other agencies in the United Kingdom, to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

**Children in Care: -** This is a child or young person to whom the Local Authority provides accommodation and care on a continued basis and over a period of a time which is longer than 24 hours. According to the Childrens Act (1989), care and accommodation are provided due to: -

* The absence of any person with parental responsibility for them, or those children who have been lost or abandoned, or in the event the person who had been looking after them is no longer able to provide suitable care or accommodation (Section 20);
* Children being in police protection, detention or remand (Section 21);
* A court order, interim order or order for the emergency protection of children (Section 31, 38 and 44);
* Respite care which a child may be receiving which exceeds 75 days in a year whereby they are away from home in a residential placement.

**Children in Need: -** Need is defined under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) as “a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired without the provision of services or a child who is disabled”.

**SEND: -** Special educational needs and disability.

**Child Protection: -** The process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of abuse or neglect. It involves the measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect.

**Child Exploitation: -** Using a minor/ child for profit, power, status, sexual gratification, or some other purpose.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): -** Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative relationships, violence, coercion and intimidation being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/ economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

**County Lines: -** A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money. Use of coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons is likely.

**Children and Social Work Act (2017): -** Legislation describing the support for Children in Care and Care Leavers and which promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children.

**Children’s Homes (England) Regulations (2018): –** Legislation which sets out how registered Children’s Homes must operate. These regulations include ‘quality standards’ describing the aspirational and positive outcomes homes are expected to achieve.

**Care Standards Act (2000): -** An Act to establish a National Care Standards Commission to make provision for the registration and regulation of Children’s Homes, independent hospitals, independent clinics, care homes, residential family centres, independent medical agencies, domiciliary care agencies, fostering agencies, nurses’ agencies and voluntary adoption agencies. It also makes provision for the regulation and inspection of local authority fostering and adoption services.

**Compatibility Risk Assessment: -** An assessment that can be undertaken in partnership with key partners such as the Police and health colleagues considering the risks presented to a provision and the young people already placed within the provision through the proposed placement of another young person at the provision and vice versa. These assessments should consider the physical location of a provision as well as risks which may be posed by or to individuals living within the community because of the proposed placement being made. This record should be shared with the placing social worker.

**Contact: -** Contact between a child and another person or persons including the child’s parents as defined in Section 34 of the Children Act (1989).

**De-escalation Techniques: -** The practice of calming and defusing a volatile or potentially volatile situation where the behaviour of concern is putting the child or young person or others at risk. This can include verbal and non-verbal techniques and could also recognise the most appropriate worker for the individual situation.

**Devon Children and Families Partnership: -** A multi-agency partnership made up of many organisations that set out and implement key priorities for children, young people and families in Devon.

**EHCP: -** An education, health and care plan replaced the statement of special educational needs from 2014. This plan co-ordinates and documents education, health and care needs, extra support required to meet the young person’s needs and outcomes to be achieved by the young person into one single legal document. This plan applies from 0 to 25 years.

**Impact Assessment: -** A review and assessment that will evidence in writing whether the service to be provided will meet the needs of the young person to be placed. This will consider factors relating to both the individual, wider environment, and compatibility and matching considering other young people who may be placed in semi-independent residential accommodation or shared accommodation alongside the young person being assessed.

**Individual Placement Agreement: -** A document which acts as an individual contract (and forms part of the Call-Off Contract) between the Local Authority and the Service Provider for the provision of care and support of children and young people in the care of the Local Authority.

**KPI: -** Key performance indicator, a measure that can be used to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a service being delivered.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): -** Fulfil a statutory responsibility for the Local Authority and are responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children and young people may have caused them or could cause them harm. They will give advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people.

**Leaving Care Act (2000): -** Legislation describing the statutory responsibilities held by the Local Authority regarding the provision and support for young people aged 16 and over who are/ have been Looked After by the Local Authority.

**MASH: -** Devon County Council’s multi-agency safeguarding hub.

**Care Plan: –**A plan which sets out how the child or young person’s needs are to be met, including care, education and health arrangements.All Children in Care are required to have a Care Plan, which is completed through the use of a Child in Care review soon after coming into the care of the Council. Thereafter, a Care Plan is reviewed via statutory reviews or after a significant change in circumstances such as an unplanned placement move.

**Pathway Plan: -** Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, all Looked-After Children should have a Pathway Plan set up by their 16th birthday. The plan should set out the support that the

young person will receive in transition to independent life, and should cover the period

up to the age of 18 or when they are living independently.

**Personal Education Plan (PEP): -** An evolving record of action forming part of a Child Looked After’s care plan and is the joint responsibility of both the Local Authority and a school. This plan should detail and document a personalised approach to learning that meets the education and development needs of Children Looked After, raises their aspirations, builds life chances and enables them to be supported to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential. Progress against the plan is overseen by many professionals and should be with the involvement of the Child Looked After.

**Physical Intervention: -** The purpose of physical intervention is to take immediate control of a dangerous situation, in order to end or significantly reduce the risk of harm to the person and others around them. Physical intervention involves some form of physical contact and application of force to guide, restrict or prevent movement.

**Placement Plan: –** A plan which sets out the requirements of the placement in meeting the needs of the child or young person and other information to support the placement. All Children in Care are required to have a Placement Plan completed before their placement begins or within five working days of a placement being made.

**Provider: –** A Children’s Home registered with Ofsted to provide residential care for children and young people.

**Quality Assurance, Reviewing and Safeguarding Service (QARSS):-** A function within Devon County Council Children’s Services holding responsibility for reviews, plans and quality assurance monitoring for children in care and child protection planning and a support role in relation to children in need.

**Quality Assurance Framework:** - A structure setting out key performance indicators and quality monitoring procedure between the Service Provider and Devon County Council including suspension protocols for delivery of this service.

**Regulation 44 Visit: – A visit undertaken by** an Independent Person to a children’s residential home on a monthly basis. It is the job of the Regulation 44 Visitor to write a report evaluating how the home is being run. This will include ensuring the children and young people are being kept safe and how effectively their wellbeing is being promoted

**Registered Manager: -** A suitably qualified and experienced manager of the Children’s Home. The Registered Manager is responsible for the day to day operation of the home and the quality of the care being provided.

**Responsible Individual: -** Acts on behalf of the Provider to ensure legal duties and responsibilities are being carried out. This role is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of the Registered Manager and service.

**Registered Person: -** This refers to the Registered Manager / the Responsible Individual or the Registered Provider within a Children’s Home service.

**The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations (2010) amended: -** Legislation describing statutory responsibilities held and activity the Local Authority must undertake to ensure the necessary arrangements, provision and placements are in place to meet the needs of Children Looked After.

**Trauma Informed Practice: -** Method or model of support used by professionals who are supporting the needs of children and young people. This includes an understanding and awareness of traumatic experiences and their impacts on the lives of children and young people. It also includes responsiveness, facilitating in reducing and minimising the impact of traumatic events and experiences promoting recovery and resilience of children and young people over time.

**Virtual School / Education Team: -** A function within Devon County Council Children’s Services who oversee and monitor the educational outcomes for all Children in Care. The includes working closely with a range of other professionals, together with parents and carers, to ensure that children receive the best education possible and get the support they need. Playing a role in overseeing the Personal Education Plan for Children in Care in partnership with the school.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Children and Young People’s Plan for Devon <https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/>

Statutory guidance -Working Together to Safeguard Children <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Devon Children and family’s procedures manual <http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/devon/index.html>

Toolkit that can be used by providers to ensure best practice when considering protected characteristics including gender and sexual orientation of those using services: - <https://new.devon.gov.uk/equality/lgbttoolkit>

Published Statistics for Looked After Children <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

Preventing Exploitation Toolkit developed by Safer Devon Partnership and Devon Children and Families Partnership <https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/>

**INTRODUCTION**

The Council requires a range of placements to meet the needs of children and young people in care. This specification sets out the requirements of residential Children’s Homes commissioned through the Registered Children’s Homes Block Contract. This contract is intended to drive forward partnership working between residential placement providers operating within the Devon County Council administrative border, the Council and its partners.

In line with strategic programmes of work for Sufficiency, the aim is to enable Devon children and young people to remain within Devon, and to support those who are placed outside their home area to safely return. These placements will be required for children with a broad range of needs, including emotional and behavioural issues.

For the purposes of this Specification, Devon County Council requires access to provision that enables children to move to and from residential care as and when required. This is based on the principle of accessing the right placement at the right time for the child, avoiding drift and delay and meeting the long term needs of the child. It is intended that residential Children’s Homes are not used as an end destination for children and young people in care; but are used appropriately for a period of time to enable stabilisation and preparation for permanence. With children and young people making a transition to family-based care or supported living provision at an appropriate time. Family based care could include: -a specialist foster placement, reunification to family or permanence through other means, such as adoption or Special Guardianship.

**Service Specification**

This specification sets out the requirements for the delivery of placements under the Registered Children’s Homes Block Contract for Children in Care by Devon County Council. Services to be provided under this specification to eligible children and young people will need to be located within the administrative border of Devon County Council.

1. **Background & Context: -** 
   1. National context: -
      1. *This service will support in the delivery of the Children Act (1989); The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations (2010); The Leaving Care Act (2000); Care Standards Act (2000), Children and Social Work Act (2017); Promoting the education of Looked after Children and previously Looked After Children; Promoting the Health and Wellbeing for Looked After Children; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Securing sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children; Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery; Children who runaway or go missing from home or care; SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years* and such other national guidance and strategies as are current or shall be issued by the Government.

* + 1. Under Section 20 of the *Children Act (1989),* the Local Authority holds a responsibility to provide accommodation to any child in need within their area who appear to require accommodation as a result of no person having parental responsibility, being lost or abandoned or the person who has been caring for them is prevented from providing suitable accommodation or care. Section 20 (3) and (5) states Local Authorities provide accommodation for any person who has reached the age of 16 and whose welfare the authority consider is likely to be prejudiced if accommodation is not provided. The Local Authority may provide accommodation for any person who has reached the age of 16 but is under 21 in any community home which takes children who have reached the age of 16 if it is considered to safeguard and promote the welfare of the young person. Section 22 A states where a child is in the care of a Local Authority it is their duty to provide the child with accommodation. Section 31 of the Children Act (1989) describes functions concerning the Local Authority and Care Orders or Supervision Orders regarding the care of young people as awarded by the Court.
  1. Devon context; Children’s Homes for Children in Care: -
     1. The Service will support the delivery of the key priorities included on the Devon Children and Families Partnership website including the Children and Young People’s Plan for Devon and any other relevant strategy or project.
     2. Services provided under this service specification will deliver in ways that will support and have reference to such other local projects and/ or strategies published by Devon County Council which are relevant to Children in Care in Devon. This may include Sufficiency Strategies, Strategies for Children in Care in Devon.
  2. Devon County Council’s needs assessment in the context of a multi-agency partnership
     1. Please refer to ‘*Published Statistics’* link under additional information above.
  3. Provision that is outside of this specification: -
     1. Services delivered under this specification does not include placements and services for children and young people in unregulated provision/ placements or registered provisions which are not a registered Children’s Home or placements and services being provided outside the administrative border of Devon County Council.
     2. Services to be delivered under this service specification does not include care for young people where there is no Devon County Council statutory duty.
     3. Services to be delivered under this service specification are not for Children in Need described under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989).

1. **Residential Child Care: - Key Principles** 
   1. Children in residential child care should be loved, happy, healthy, safe from harm and able to develop, thrive and fulfil their potential.
   2. Residential child care should value and nurture each child as an individual with talents, strengths and capabilities that can develop over time.
   3. Residential child care should foster positive relationships, encouraging strong bonds between children and staff in the home on the basis of jointly undertaken activities, shared daily life, domestic and non-domestic routines and established boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
   4. Residential child care should be ambitious, nurturing children’s school learning and out of-school learning and their ambitions for their future.
   5. Residential child care should be attentive to children’s need(s), supporting emotional, mental and physical health needs, including repairing earlier damage to self-esteem and encouraging friendships.
   6. Residential child care should be outward facing, working with the wider system of professionals for each child, and with children’s families and communities of origin to sustain links and understand past problems.
   7. Residential child care should have high expectations of staff as committed members of a team, as decision makers and as activity leaders. In support of this, Children’s Homes should ensure all staff and managers are engaged in on-going learning about their role and the children and families they work with.
   8. Residential child care should provide a safe and stimulating environment in high-quality buildings, with spaces that support nurture and allow privacy as well as common spaces and spaces to be active.
2. **Outcomes to be delivered**
   1. The Service Provider will be expected to evidence the following core outcomes are being achieved for Children in Care accessing these services: -
      1. Children and young people receive personalised and high-quality care that promotes a healthy lifestyle and positive physical, emotional, mental and sexual health.
      2. Children and young people are safe and protected. This includes protection from ill treatment, neglect, violence, sexual exploitation, bullying and discrimination and social exclusion due to anti-social, criminal or risk-taking behaviours.
      3. Children and young people are supported to aspire, achieve and engage in education and learning, training, and employment opportunities.
      4. Through the care and support received Children and Young people feel confident that they have the practical skills they need to allow them to manage life challenges, make informed decisions and choices about their future.
      5. Children and young people feel included and able to participate within their local community.
      6. The Service Provider will be expected to evidence core outcomes being achieved for Children in Care included within any relevant strategies published by Devon County Council. This could include outcomes contained within Sufficiency Strategies and Strategies for Children in Care in Devon.
      7. The Service Provider will also support children young people in placement to facilitate in them achieving the outcomes contained within their Care Plan, Pathway Plan and EHCP as described in section 4.3 below.

**4. Service Description**

* 1. Method of Delivery: -
     1. The Service Provider will deliver placements within registered Children’s Homes and of a high quality.
     2. Service Providers will ensure placements are personalised in ways to best meet the needs of Children in Care in Devon. Therefore, Service Providers will propose and deliver creative, flexible and innovative solutions to meet the needs of children and young people that complies with the Children’s Homes Regulations (England) 2018 and the quality standards described within this legislation.
     3. Service Providers will provide either a placement within a group living home (Lot 1) or a singleton provision (Lot 2). Placements will be provided via ‘whole home’ or though individual placements within a home. With the exception of placements provided in Lot 2 which can only be delivered within ‘whole home’. Placements provided within a group living home, these homes will have a maximum capacity of 3 beds.
  2. Service Standards and Quality Requirements: -
     1. The Service Provider will ensure services delivered to children and young people take account of their culture, ethnic wishes, gender and sexual orientation to ensure their needs are fully met.
     2. The Service Provider will ensure all services are delivered in accordance with the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations (2018) and associated quality standards.
     3. The Service Provider will deliver placements for eligible children and young people from a Children’s Home which has been registered appropriately with Ofsted and are registered as a Children’s Home in accordance with the Care Standards Act (2000).
     4. The Service Provider will notify Devon County Council immediately, prior to publication of reports and actions, where a provision has been inspected by Ofsted and have been judged to be ‘Inadequate’ or compliance notice and/ or any restrictions effecting the registered provision or registered persons have been issued. This will include instances where the Service Provider is seeking to challenge judgements.
     5. The Service Provider will deliver services in ways that comply with the quality requirements set out in the Quality Assurance Framework included in Schedule X.
     6. In the event of any quality concerns or potential for Suspension of Services, as detailed in the Quality Assurance Framework included in Schedule X, the Service Provider will be required to prepare and maintain a Service Action Plan. The Service Provider will be required to provide regular progress updates against the plan and evidence of action undertaken to Devon County Council.
     7. The Service Provider will, as far as is practicable, make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled children can access provision delivered under this contract. This will include being dynamic in their approach to meet their needs whilst remaining within the registration status of the Children’s Home.
     8. The Service Provider will regularly consult with and obtain the voice of Children and Young people, sharing this with Devon County Council and using this to shape, develop and improve services available.

* + 1. Service Providers will regularly consult with and obtain the views of key professionals and stakeholders sharing this with Devon County Council and using this to shape, develop and improve services available.
    2. The Service Provider will ensure the decoration and furnishings of homes are suitable for children and young people and are not stigmatising, for example the use of signs and notices. Consideration of this will be extended to include the use of monitoring systems which could be an invasion of privacy and stigmatising for young people. Where monitoring systems are used this will be in agreement with the young person, parents and/or significant others (where appropriate) and key professionals. The use of monitoring systems will only be used to reduce risk and the use will be set out within a risk assessment which will receive regular review. Where any systems for monitoring are used then these systems will as far as possible not affect children and young people who live in the same home but who do not require monitoring through the use of systems that provide this. The use of internal CCTV is not considered normal practice, even in instances where there is identified risk. Any use of internal CCTV will require written permission from Devon County Council prior to use which will not be given without evidence of agreement from the commissioned inspectorate, currently Ofsted.
    3. The Service Provider will ensure access to the internet will be available in all homes as well as a quiet place for study. Providers will ensure that homes and equipment allow young people to complete homework and revision as set though their education. Access to the internet will be suitably filtered in accordance with the ages of children and young people who have access to it.
    4. The Service Provider will undertake and maintain an impact assessment inclusive of compatibility risk assessment for all young people placed in services provided under this contract. This must be completed prior to any young person accessing placements and services being provided and repeated each time a young person is proposed for placement within the home. A copy of this assessment(s) will be shared with Devon County Council. These assessments will be reviewed on a regular basis. Providers will engage proactively with all placing Social Workers when a child or young person is being considered for placement. Any risks will be communicated and described to social workers and their views sought for risk management.
    5. Devon County Council reserves the right in all circumstances to notify any Regulatory Body or other relevant agency of any issues of concern identified during contract monitoring processes that falls within the jurisdiction of that agency.
    6. The Service Provider will support Children in Care accessing services under this specification to obtain advocacy support where required.
  1. Care Plans / Pathway Plans and EHCP’s
     1. The Service Provider must deliver services to Children in Care according to the details contained within their Care Plan or Pathway Plan and where applicable the young person’s EHCP which outline arrangements for each child’s outcomes including support from education and health. Multi-agency support will be co-ordinated by the Service Provider. This will include the Service Provider working in ways to achieve both the outcomes described in this specification and those contained within the young person’s Plans. The Service Provider must ensure they are working from plan(s) which are up to date.
     2. The Service Provider will deliver services in ways that prepare the young person for transition such that they are able to successfully move on from the home to a family-based placement including a return home where suitable or into services where young people will be more independent. This will comply with arrangements for transition included in the young person’s Care Plan, Pathway Plan and EHCP in place. Provision of evidence will need to be provided to satisfy the requirements relating to transition included within the Quality Assurance Framework (see Schedule X).
     3. The Service Provider will use outcome tools to measure the progress for young people in line with their individual plans. Outcome tools adopted will evidence in a consistent and structured way improving areas of a child or young person’s ability in key areas such as Education, Health and Wellbeing.
     4. The Service Provider will develop and maintain a Placement Plan for each young person in placement. This will be reviewed by the Service Provider at least once every month. The Placement Plan will need to align and appropriately reference the young person’s Care Plan /Pathway Plan & EHCP as appropriate. In addition, the Service Provider will be required to send copies as they are updated to the young person’s social worker and other agencies as appropriate.
  2. Behaviour Support
     1. The Service Provider will adopt a parenting model to promote engagement and trusting relationships between staff and young people. Staff will have a good understanding of the lived experience of the child allowing them to better understand presenting behaviours. Training for the adopted parenting model will be updated as required and new staff appointed will undertake timely training to ensure that the ethos of the home regarding this remains consistent.
     2. The Service Provider will ensure that strategies and resources are deployed to achieve and promote positive behaviour change for young people. This should prevent the need for increased levels of care or need for emergency services. The Service Provider must ensure strategies and resources deployed look to encourage young people to reflect on their behaviour and the consequences of their behaviour. In addition, the Service Provider must ensure positive approaches rather than punitive approaches to supporting behaviour of young people are promoted.
     3. The Service Provider will provide and/ or source training for their staff that will create and promote Trauma Informed Practice within the home. This will allow for a clear understanding of the effects of trauma on behaviour and emotion.
     4. The Service Provider will ensure recognised and approved training for physical intervention and de-escalation is provided to all staff who will be required to carry out this intervention. Staff who have not completed this training will not undertake physical intervention and will not be expected to work where it will be necessary for them to undertake such intervention. This training will be refreshed as required and any staff who are out of date on their training will be considered as being in the same position as staff who have received no training.
     5. The Service Provider must ensure there is absolutely no use of physical intervention techniques on children and young people where they are held face down in a prone position or on their back in supine as a means of managing and promoting appropriate behaviour of young people in placement.
     6. The Service Provider will have due regard for the legislation relating to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and the Mental Capacity Act including any amendment or replacement of this legislation.
  3. Staffing requirement

* + 1. The Service Provider must evidence and keep records of all recruitment which has been undertaken and at all times this will be in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations, (2018).
    2. The Service Provider will ensure there is the appropriate volume of staff who have the appropriate training, qualifications and experience to enable them to work with, support and communicate appropriately and pro-actively with an appropriate mix of children and young people placed. Although it is recognised that there will likely be a percentage of staff who have not yet achieved the required qualification, due regard will be given by the Registered Person to consider any impacts of this to the delivery of a high-quality service and will take the necessary action to address this.
    3. At all times training provided to staff will allow them to understand and respond to the needs of children and young people who are in placement and those that have been proposed for placement.
  1. Access arrangements
     1. The Service will be delivered 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.
     2. The Service Provider will ensure they are contactable 24 hours a day all year round.

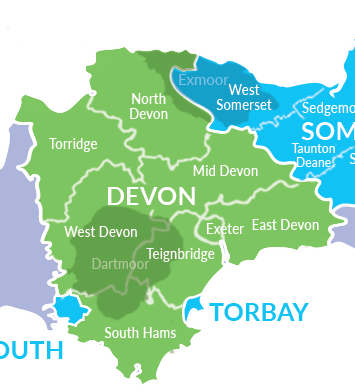
* + 1. The Service Provider will establish a 24-hour emergency contact point with consideration to times outside of normal working hours.

1. **Eligible Children and Young people and Referral Arrangements**
   1. Services are to be provided to support the needs of children and young people aged 0-18 years who are Children in Care with Devon County Council. This could include children and young people who have been placed previously in family-based care/ foster care or those children and young people who have been assessed as requiring a residential placement from the outset.
   2. Referral

* + 1. The Service Provider is expected to work in ways that comply with the processes and requirements detailed within the Call-Off Procedure included in Schedule X of the Contract in order that children young people can access services and placements under this service specification.

* + 1. The Service Provider will have arrangements for receiving referrals from Devon County Council which include out of hours provision. This will include the provision of services to match children and young people to prospective beds and send placement matching information to Devon County Council.
    2. Where referrals are made by Devon County Council and refused by the Service Provider under this contract then information will be provided to Devon County Council to offer suitable reason for this. If concerns are raised against the validity of the decision taken, then an exploration meeting will take place between Devon County Council and the Service Provider to provide further information and resolution.
    3. Devon County Council will ensure all available information regarding the child is made available to the Service Provider to enable a considered decision to be made on whether a placement is suitable. This may include conversations with Social Workers, previous placement providers and visits to the child or young person. It is the responsibility of Devon County Council to agree a placement offered by the Service Provider meets the assessed needs of the child.
    4. The Service Provider must meet requirements concerning impact assessment inclusive of compatibility risk assessment as described at 4.2.12 within this service specification.
    5. Where placements and support for young people are agreed, the Service Provider will receive a copy of an Individual Placement Agreement for all young people who will access services under this contract. This document must be returned to Devon County Council prior to the child or young person accessing the service. For reference please refer to Call off terms and conditions, Schedule X of the Contract.
    6. Where it has been agreed with Devon County Council the volume of support provided to children and young people such as staffing being increased or decreased, the Service Provider must ensure there is a signed variation to the existing Individual Placement Agreement or the issuing of a new signed Individual Placement Agreement is in place. This must be in place before any change in service can be delivered by the Service Provider. Devon County Council will not provide payment for services without this document is in place.
    7. The Service Provider will work with Devon County Council to provide placements in urgent circumstances where necessary. In these circumstances Devon County Council and the Service Provider will work together to ensure all necessary documentation and process is followed and/ or completed retrospectively.
    8. Payment arrangements for services delivered under this service specification will be as per the arrangements included within the schedule of rates Schedule X.
    9. Placements for Children in Care within services under this contract made by Devon County Council will be confirmed via the processes set out within the Call Off arrangements, Schedule X.
    10. In cases where placements under this contract are not being used by Devon County Council, a decision may be taken by Devon County Council to offer these placements to other local authorities, priority will be given to children and young people from Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, Cornwall Council and Somerset County Council as determined by Devon County Council.

1. **Geographical Area**
   1. Geographical Area and strategic and operational configuration for services: -
      1. Services will support children and young people detailed in Section 5 of this service specification.
      2. The Service Provider must provide service provision that is located within the Devon County Council administrative boundary for eligible children and young people in line with the requirements of this specification. Areas marked green on the map below illustrate the geographical area and administrative boundary for Devon being described.



1. **Multi-disciplinary and Integrated Working**
   1. The Service Provider will be required to participate in and contribute to a Pre-Planning or Placement Planning meeting, working alongside key professionals within Devon County Council. This should be held at least 3 days prior to the young person beginning their placement or no longer than 72 hours following placement start where a pre-placement planning meeting is not possible.

* + 1. The Service Provider will work in an integrated way with key professionals from Devon County Council and other partners and professionals across Health and Education, contributing to, reviewing and maintaining Care Plans/ Pathway Plans for children and young people using their services. Therefore, the Service Provider will be required to attend and contribute to statutory review meetings, as scheduled, and required by key professionals as part of Devon County Council’s statutory review process.
    2. The Service Provider will have due regard to the SEND Code of Practice guidance including any revisions that are made. Service Providers will work with Devon County Council and our partners to deliver strategies and policy for SEND.
    3. The Service Provider will work in an integrated way with the child or young person, key professionals including the Virtual Education Team within Devon County Council and the Education provision to support and encourage children and young people to attend and achieve in their Education. This will include sharing concerns about the availability of or attendance in Education, taking action appropriately to work to achieve resolution jointly and working in an integrated way to inform the review and development of statutory plans that concern the young person in placement with the Service Provider such as the Personal Education Plan (PEP).
    4. The Service Provider will work to develop and maintain close working relationships with other relevant services, partners and professionals as appropriate to children and young people accessing services under this service specification. This must include but is not limited to promotion and maintenance of close working protocols with: -
* Any provider of Community, Health and Wellbeing Services for Children & Young People in Devon including CAMHS;
* Devon County Council Children’s Services this includes the 0-25 SEN team, MASH, LADO, Social Work teams, Personal Advisors, Quality Assurance, Reviewing and Safeguarding Service (QARSS);
* Schools and colleges;
* Substance Misuse Services;
* Youth Offending Team;
* Careers South West;
* Police.
  + 1. The Service Provider will be expected to work in an integrated way with Devon County Council in circumstances where it is appropriate to achieve step down for children and young people. With the aim of returning the young person home or to a family-based placement following a period of residential care.
  1. Placement Stability
     1. When there are concerns about the stability of a placement including where the level of need and risk has changed, three types of meeting can be used
* Team around the child meeting
* Stability meeting
* Risk Management meeting (including Strategy meetings for S47 investigations/ LADO processes)
  + 1. The Service Provider or Devon County Council can request either meeting at any stage if there are concerns about the sustainability of the placement. Risk management and stability meetings should be chaired by a social work team manager or equivalent.
    2. Meetings should as a minimum include the Registered Manager, the Social Worker and the child or young person (if appropriate) along with any other relevant professionals. It should consider the difficulties in the placement and propose strategies to resolve these in line with the Care / Pathway Plan. Risks in sustaining the placement will be shared by partners in a multi-disciplinary environment and not left for one party to manage alone.
    3. If the outcome of the stability or risk management meeting is that additional resource is required for the Service Provider to support the placement, they will be required to complete the ‘Additional resource’ form contained in Schedule X as soon as possible. No additional resources should be put in place without the express agreement of Devon County Council.
    4. Requests for additional resource or support will be considered by Devon County Council, Placement Review Panel in a timely fashion. In a crisis where, additional resource is needed immediately, the Provider will contact the placing social worker via email with the relevant information, copying the children’s Placement Team into the email. This request will be escalated to budget holders by the Social Worker, with the support of the Commissioner, Placement Team or other relevant contact.
    5. If the placement cannot be stabilised the Service Provider will support the continuation of the placement until alternative placement can be sourced and the transition managed in the best interests of the young person. Service Providers and Devon County Council will work together closely in these circumstances to ensure that the best arrangements are made in consideration to risk or harm.
    6. The Registered Person will have decision-making control for placements made and ended. For services provided under this contract, evidence of decision making for placements will be held and provided to Devon County Council. No placement will be ended without a meeting to discuss this unless the reasons for this are significant and are assessed as otherwise causing potential harm to any Children or Young People placed. Meetings will be called for by either the provider or Devon County Council and will be attended by key professionals. Timescales for these meetings to be conducted will be prompt but will consider the ability of professionals to attend within the timescale set.
    7. In the event of a sudden and unforeseen placement breakdown, the Service Provider will work with Devon County Council professionals to arrange respite or an alternative placement that could include higher levels of support as agreed with Devon County Council. Please refer to notice periods set out within the Terms and Conditions in Schedule x
  1. Safeguarding
     1. The Service Provider must have clear policies and procedures in place relating to safeguarding in line with national guidance including Working Together and locally agreed procedures through the Devon Children and Families Partnership.
     2. The Service Provider will work and deliver services in ways that comply with Devon Children’s and Families Partnership Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. In addition, the Service Provider will take appropriate action to address concerns working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.
     3. In the event of a Child or Young Person going missing from placement, Devon County Council must be notified in accordance with Devon County Council’s Children Missing from Care or Home policy. Providers will implement a pre-agreed process for ensuring that young people are returned to a place of safety quickly and in accordance with Statutory Guidance.
     4. Following any episodes of a missing for children and young people placed through this contract will be followed up by a return home interview within 72 hours of the child or young person returning in accordance with the Children Missing from Care or Home statutory guidance.

1. **Contract Monitoring** 
   1. The Service Provider will be required to attend a monitoring meeting with Devon County Council. The frequency of these meetings will be every 3 months or sooner if requested by Devon County Council.
   2. The Service Provider is required to supply supporting evidence and information to demonstrate how the service outcomes are being achieved on a quarterly basis. The Service Provider will submit a monitoring report each quarter. This should be returned to the following mailbox: - [childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk). The report and data provided will comply with requirements described in the Quality Assurance Framework as set out in Schedule X. The Service Provider will attend monitoring meetings on identified dates and will be required to submit the monitoring report at least two weeks before the meeting.
   3. The Service Provider must also provide, monthly, a copy of any Regulation 44 reports and Incident Reports. Monthly submissions will be for reports made in the previous month. All reports will be sent to the following mailbox: - [childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)
   4. Notifiable incidents (Regulation 40 reports) will be sent to the following mailbox : - [childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:childrenscommissioningsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk) within 24 hours of completion, this will be followed by the sending of any updated reports to the same mailbox where completed.
   5. Any reports sent to the mailbox set out above will not remove the need for Incident reports and notifiable incidents to be shared within the Social Worker promptly following report completion. These reports will be shared with the social worker via email within 24 hours of completion.
   6. All communications via email between the Service Provider and Devon County Council will be confidential and will only be sent using secure ‘Egress’ email or if revised secure email as notified by Devon County Council.
   7. On an annual basis consideration will be given to performance of the service across the whole 12-month period in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework (see Schedule X) including agreeing any areas for development of the service in the next period and considering whether any contract variation may be necessary.
   8. Service Development
      1. The Service Provider will keep under review the impact of their policies and Quality of Care review as referred to under regulation 45 of The Childrens Homes Regulations (England) 2018.
      2. The Service Provider is expected to work in partnership with Devon County Council to ensure continued service improvement in line with identified priorities and projects.
      3. The Service Provider will maintain a development plan for the service to ensure continued service improvement so services continue to support and meet the needs of identified children and young people.
2. **Management & Operation**
   1. Key Performance Indicators to be reported quarterly against identified targets/ volumes are summarised in the Quality Assurance Framework included in Schedule X.