

Buckinghamshire County Council

Children's Services

Mid-Year Review of Costs & Savings



Key Issues/Current Forecast

- The position for Children's Services Portfolio at the end of June 2018 is a forecast overspend of **£1.946m**
- This is after:
 - £0.8m contingencies released for demography and complexity of cases
 - £2.55m released contingency for general social care pressures
 - £0.350m Public Health grant funding to support the CAMHS contract
- MTP savings targets in 2018-19: **£3.256m**
- **Key pressures 2018-19**
 - Delays in implementing savings for Early Help and Short Breaks
 - Costs of Placements for Looked After Children
 - Legal costs – Children's Social Care

This paper highlights a RAG rating against the savings targets and provides detail on those ranked as **RED**



Buckinghamshire County Council

- Review of Children's Services Savings Targets 2018-19

	2018-19 £000	RAG
Legal Shared Services	(125)	R
Strategic Review of Early Help Services	(1,520)	G
Strategic Review of services supporting Looked After Children	(1,220)	R
Strategic review of services that support children with disabilities and/or special educational needs	(391)	A
Total	(3,256)	



Legal Costs – Action Plan

Legal budgets projected to overspend by £0.7m at the end of Q1. The service anticipates that service improvement may result in a higher spend than last year with increased complexity of current court cases as well as an increasing demand for existing care proceedings.

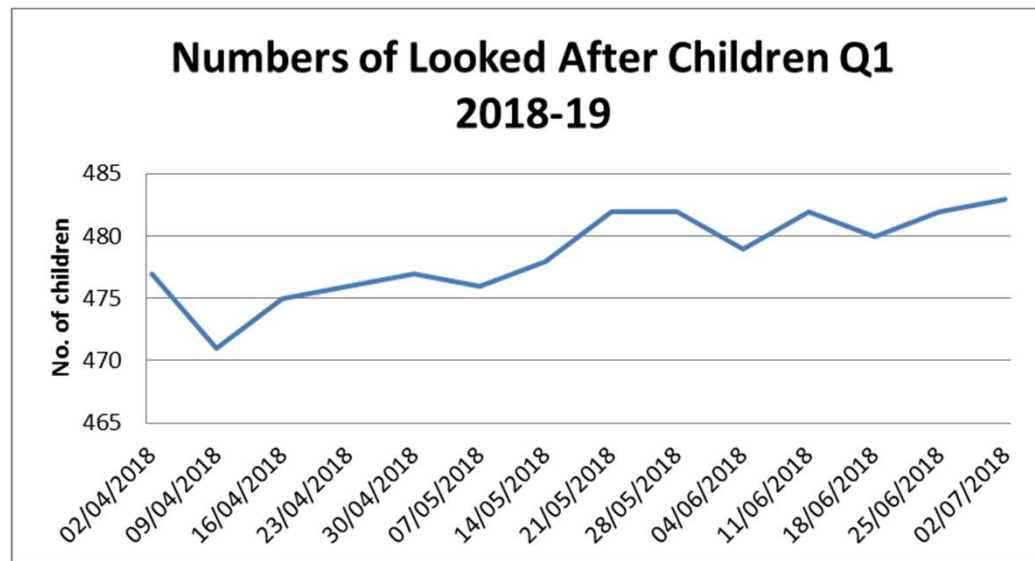
Actions to reduce spend against legal budgets include:

- Service Director approval required for all requests to use external Barristers
- Creation of a dedicated Court Team has enabled clear grip and control to be established in addition to quality assurance of casework and requests for Legal advice



Placement Costs – Looked After Children

- Placement budgets for looked after children (LAC) projected to be £1.2m overspent at the end of Q1 following the release of contingencies.
- Expected increase in LAC numbers due to improvement work and complexity of cases
- Forecast to reflect impact of strategies to reduce the numbers of children placed in external residential care and increase numbers supported by in house carers



Placement Costs – Looked After Children

- *Actions to mitigate include*
 - **Review of high cost external residential placements** to identify young people who may be able to step down to alternative placements to meet need and reduced costs
 - **Sufficiency Strategy:** The BCC three year Sufficiency Strategy is being revised to set out our approach to commissioning and provision of placements so that we have a clear plan of actions to be taken across placements to manage demand.



Placement Costs – Looked After Children

- **Mitigating actions (*cont....*)**
- **Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy:** Launched April 2018, this will focus on reducing reliance on independent fostering agency (IFA) provision whilst developing a sustainable 'in-house' service to deliver an improved and increased support and development offer to current foster carers.
- **Children's residential care homes:**
 - An initiative to develop four new in-house residential care homes which will provide 20 new in-house residential care beds.
 - The overall aim of this activity is to reduce the reliance on expensive independent residential care home provision and develop an in-house residential resource.

The financial model for placement costs is being re-based to reflect current activity and the impact of mitigating strategies to present a realistic view of costs for 2019-20 and beyond

