



Norfolk County Council

Assisted Boarding Programme

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National context

- Rising year-on-year numbers of children going in to care
- 71,000 in children in Local Authority in care today
- Reduction in Early Intervention spending
- Massive increases in demand
- Estimated £3.41bn spend on Looked after Children in 2016-17 - a rise of £151.7m, or 4.7%



Local context

- Direction to Improve
- 1,054 Children in Care (28 October 2016)
- Stabilised Looked after Children numbers over the last year or so
- Investing in Early Help services



Norfolk Assisted Boarding Programme

- Annual Budget of £400k (£100K DSG and £300k Children Services)
- 22 Children currently placed in Boarding school – 4 new starters this September. Further 4 Children under consideration.
- Average of £18k per child per annum. Average LAC child £52K
- 110 Children have been considered for boarding school
- Last financial year, 2 out of 18 children placed in boarding either failed or were accommodated.
- This represents a 89% success rate
- Minimum 'avoiding cost' £628K per annum based on foster care



One Story

- X is a boy who has been at a boarding school since September 2011, at age 11.
- His family have been known to the department for several years. Mother has longstanding mental health problems and there is a history of domestic violence in her relationship with X's father.
- In 2011, there was a serious incident in which mother decided to kill herself and her children by leaving the gas on. This proved to be non life-threatening as the cooker was electric. However this precipitated a period of the children being accommodated.
- They subsequently returned to live at home. A Letter before Action was issued to X's mother and using this process an agreement was reached for X to attend Boarding school as a weekly boarder (staying with his mother on weekends and in school holidays).
- X's mother has been warned that if she withdraws her permission, Care Proceedings will be initiated. X lives with his mother and he has contact with his father.
- X has been awarded a Scholarship (which will pay 10% of his school fees) until he is 18.
- X has made excellent progress. He is in the Cricket and Rugby teams and has the opportunity to travel the country to play. X plans to study sport and business at University.



Outcomes

- Structure, routine and aspirational environment
- Enhanced self-esteem
- Improved educational attainment
- Raised aspirations
- Still very much part of the family



Some tips on boarding placements

1. It's something in your 'early help' tool box
2. Take it one case at a time – matching is important
3. Case Management – Boarding vs SW case closure
4. Remember the small items of extra spend: Uniform, Music Lessons, School trips, transport. Agree them up front
5. This is a *long-term* commitment