

Children's Residential Service Provision Commissioning Strategy

February 2023

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Executive Summary

Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory duties and strategic aims underpin our requirement to ensure that our Sufficiency responsibilities are comprehensively met now, and in the future. Our changing profile of children in care is clearly indicating the need for residential provision locally for our Children and Young People in Care, with Disabilities and Complex Needs. This strategy will focus on the needs of children with complex behavioural presentations, having suffered significant trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences and/or with attachment difficulties.

Over recent years, Cambridgeshire's need for residential provision, and education services to compliment, has evolved. This strategy explores Cambridgeshire's needs regarding residential provision, the national context surrounding this, and provides a series of options, recommendations and actions required to support the authority to improve its ability to meet the needs of our looked after children and young people and their families through the development of good quality, local residential services provision.



Introduction

The main drivers for this strategy are:

- To improve outcomes for children and young people and their families.
- To increase sufficiency within County for this identified group of children and young people.
- Ensure Cambridgeshire's children in care remain in their local area accessing local services.
- To reduce the use of unregistered services for young people.
- To have provision that is for the primary use of Cambridgeshire children in care.
- To enhance partnership working internally and across our statutory service partners, the voluntary and community sector, and independent agencies.

1.1 Overview

There are a number of factors causing pressures on the Residential Children's Homes sector at present, resulting in the ability of Local Authorities to find good quality homes for Children and Young People in Care. Many of the recent reports, the Competitions and Markets Authority [CMA] 2022 study and Independent Children's Homes Association [ICHA] report 2022, are very clear that currently providers generally prefer the freedom of spot purchase agreements as it allows them to match young people and make placements without the constraints and restrictions that can often be attached to Local Authority contracts and Frameworks.

This Strategy provides a summary of these challenges (both nationally and locally); how Cambridgeshire intends to overcome them, and how we will achieve positive outcomes, in good quality, local homes for our Children and Young People. This strategy recommends the development of a whole Residential Children's Home service, meeting a variety of needs, to enable Children in Care to remain living in their local areas, in accordance with our Sufficiency Duty.¹

Wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, Children and Young People should be able to remain living in their local communities, in good quality homes. The development of these new Cambridgeshire residential children's homes, will provide placements for children either new into

¹ [Cambridgeshire-County-Council-Sufficiency-Statement-Children-in-Care-and-Care-leavers-2021-24.pdf](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/Cambridgeshire-County-Council-Sufficiency-Statement-Children-in-Care-and-Care-leavers-2021-24.pdf)
(cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk)

care, or as part of transitions from 'current' placements; as such this strategy outlines a phased approach to opening our Residential Children's homes.

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2 National Context

2.1 Summary of Legislation

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under [The Children Act 1989](#) to ensure there are sufficient local placements to support Children in Care remaining as close to their home and community as possible, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

[Cambridgeshire County Council's Sufficiency Statement for Children in Care and Care Leavers](#) considers the anticipated levels of need and demand that will be required to enable the Council to ensure that there is sufficient provision in place to meet need locally, with minimum disruption to the lives, education, care, and health care of local children. Cambridgeshire's Sufficiency Statement details that it is both Cambridgeshire's duty and strategic commissioning intention to increase the sufficiency of good quality, local provision; this mandate is echoed within this Strategy.

The Good Law Project (GLP) previously argued in 2022 that Cambridgeshire County Council failed to meet its Sufficiency duty, owing to the number of Children in Care living at a distance from Cambridgeshire. The courts did not uphold this view, as there was sufficient evidence of the development of services within Cambridgeshire, and consideration given to the current context of the wider placements market. However, the creation of capacity within our area for the sole use of Cambridgeshire Children in Care, has been and remains a strategic priority.

All local authorities, when considering a residential children's home placement in England, are required to place the young person in a children's home that has been registered with Ofsted.

These homes are regulated against [The Children's Homes Regulations, 2015](#) in conjunction with Quality Standards prescribed by [The Care Standards Act 2000](#). These regulations and standards replace the former national minimum standards and set out the aspirational and positive outcomes that Ofsted expect the homes to achieve. They also set out the underpinning requirements that homes must meet to achieve those overarching outcomes.

2.2 Changes to Unregulated Placements

Unlawful placements

Since September 2021, it has been unlawful for Local Authorities to place any child in care aged under 16 in unregistered accommodation, i.e., accommodation that is not bound by The Children's Homes Regulations 2015 or the Fostering Regulations 2011. This further increases the necessity for residential placements, particularly for our more complex and vulnerable young people.

Historically unregistered placements had been utilised by Local Authorities, for young people under 16 years of age, only where registered provision was unable to offer to meet the needs of the young person, and as such no regulated placement options were available. Nationally, it was considered that prior to the change in legislation in September 2021 that as many as 100 children under 16 years were living in unregistered placements at any one time. Whilst it is widely acknowledged that this was not any authorities' preferred placement option, the change in legislation required authorities to 'find' registered provision for this group of children and young people, resulting in any spare placement capacity being saturated within a matter of months.

2.3 Children's Social Care 'Market'

In January 2021 the Government launched an independent review of children's social care (led by Josh MacAlister). In March 2021, MacAlister requested that the Competition and Markets Authority [CMA] undertake a '[children's social care market study](#)', which was published in March 2022. The CMA report describes the children's social care market as 'dysfunctional' and alleges that Local Authorities and stakeholders have 'sleepwalked' into a system where children are unable to obtain suitable placements and Local Authorities are unable to either negotiate or plan properly for the future.

“ The largest independent provider ... accounts for 8% of places excluding local authority provision and 7% of beds including local authority provision. The 10 largest companies provide 32% of beds excluding local authority provision and 27% of beds including local authority provision. ”

MacAlister's report detailed similar findings to the Competition & Markets Authority namely, that Local Authorities' inability to influence the number and cost of placements has negatively impacted on their ability to

find suitable placements for vulnerable and complex young people. The rising complexities and reducing number of available placements has led to higher prices. Ultimately, Local Authorities are competing for scarce options and struggling to provide quality placements for young people. The CMA

similarly raised concerns that the largest 15 independent providers ‘earned significant and persistent economic profits.’ This suggests that profits are not being reinvested into services and the impact of supply and demand does not affect this ‘market’ in the way usually seen.

MacAlistair describes the children’s residential care home sector as being ‘fundamentally broken’ and dominated by private providers who make excessive profits. Specifically in relation to this paper MacAlister recommends:

- A review of the barriers to provision of children's homes, as well as the recruitment and retention of care staff and foster carers.

2.4 National Challenges The availability of Residential Children’s Homes provision is a complex issue. Those complexities extend beyond Cambridgeshire’s borders and impact on quality, capacity and ultimately outcomes for children and young people nationally, as well as locally.



Deficit in capacity for specific needs of Children, particularly at the higher continuum of care.



Children are increasingly **being placed ‘out of area’** which disconnects vulnerable children from their family and friend networks.



Providers may be less inclined to take challenging Young People due to the perception that this may have a negative impact on their **Ofsted rating**.



Recruitment and retention of both Social Work and Residential Home staff is difficult, with turnover of staff creating disruption and impacting on the children being cared for.



Skills shortages make it more difficult for new providers to enter the market. Unqualified and inexperienced staff risk the service not performing to the required standard.



Matching alongside (particularly in 3-bed plus homes) remains an issue. This can prevent placements and incur bed blocking charges from providers where a child’s vulnerabilities and needs are such that it prevents subsequent placements being made



Costs are not linked to quality and performance. As demand is outstripping supply, local authorities risk paying for poor outcomes and providers currently do not feel compelled to innovate and change, as their provision will be used anyway due to a lack of alternatives



With **demand outstripping supply**, Local Authorities have little leverage in negotiations.



It is evident from the above challenges, that solutions for Local Authorities will be as complex as the challenges posed. For Cambridgeshire, the national challenges have created a 'perfect storm', exasperating an already pressured local market, and further reducing our ability to source good quality local provision for our Children in Care. This strategy will continue to explore what the local context is for Cambridgeshire, and ultimately what this means currently for our Children and Young People in Care. It is evident, however, from just these national complexities, that solutions must derive from provision being available in Cambridgeshire, for Cambridgeshire children.

This conclusion isn't innovative; however, it is clear that other Local Authorities are similarly opting to create in house residential provision and improve access to their local markets. Our proposed response to the national challenges will provide local capacity for Cambridgeshire children. This approach alongside a strategy that continues to include commissioning from the private market will address the needs for these children and young people, whilst giving greater control over access to residential placements in Cambridgeshire.

3 Local context

3.1 Introduction to Cambridgeshire

As of August 2022, there were 24 Children's Homes within our area. There are an additional three Cambridgeshire Homes which are specifically residential short break homes for Children with Disabilities; these are not included within the scope of this strategy.

Cambridgeshire currently does not operate any 'mainstream' Residential Children's Homes for Children in Care. All of Cambridgeshire's provision is sourced through the external market.

The 24 Children's Homes providing up to 127 beds are operated by 15 separate organisations. Of these 24 homes, 75% (18) are located within the Fenland district, with 2 homes in East Cambs, 2 in South Cambs, and 2 in Huntingdonshire.

3.2 Commissioning arrangements

Cambridgeshire County Council operate a [Dynamic Purchasing System \(DPS\)](#)¹ for the provision of children's external placements including Residential Children's Home placements.

Cambridgeshire's DPS extends to include the provision of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements, Independent Schools and Education Provisions (ISEPS) and the provision of Out of School Tuition (OoST). It has the ability for other local authorities to purchase placements using this contractual arrangement, currently Peterborough is the only local authority to utilise this opportunity. There is no limit to the number of providers accepted onto the DPS, providing they meet minimum requirements.

Cambridgeshire's DPS opened on 01 April 2019, for an initial term of five years (ending 31 March 2024) with the option to extend for a period of up to five years.

¹ The Public Contract Regulations 2015 define a DPS as 'a completely electronic tendering system for the selection of potential providers, who comply with minimum service requirements.'

As of August 2022, there are 40 providers delivering residential Children's Home Services, across 300 homes, providing up to 1285 placements, accessible to Cambridgeshire under the DPS.

There are several reasons why providers, particularly local providers are not accessible via Cambridgeshire's Children's External Placements DPS. These include failing to meet the Council's quality benchmark (providers are required to demonstrate that over 50% of their services rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted), and strategic decisions made by providers not to join DPS or Framework arrangements.

Increasing capacity under the DPS with a focus on good quality, local provision continues to be a strategic priority. Children's Commissioning continue to promote the DPS with all 'spot purchased' providers, through individual discussions, via provider engagement events, meetings with Commissioners and regional networking.

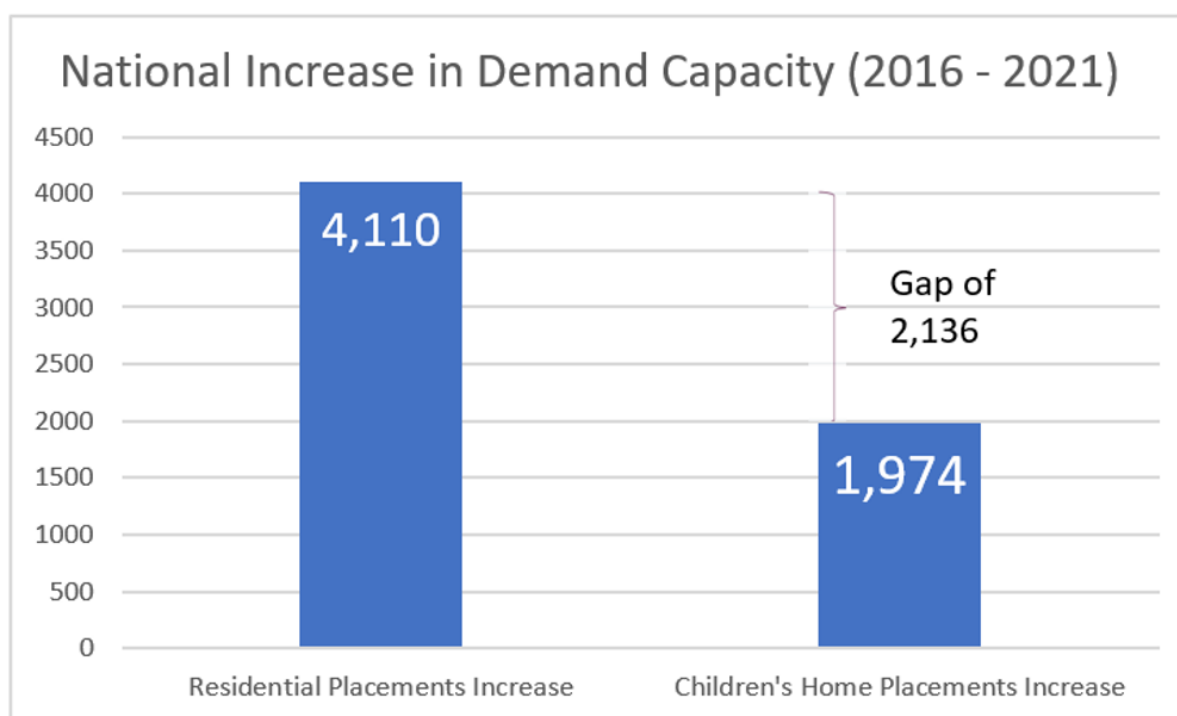
3.3 The Capacity Illusion

The illusion of capacity and supply within the market is one facing all local authorities at present. Based on data detailing the number of homes, and the registered capacity within, there appears to be sufficient supply of homes and beds, however, in practice the availability of capacity locally and nationally is much more limited.

This challenge is noted within the Competition & Markets Authority review of Children's Social Care, and is apparent nationally, not just within Cambridgeshire. As a result of its national implications, there is increased demand from all Local Authorities for residential children's home placements, with some providers reporting over 100 referrals a week to secure a limited number of vacant placements.

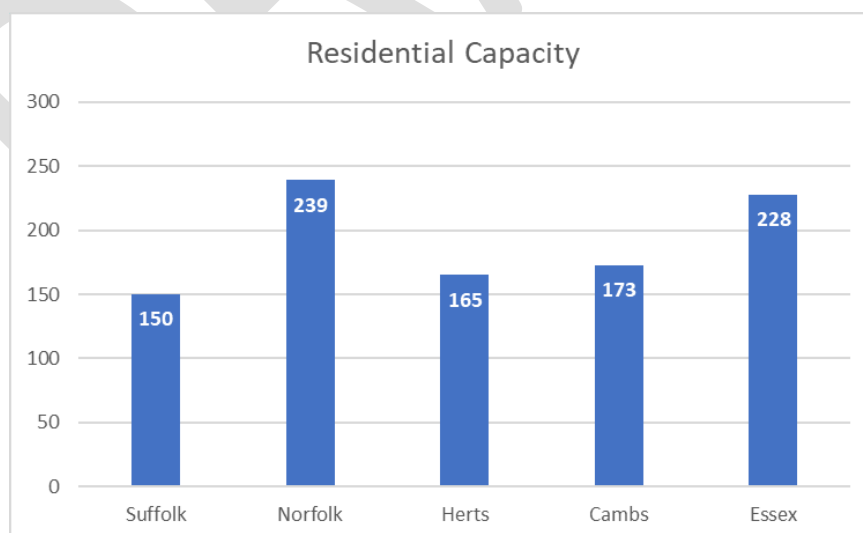
The CMA reports that whilst there is growth, nationally, in the availability of residential children's homes, this is flawed for a number of factors –

- The number of homes is not growing at the rate of demand.
- The majority of new homes are in the Northwest of the Country (30%)
- Registered capacity does not always reflect the operational capacity of homes.



¹

Below represents the number of residential children's home beds operating within each of the Authorities in the Eastern Region. These totals include LA children's homes and private children's homes.



Of the local provision detailed above, these beds are not specifically for the sole use of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care. Many local residential children's homes have contractual

¹ Taken from National Ofsted Provider Data

arrangements with other Local Authorities across the country, and as such compete with Cambridgeshire for access to those same homes.

Many children's homes are unable to provide the number of placements suggested by their registered capacity. This is for several reasons including safeguarding issues, matching risks for children with similar issues and/or behaviours and, restrictions placed on providers by Ofsted.

This can reduce the availability of residential children's homes able to support children to remain living in their local area and reduce the number of choices Cambridgeshire has when placing a child.

The national picture of the children's residential homes market is one of local authorities competing for reduced available options often resulting in children being placed where there is availability, rather than in the ideal placement.

The Interim Competition & Markets Authority report published in October 2021 encapsulated the issue when stating, there are *"clear concerns that the placements market is not providing sufficient appropriate places to ensure that children consistently receive placements that fully meet their needs, when and where they require them. This is resulting in some children being placed in accommodation that, for example, is too far from their home base, does not provide the therapy or facilities they need, or separates them from their siblings. Given the impact that poor placement matches have on the well-being of children, this is a significant concern."*

3.4 Placements

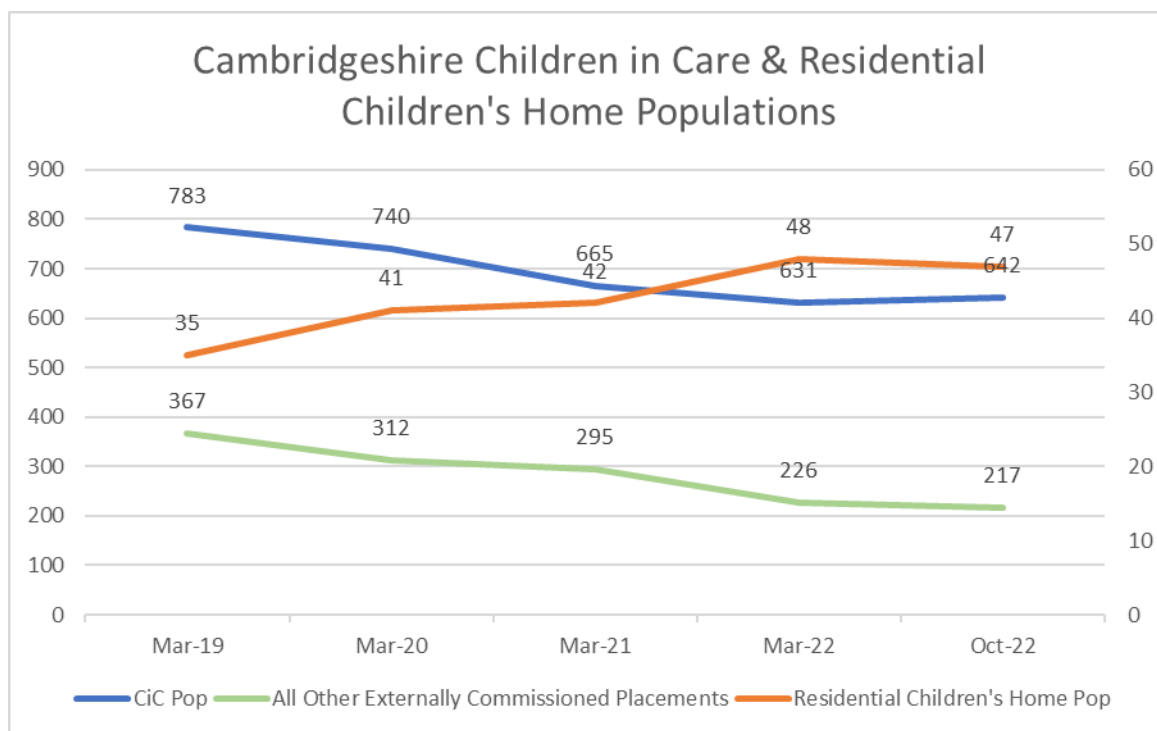
Location all Cambridgeshire County Council Residential Placements made April 2019 – March 2022



Between 1 April 2019, and 31 March 2022, 93 Residential Children's Home placements were made with only 21 (22.5%) made within Cambridgeshire, concentrated in and around the Fenland district. This highlights the lack of sufficiency within Cambridgeshire, and limited capacity outside of the Fenland district.






Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population has reduced in recent years, with a slight increase between March and August 2022. Conversely, despite this reduction, the number of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care living in Residential Children's Homes

has increased. There is nothing to suggest that Cambridgeshire's demand for residential homes will decrease in future years; particularly when considering the complexity of need for children at present (detailed at Section 3.5) there is a likelihood that demand will continue to increase.



3.5 Needs Profiles

Many of Cambridgeshire's children and young people in Residential Children's Homes present with complex and challenging behaviours. The majority (96%) of Young People requiring Residential

 Family and Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing from Care Episodes • Adoption breakdown • Challenging and aggressive behaviour • Unresolved childhood trauma/ trust – attachment difficulties • Verbal aggression • No sense of danger • Accessing inappropriate online material • Risk to animals • Multiple placement breakdowns 	 Health, including Mental Health  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance & alcohol misuse • Vulnerable mental health, including self-harm, suicidal ideation and Tier 4 step downs • Physical health difficulties
 Neurodiverse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning difficulties, including those who do not currently have a diagnosis but have undiagnosed tendencies. • Autism, including those who do not currently have a diagnosis but have undiagnosed tendencies. • Social, emotional & Mental Health needs (SEMH) 	 Crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Criminal Exploitation • Gang Involvement, carrying and using weapons • Child Sexual Exploitation • Violence to others • Fire Setting • Damage to property • Motor theft/Shoplifting • Sexually harmful behaviour

Services in the period April 2019 – March 2022 presented with at least three issues from the chart above with all Young People presenting with at least two of these issues.

The above chart is not a definitive summary of the presenting behaviours, risks and needs of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care. Furthermore, our children living in residential homes are not a homogenous group of children with a singular need. More recently, within Children's Commissioning we are experiencing challenges in identifying homes that can safely support children with conflicting, or varied needs.

Whilst children's needs are known to social care, to their carer networks and within Commissioning, these individualised needs are not easily compared across our wider residential children's homes population. Common themes occurring for children in care requiring residential children's homes placements, where often local provision is unable to safely meet their needs includes the following factors –

- Mental Health needs -transitions from Tier 4 Children's Adolescent Mental Health provisions.
- Risk of harm to self and others where there is no acute mental health need.
- Child Criminal Exploitation and / or gang involvement
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Younger children experiencing attachment difficulties and inability to maintain family-based placements.

These needs formulate Cambridgeshire's need for local therapeutically informed emergency/crisis placements in small homes where intensive intervention and rehabilitation work can be undertaken with comprehensive assessments and care planning in place, clearly articulating the needs of the child or young person and outcomes to be achieve.

3.6 Cambridgeshire Themes and Trends

The challenges faced nationally are reflected locally in ensuring the authority is meeting its Sufficiency Duty.

3.6.1 Increasing Numbers of Young People living in Children's Residential Homes

Between April 2019 – October 2022 there was a 34% increase in the number of children living in residential homes. During the same period other external purchased placements have decreased by 40%, and our Children in Care population has also reduced by 18%.

3.6.2 Young people's vulnerabilities, complexities, and challenges

There is limited quantitative data available to contextualise this, but anecdotally, Cambridgeshire has seen an increase in recent years in the complexities of need for children in our care. This is considered to have increased further following Covid-19 and the resulting Lockdown, reduced facetime for professionals with children, and the pressures on mental health services.

Referrals to universal mental health services for children across Cambridgeshire are reportedly higher than pre-2020 data. Further to this, Mental Health services for children across all tiers of support are advising significant increases in demand, as well as challenges in identifying resources to meet the needs of those children requiring services, as well as 'move on' provision thereafter.

The local mental health strategy further details the increased pressures on universal services and can be found [here](#).

Whilst we are currently unable to conclusively draw a link between the challenges services are experiencing and the impact on Children in Care needs specifically, there is an acceptance that these cohorts of young people correlate.

The legacy impact of Covid throughout the system is that children and young people are not having preventative and diversionary services which are capable of managing and meeting the ongoing demand, coupled with ever increasing ripple effect throughout systems, including health, education and social care, now impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, all of which will contribute to our children in care numbers likely to increase as too, will the presenting complexity of need.

3.6.3 Limited availability of emergency/same day residential placements.

Cambridgeshire seeks to identify placements for children and young people to facilitate planned transitions wherever possible. There are, however, some instances where a child requires a placement in an emergency timeframe and the availability of emergency (or same day) placements for children has become reduced, particularly with regard to residential children's homes.

A number of factors have been identified as contributing towards this challenge including:

- Reduced availability of provision more widely. There is a proportional relationship between the number of placements in Residential Children's Homes and the number of 'emergency' placements within these homes, a reduction overall.
- Matching - There are challenges in matching a Young Person requiring an 'emergency' placement with others already residing within the Home. An emergency placement could easily disrupt the stability of placements for those settled within the home.

3.6.4 Lack of solo / dual provision locally.

There is a lack of sufficiency of solo residential placements within Cambridgeshire which results in Children who require solo placements moving out of area. Over previous months, there has been a consistent demand for solo placements with up to five children at any given time being assessed as appropriate for a solo placement in September 2022.

Often children's needs are assessed as complex. There are many different descriptors used which illustrate complexity of this sector. CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation), MH (Mental Health), DoLs (Deprivation of Liberty safeguards), violence, damage to property, substance misuse, autism, EBD (Emotional or Behavioural Difficulties), LD (Learning Disabilities), fire setting, eating disorders and trauma are just some of the needs and behaviours that young people are experiencing.

One or a combination of the above needs means that young people are unable to live, initially, alongside another young person. There are various interventions that are established during a young person's solo placement, and we consider it inappropriate for a child or young person to live in a solo

placement for any longer than 6 months. After this time, it would always be part of the young person's care plan to live alongside another young person or in a family environment.

3.6.5. Lack of residential provision for children with a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Orders

When a young person has a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards order (DOLs) this can present additional challenges in sourcing a placement. There are two elements to this, the first is that providers do not have the ability or skills to implement the requirement of the DOL's order and are therefore unable to offer a placement.

Secondly, if a provider can offer, and support with the requirements of the DOL's order they have to consider the impact of the order on other young people within the placement [levels of supervision, restraints, locks etc]. Invariably registered providers will not accept children in care subject to a DOLs. Therefore, to safely manage the child's care and support needs a solo placement would in the first instance be the placement option.

3.6.6 Foster Carer Recruitment

It is well known that the recruitment and retention of foster carers is an issue both nationally and within Cambridgeshire too. There is a shortfall in the required numbers of carers, especially experienced/skilled carers who can care for vulnerable and complex young people helping them to achieve their potential. The challenges currently experienced with shortfalls in placement availability and sufficiency in area, is expected to continue; locally we have an aging foster carer population, and recruitment and retention of carers continues to be an ongoing pressure and core priority.

The Fostering Network's report, following the publication of the 2021 Ofsted datasets, details a net increase of just 45 local authority carers, and 960 IFA carers nationally, and a shortfall of over 7300 foster homes in England (2021); a shortfall which is expected to increase given the profile of carers, the anticipated increases in the number of children in care.

It is of note that this limited increase nationally is not reflected locally. Furthermore, it is critical that foster carers, are able to meet the needs of children and young people placed in their homes; many people come to fostering with transferable skills and experience, and foster carers benefit from continued support and development on their journey in offering care to children with more complex

needs. There are ongoing recruitment drives to attract and maintain our fostering offer to children displaying these complex needs, however there is a shortfall, so by default a number of children end up in higher cost resources – residential provision.

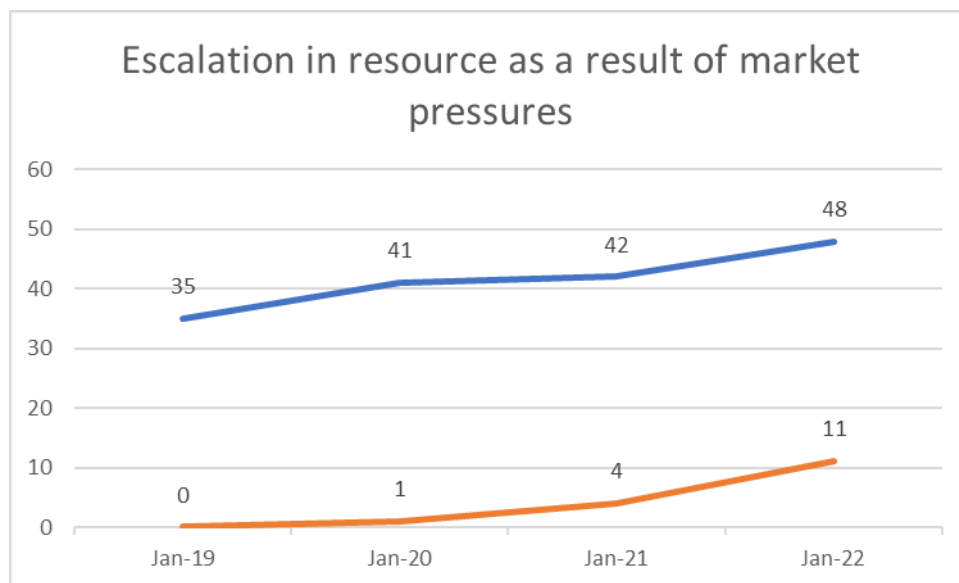
The creation of residential homes within Cambridgeshire for Cambridgeshire children and young people will also provide positive opportunities to develop and enhance the skillsets and experiences of both foster carers and residential staff. For example, residential workers may be interested in becoming Cambridgeshire foster carers, particularly where a young person is stepping down from residential to fostering. Similarly, there may be the option for Cambridgeshire foster carers to become part of the residential staff team/bank staff team.

Additionally, any training that is being delivered to residential staff (for example by a clinician on certain behaviour strategies and skills) could also be offered to foster carers to develop their learning and upskill the fostering workforce.

This model will contribute towards developing appropriate transitions for children to fostering from residential homes in accordance with care plans, and in support of appropriate early transition planning.

3.6.6 Limited placement options other than Residential

There are an increasing number of situations where a child's initial care plan was for a fostering placement, but lack of capacity in the internal and external market results in an escalation in resource type [residential children's home placement] in the absence of any other valid offers. Historically, this is a challenge that Cambridgeshire has overcome, however more recently the lack of sufficiency locally and nationally has impacted on our ability to source the right placement at the right time.



The above graph highlights instances where there has been no family-based placement available therefore the young person has been placed in a residential setting. The blue line represents the number of children living in a residential children's home. The orange line represents the children that were identified for a foster care placement but were placed in residential home as at the end of each month referenced [cumulative, not placed in that month].

Section 4 of this draft strategy details costs associated with this escalation in resource type.

3.6.7 Staff recruitment

Providers report significant challenges post Covid and post-Brexit, with the recruitment and retention of residential staff from support worker roles through to a national shortage of Registered Managers. The national challenges regarding the availability of suitably qualified and experienced residential workers to undertake a Registered Manager role within homes, has contributed towards a review (and ultimately revision) by the Regulator; a single Registered Manager can now retain responsibility for up to six beds for children and young people, across up to four locations, under a single registration. This is a relatively new option from the regulator, but is not implemented widely as yet, mostly due to the condition that at the point of registration all locations must be listed so, a provider cannot 'add' to the Registered Manager's registration as and when they invest in new homes.

The higher proportion of residential homes within the Fenland area of Cambridgeshire (see section 3.1) presents further pressures on recruitment, with some providers opting to close homes as a result of staffing challenges.

It is acknowledged that pathways into the sector are limited, and care or support roles are rarely viewed as a career choice. This draft strategy would aim to readdress these issues offering clear, defined pathways of employment and career progression within the services and Local authority.

3.6.8 Competition with other Local Authorities for Local Provision

As discussed in section 3.3, there is no provision in Cambridgeshire for our sole use; we are therefore competing with other Local Authorities, both regionally and nationally for in area residential provision with providers reportedly receiving as many as 100+ referrals for any one vacancy.

Furthermore, the majority of new Children's Homes are being introduced within the Northwest of the Country (30%), meaning that there is insufficient new growth occurring (as a result of external development) locally to meet need. Nationally, 75% of homes are operated by external providers; in Cambridgeshire this is 100% of residential homes for children in care (excluding residential short breaks homes), meaning that all 24 local residential homes are subject to competition from other placing authorities.

4

Placement Costs

4.1 Costs of Residential Children's Home provision and the market

Nationally the average weekly fee for a residential children's home placement is £4,599⁴ [May 2022]; this exceeds the average fee for Cambridgeshire (£5,769 at February 2023, accounting for 50 placements). The average weekly fee for placements made in year demonstrates the increased fees associated with new placements, compared with 'historic' placements. We have experienced a 45% increase from 2019/20 to 2022/23. Nationally there has been a 23% increase from 2019 to 2022.

Average Weekly Cost of Residential Children's Homes Placements (2019-20 to 2022/23)

Residential Children's Home Placements	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Average Cost (All Placements)	£3,965	£3,404	£4,167	£5,769
Average Cost (Placements made in year)	£4,618	£4,618	£4,330	£7688

The average costs listed below demonstrate that the authority incurs greater costs when required to source placements out of area too; often these placements are 'spot purchased' with providers with whom the authority has little financial oversight or negotiating ability, contributing to higher fees.

Average Weekly Cost of Residential Children's Homes Placements: In-County and Out-of-County (2019-20 to 2022-23)

Residential Children's Home Placements	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Average Cost (New In County Placements)	£3,754	£4,062	£3,234	£6044
Average Cost (New Out County Placements)	£4,409	£4,729	£4,384	£8510

This table details only those placements made to registered residential children's homes; and does not reflect the costs incurred to the authority for unregistered placements.

⁴ Independent Children's Homes Association [ICHA] report, as of May 2022

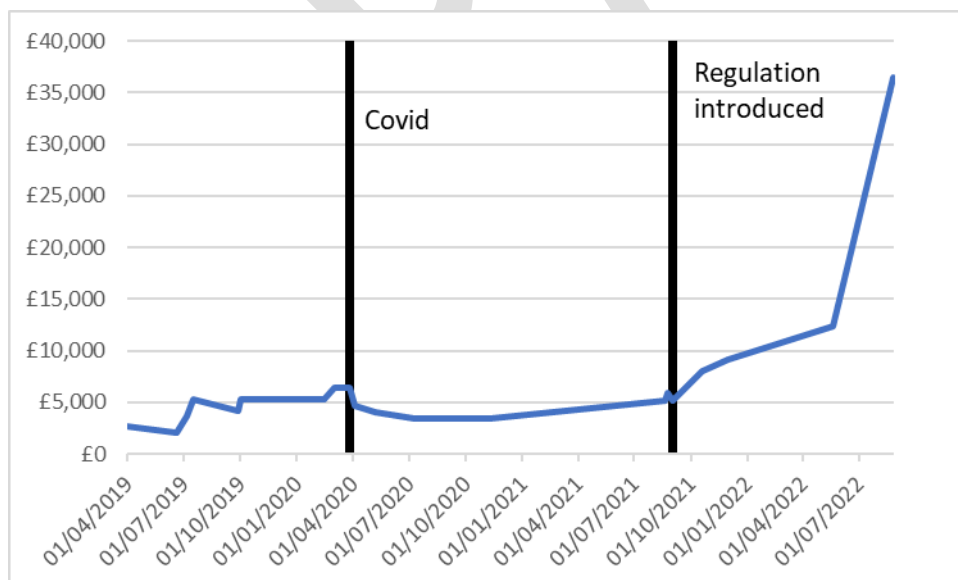
Where Young People are placed Out of County the average cost of these placements currently is 40% higher (compared with in-county placements).

In addition to the cost of the placement there are additional costs associated with out of area placements, such as paying for access to services (including therapy) where the existing commissioned services cannot be accessed, and travel costs (including time) for Social Workers to undertake their statutory obligations.

The CMA launched a market study in March 2021 in response to two major concerns in relation to how the residential market was operating. The first was the lack of availability of placements to meet need, and the second was that the cost associated with these placements were particularly high. In essence, high-cost placements do not guarantee high quality provision, our experience correlates with these findings.

Where Cambridgeshire has made unregistered placements for a small number of young people under 16 years of age, the costs have increased significantly since September 2021. Some Providers have revised weekly fees by as much as an additional £2,000 to cover their 'business risk' for accepting these placements.

Unregistered Placement Costs: per week April 2019-October 2022



4.3 Annual Cost

Placements for Children in Care are funded by up to three budgets; Education (Inclusion and SEND), Health (Integrated Care Board) and Social Care.

Often Education and Health funding is afforded for those Children in Care living outside of area, where local education and health services are unable to meet the child's needs. As a result of any proposal to develop increased local provision, this will reduce the proportion of education and health funded placements for children in care, but may result in increased demand for local services to support these children within our in-area homes.

4.4 Other Local Authorities

Conversations with other local authorities, including Staffordshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk, and Somerset County Councils made it clear that children's residential services are an area of shared focus. The issues identified in Cambridgeshire are the same for these local authorities, albeit with minor local variances.

Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Staffordshire all operate their own residential services, ranging from three homes to five homes per local authority. Additionally, Staffordshire, Hertfordshire, and Essex all have plans to increase capacity and are actively expanding provision in area.

Staffordshire is expanding its existing in-house residential offer by opening a series of their own 3 bedded homes, for complex/crisis young people and Staffordshire predicts that their break-even point would be 80% occupancy.

Hertfordshire is implementing a similar model focusing on the creation in the region of an additional 27 beds. Essex is implementing a programme to redeliver its services by creating solo and in-house assessment homes focusing on reducing the number of unregistered placements they are making. With all local authority endeavours to increase residential capacity for their children in care, the challenges faced will include:

- Sourcing the properties/capital investment

- Planning Application [change of use]
- Infrastructure with the skills and expertise to support the development, implementation and delivery outcomes.
- Recruitment and retention of staff/Registered Manager/s.
- Navigating complex governance processes.

Additionally, Staffordshire is looking to also develop a flexible and innovative block contract arrangement with a number of providers, offering beds available across several different homes. Suffolk is taking this approach in relation to block-purchasing solo and dual homes as well as having 27 of their own in-house residential beds. These block beds will have different prices depending on the home and service offered, with each home having a ceiling price stipulated.

The downside of entering into block contracting arrangements are the potentially high ceiling prices, matching young people to appropriate beds, emergency beds, and funding voids. One size does not fit all.

To increase sufficiency, Somerset has embarked on an extensive and ambitious strategic partnership programme to develop 10 children's homes within county over the next 5 years for their most vulnerable and complex young people. The contract will be for a 10-year term.

This innovative partnership also includes high needs fostering and therapeutic education, to produce a blended care approach that is like North Yorkshire's 'No Wrong Door' model and the [Hope House model](#) run by Surrey County Council, NHS Surrey, and Borders Partnership Trust. The No Wrong Door Model is also the model that Norfolk is implementing as their residential strategic plan with the aim of reducing purchased residential placements. This approach brings together a dedicated team of social workers, nurses, teachers, psychologists, art/drama therapists, psychiatrists, and activity workers. It offers education through a [therapeutic community](#) to support recovery.

Its remit is:

- To prevent or shorten inpatient hospital admissions for young people with mental health difficulties.
- To prevent out-of-county fostering, community home or residential school placements for young people.
- To prevent family breakdown where a young person is likely to be placed out of county.
- To work with young people in the community and/or through the provision of an individual day programme to meet their specific therapeutic, educational and social needs.
- To support young people to access employment, education or training.
- To work with young people on a short-term basis, usually for six to twelve months

4.5 Providers

The Competition & Markets Authority report found that many providers were making substantial profits from the Young People placed in their homes. Provider organizations fall into a number of different categories all of which have advantages and disadvantages however it is key to note that Ofsted reports that 79% of organisations registered to operate children's homes, have five or fewer homes within their organisation. Of the 79% of providers, that have five or fewer homes, 40 % of them chosen not to engage in tendering activities with local authorities. These "providers would actively prefer to work with their closest local authorities based on relationships and previous experience" (ICHA State of the Sector Report May 2022). These providers still need to make profits but are open to operating in a relationship, partnership commissioning approach that can be extremely beneficial for all stakeholders unlike working with a larger organization. Additionally, there are some third-sector providers who do not make a profit and offer added value to a Local authority by operating in a cost-neutral way.

5 Options

The Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) report on Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2021 found:

- that the running cost for local authority children's home to be £4865 p/w
- that the running cost of the private and voluntary sector to be £4153 p/w

These figures are based on PSSRU's analysis of total local authority expenditure on children's homes, including some secure units and residential schools.

The Competition & Markets Authority report found:

- Local Authority operating costs per child at 80% occupancy were on average £63,131 p.a. (30%) higher than those of the large providers at 83% occupancy.
- Local Authorities employed 1.5 to 2 more staff per child costing £76,701 (41.4%) more per child annually than large providers.

“It therefore appears that the amount paid for a place in the private sector, even allowing for profits, is not higher than that paid by a local authority to provide an inhouse place. Our analysis of our dataset indicated that the primary driver of these cost differentials was in higher staffing ratios and costs in local authority provision.”

Initial conversations with colleagues in Cambridgeshire, other Local Authorities, sub-regional commissioning groups and private providers have corroborated both the Competition & Markets Authority and PSSRU findings and figures, albeit with increased costs for higher need cohorts, particularly in solo or dual occupancy homes, as there are no economies of scale via additional placements.

These conversations and analysis have found figures in the £7,500 - £8,000 per young person p/w, to be more accurate for the running cost of two bed homes for these higher need young people, and approximately £5,000 person p/w in a lower support four-bed unit.

5.1 Summary of Options

There are 4 options to be considered for Residential Children's Homes in Cambridgeshire. These are outlined with a comparison table in this section.

5.1.1 – Business as Usual: Maintain Current Arrangements

For Cambridgeshire to continue operating in the current business-as-usual way there would be no changes required. This would be the easiest option, but it is important to note that this is the current status quo and would not address nor future proof the challenges currently being faced by Cambridgeshire.

Risks and benefits

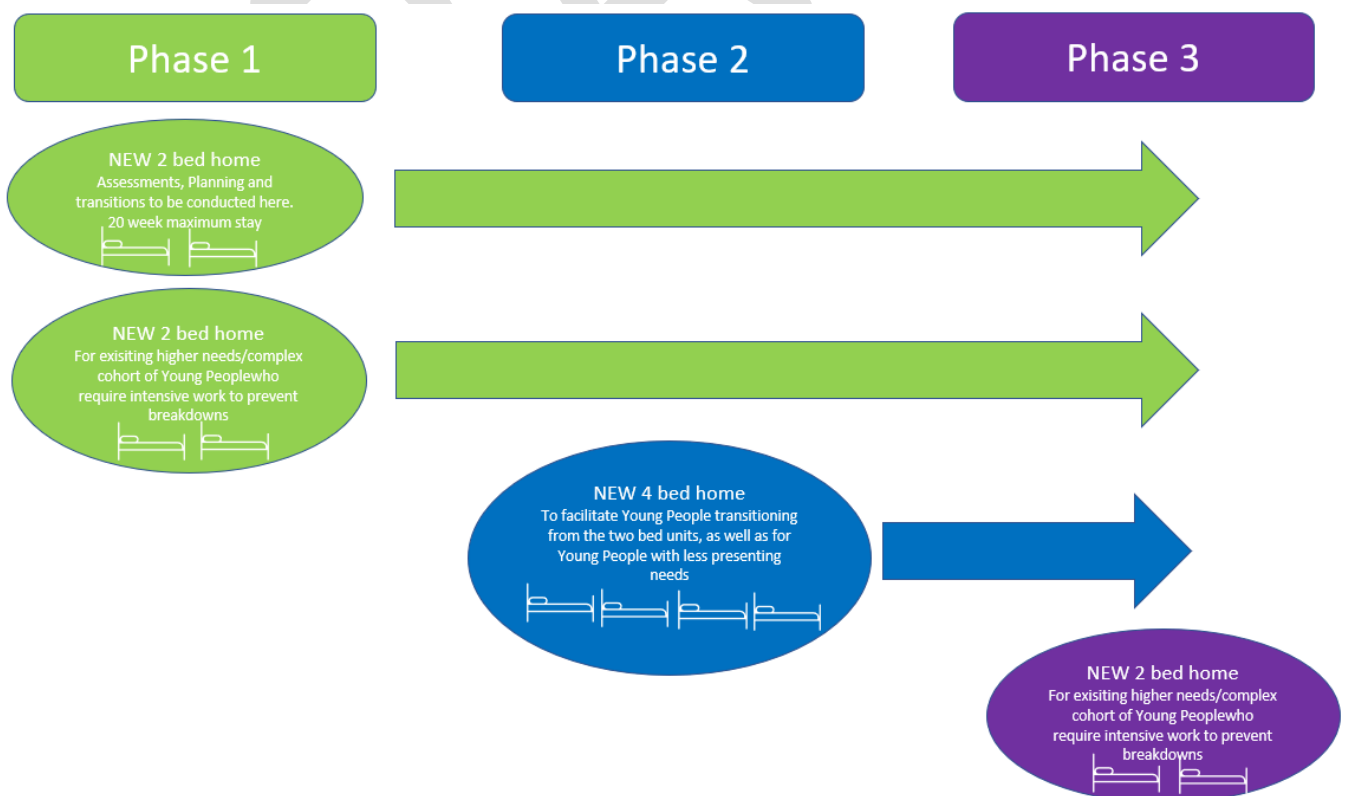
Benefit	Risk	Mitigation
Can be implemented immediately. No requirements to undertake; governance; property searches and purchases; staff recruitment; navigate planning permission; Ofsted registration and inspections; obtain capital and revenue funding or apply for any DfE bids	No guaranteed increase in local sufficiency. No control over the provision or the market	For all risks, mitigation available is through working QA processes, contract management as well as influencing through DPS and the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG) ⁵ systems.
No requirement to run and maintain buildings. No management and administrative responsibility of services	Limited options to access placements that represent good quality and value which also provide positive outcomes. Particularly in an emergency/short notice.	
No risk regarding re-deploying staff, or paying redundancy, should the local authority choose to close the home later	Limitations regarding influencing placement location, stability, staffing ratios, cost	
No reputational risk to the local authority from a poor Ofsted inspection or any other reports on the standards of	Limited ability to integrate the residential setting across the wider social care offer – for example staff working flexibly across settings and roles	

⁵ The Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG) is a partnership of Local Authorities from the East, South East and South West regions of England, including Cambridgeshire County Council, who are committed to working together to support the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's placement in independent and non-maintained special schools and children's residential care homes.

the service delivered to young people		
	No influence on providers' Ofsted outcomes and the effects this has on the young people in placement.	
	No control over the provider's ability to issue notice on placements	
	No control over provider's ability to increase costs year on year. Costs are rising, seller's market. Cambridgeshire would be exposed to continued rising costs with little control.	

5.1.2 Suggested Cambridgeshire Operating Model & Costs

The creation of four therapeutically informed children's homes within Cambridgeshire for Cambridgeshire Children in Care via a phased approach. Phase 1 and 2 can be concurrent, with the learning then applied to Phase 3.



Phase 1: The creation of two dual-bed children's homes for emergency / crisis intervention placements.

The first home will incorporate an assessment, planning, and transitions pathway within a targeted maximum 20-week stay although based on need and the individual situation, there may be occasions when this time period has to be extended. These homes are primarily for children who are new to care or have had previous limited involvement with social care.

The second will be a dual bed home for the existing higher needs/complex cohort of young people already in a placement who would require ongoing intensive work locally to prevent breakdowns with a view to transition when appropriate.

Phase 2: A 4 bedded children's home that could potentially facilitate some of the young people transitioning from the two bed units (where appropriate) as well as for young people with less presenting needs, yet still requiring residential provision.

Phase 3: The creation of another dual bed unit for the existing higher needs/complex cohort of young people already in placement who would require ongoing intensive work locally to prevent breakdowns with a view to transition when appropriate. The homes will be allocated a clinician to support all staff with the embedding of behaviour management strategies and therapeutic approaches to better understand the reasons for a child/young person's presentation and the best responses to take.

This approach will create overall ten new children's home beds.

5.1.2.1 – Potential Option A -Cambridgeshire County Council Owned and operated Residential Children's Homes

Cambridgeshire to purchase four properties, over the three phases, (providing up to ten beds) and operate these using Cambridgeshire staff. These homes would be a fully integrated part of the Children's Social Care service. This model would enable Cambridgeshire to -

- Have control over the service design, practice model, placement allocation, matching of young people and financial control.
- Ensure additional support is available for Young People following Transition.

- Facilitate the ability to develop more innovative approaches and methods of working between the Home and Cambridgeshire staff.

Cambridgeshire-owned and operated homes would support us to get the right young people into the right homes as quickly as possible to ensure the best outcomes for our young people.

This option would require significant capital outlay to secure the new homes. If this is the preferred option a full cost analysis will be produced considering market variations, location, and sizes of properties available.

Benefit	Risk	Mitigation
Control and availability of exclusive local placements for Cambridgeshire young people.	Availability of capital resources to purchase homes	Cost-benefit analysis of property/ies' size, and location to ensure financial equality of the service. Potential for a third round of DfE Capital bids.
Ownership of service design, practice model, management, and service quality	Ability to source appropriate buildings to deliver the services. The ability to manage and work with the local community in relation to these services.	Commissioning managers who understand the markets and requirements residential home. The early employment of a manager to manage and work with the community.
Ownership of matching, availability, and transition of placements in and out of the service	Planning around matching, admissions, and discharges from the home is required	Strong professional relationship management between service leads who understand the requirements, impact, and pressures of all the areas affected.
Reduction of high-cost unregistered placements for Cambridgeshire young people	Voids could have a direct financial impact on Cambridgeshire budgets	Strong professional relationship management between service leads who understand the requirements, and manage voids effectively
Retain family and local links and reduce social isolation for young people placed in the local service.	Timescale to pass governance processes, property searches, and purchases, as well as staff recruitment, particularly of registered managers	Early employment of an experienced registered manager to mitigate these risks.
Internal financial ownership of the service	Coordination and mobilization of several in-house stakeholders to deliver this project, when for many it will not be their key priority	This can be mitigated implement a project board and project manager. This will ensure stakeholders are held accountable to deliver clear time bound outcomes to deliver the service.

The service will reflect Cambridgeshire's values, principles and approaches and be integrated with the council's management of other children's service areas	The reputational risk from poor Ofsted inspections of the home/s and the subsequent key line of inquiry for Cambridgeshire's ILACs inspection	Operation management board to ensure the service is managed and supported effectively to manage any given situation
The service will be strategically aligned with the wider Cambridgeshire residential strategy relating to children with disabilities and young people with SEND, as well as the provision and development of education within Cambridgeshire	Challenging market to recruit full staffing teams for these services.	The ability to offer the benefits of being a Cambridgeshire employee as well as offering a clear career path and opportunities through the service with Cambridgeshire.
There were 266 placements made to Independent Specialist Educational Placements in the year up until July 2022. Of these 22 were 52 week placements therefore would be children in care. The total cost of these placements was £4620171 at an average cost of £210007. This service operating locally could potentially contribute to reducing these costs.		
Ownership of Ofsted registration, inspection and outcomes and the impacts of these processes and judgements		
Model of practice to include a therapeutic approach offer and education		
The design, build and operation of the homes can be in line with Cambridgeshire's green, energy efficient principles and reduced carbon emissions		
The terms and conditions for the employment, management, supervision, training, development and pay of staff will be in line with Cambridgeshire's principles and ethos		
Direct impact on quality via training and retention		

packages. This could include Cambridgeshire foster carers attending residential training and vice versa to upskill staff and increase their agility and flexibility. Ability to develop staff and have robust succession management plans in place		
The increase and development of professional relationships between the residential service and ART, social workers, IRO's, health workers educational professionals and any other professionals who support the young people in service		
Reduced travel time for staff and wider partner agency staff supporting the young people in service.		

5.1.3 – Cambridgeshire owned Residential properties with a contracted provider operating the homes service.

Cambridgeshire to buy properties for use as Residential Children's Homes and then commission a provider to staff and operate the homes. This option is similar to 5.1.2 and would be subject to a full tendering process. The successful provider would have operational control of the service, but Cambridgeshire County Council would ensure value for money and effective service delivery via contractual methods.

The below identifies the benefits, risks and mitigation of this option.

Benefits	Risks	Mitigation
Control and availability of exclusive local placements for Cambridgeshire young people.	Availability of capital resources to purchase homes	Cost-benefit analysis of property size, and location to ensure financial equality of the service Potential for a third round of DfE Capital bids.
Ownership of service design, practice mode.	Ability to source appropriate buildings to deliver the services.	Commissioning manager that understands the markets and requirements of a residential home.
Reduction of costs to Cambridgeshire as we will not	Control over matching, availability, and transition of	Strong professional relationship management

have to pay accommodation element of placement costs. A provider can potentially have reduced or zero property rates.	placements in and out of the service will not be lost.	between provider leads who understand the requirements, impact, and pressures of all the areas affected. Robust commissioning framework that identifies and mitigates potential risks to achieving full occupancy.
Reduction of high-cost unregistered placements for Cambridgeshire young people	The ability to manage and work with the local community in relation to these services.	The early tendering of the service enables senior provider employees to manage and work with the community.
Retain family and local links and reduce social isolation for young people placed in the local service.	Timescale to commission a provider to deliver the service will need to be fully tendered. Ofsted implementation will be able to be implemented until the tender process is completed and the contract awarded.	Early market engagement event and tendering of service specification
For standard contract, voids will not come at a cost to Cambridgeshire	No control of the costs service providers could put forward to deliver the service.	
The block beds will have differing prices, depending on the different home they are within, and the services provided. The block beds can be spread over several size homes for example solo provision to four bed provision	The LA would pay for voids when there are no young people in placement. This carries a financial risk for the LA	Agreement to be written into the tender of void manage requirements in addition to relation and partnership commissioning approach with the provider.
The service specification design will reflect Cambridgeshire's values, principles and approaches and be integrated with the council's management of other children's service areas	There is risk that providers who tender for the service may not be providers that Cambridgeshire would willing to award to and run the service.	Market engagement events and engaging with key strategic partners.
The service specification design will be strategically aligned with the wider Cambridgeshire residential strategy relating to children with disabilities and young people with SEND, as well as the provision and development of education within Cambridgeshire	Challenging market to recruit full staffing teams for these services.	

The service specification design Model of practice to include a therapeutic approach and offer an education	Provider failure and reputational risk from poor Ofsted inspections	Relationship commissioning with the provider to support throughout the process.
The design, build and operation of the homes can be in line with Cambridgeshire's green, energy efficient principles and reduced carbon emissions		
No risk regarding re-deploying staff, or paying redundancy, should the local authority choose to close the home at a later date.		
No requirements to undertake the additional management and administrative responsibility for recruiting, training, and supervising residential staff. As well as developing policies, procedures, specification, and maintaining and running the building.		
Potential to work with a provider with a proven track record		
Reduced travel time for staff and wider partner agency staff supporting the young people in service.		

5.1.4 Cambridgeshire owned Residential Children's properties with tendered innovation partnership with the VCS operating the service.

Cambridgeshire to buy properties for use as Residential Children's Homes and then commission a provider to staff and operate the homes. This option is similar to 5.1.3 and would be subject to a full tendering process. The Innovation partnership would aim to;

- To co-design a residential service by sharing expertise and knowledge in the delivery of residential Services through innovative solutions and contributing to transformational change through new and shared service delivery models.
- To co-deliver a residential service that focuses on outcomes and value for money

- To co-invest in providing additional resources in addition to, reviewing and developing new ways of operating and working.
- To develop leadership and collaborative approaches between organizations and partnerships, necessary to develop innovation and change.
- Develop a more commercial ethos within internal and external delivery models.
- Availability of funding opportunities not available to local authorities.

Benefits	Risks	Mitigation
An innovation partner would potentially be able to offer additional financial support to the project	Unable to identify an innovation partner through the tender process.	Partnership and stakeholder events pretender process to share Cambridgeshire's position and process.
Control and availability of exclusive local placements for Cambridgeshire young people.	Availability of capital resources to purchase homes	Cost-benefit analysis of property size, and location to ensure financial equality of the service. Potential for third round of DfE Capital bids.
Ownership of service design, practice mode.	Ability to source appropriate buildings to deliver the services.	Commissioning manager that understands the markets and requirements of a residential home.
Reduction of costs to Cambridgeshire as we will not have to pay accommodation element of placement costs. A provider can potentially have reduced or zero property rates.	Ownership of matching, availability, and transition of placements in and out of the service will not be lost but will provide an additional challenge	Strong professional relationship management between provider leads who understand the requirements, impact, and pressures of all the areas affected. Robust commissioning framework that identifies and mitigates potential risks to achieving full occupancy.
Reduction of high-cost unregistered placements for Cambridgeshire young people	The ability to manage and work with the local community in relation to these services.	The early tendering of the service enables senior provider employees to manage and work with the community.
Retain family and local links and reduce social isolation for young people placed in the local service.	Timescale to commission a provider to deliver the service will need to be fully tendered. Work would need to be completed with legal services to ensure this was achievable. Ofsted implementation will be able to be implemented until the tender process is	Early market engagement event and tendering of service specification

	completed and the contract awarded.	
For standard contract, voids will not come at a cost to Cambridgeshire	No control of the costs service providers could put forward to deliver the service.	Agreement to be written into the tender of void manage requirements in addition to relation and partnership commissioning approach with the provider.
The service specification design will reflect Cambridgeshire's values, principles and approaches and be integrated with the council's management of other children's service areas	Challenging market to recruit full staffing teams for these services.	Market engagement events and engaging with key strategic partners.
The service specification design will be strategically aligned with the wider Cambridgeshire residential strategy relating to children with disabilities and young people with SEND, as well as the provision and development of education within Cambridgeshire		
The service specification design model of practice to include a therapeutic approach offer and education	Provider failure and reputational risk from poor Ofsted inspections	Relationship commissioning with the provider to support through the process.
The design, build and operation of the homes can be in line with Cambridgeshire's green, energy efficient principles and reduced carbon emissions		
No risk regarding re-deploying staff, or paying redundancy, should the local authority choose to close the home at a later date.		
No requirements to undertake the additional management and administrative responsibility for recruiting, training, and supervising residential staff. As well as developing policies, procedures, specification, and maintaining and running the building.		

Potential to work with a provider with a proven track record		
Reduced travel time for staff and wider partner agency staff supporting the young people in service.		

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Summary & Recommendations

To conclude, the two below recommendations should be considered as one of the most appropriate options to progress.

6.1 Recommendation Option 5.1.2

The first option is for Cambridgeshire to own and operate the proposed four children's residential homes internally (utilising a three-phase approach). This option best meets Cambridgeshire's needs in the immediacy, and offers the opportunity to develop, and evolve the service over time to continue to respond to the needs of our children and young people.

The service will be subject to KPIs, contract management and reports on the homes going to a governance board (and any Committees as appropriate) consisting of the relevant partners and stakeholders enabling Cambridgeshire to demonstrate the outcomes achieved for our children and young people.

The implementation of this recommendation will give Cambridgeshire young people access to local placements, in a timely manner, within a service that is designed specifically to meet their needs. It is expected that this recommendation will reduce the requirement to make placements that are classified as unregistered, therefore decreasing the risks associated with this practice. Overall, we would expect this process to deliver improved outcomes for Cambridgeshire children and young people.

This option will provide the opportunity to invest in and develop staff, create new career pathways and have integrated management systems that share risk and make decisions collectively and respond to change as 'what works' is forever changing.

The homes design, renovation and operation can be in line with Cambridgeshire's green, energy-efficient principles, and objectives to reduce carbon emissions and utilise renewable resources where possible. Should this be a preferred recommendation a full in-depth cost analysis piece of work would be undertaken.

6.2 Recommendation Option 5.1.4

The second option to consider is 5.1.4, for Cambridgeshire tender an Innovation partnership agreement with a voluntary sector organisation. Cambridgeshire would purchase four children's residential homes internally (utilising a three-phase approach). This approach best meets the needs of Cambridgeshire should the decision be that Cambridge does not tend to hold the responsibility of running the service.

The service will be subject to KPIs, contract management and reports on the Homes going to a governance board (and any Committees as appropriate) consisting of the relevant partners and stakeholders enabling Cambridgeshire to demonstrate the outcomes achieved for our children and young people.

This option offers the opportunity for the VCS to bring additional funding to the partnership, develop management solutions for the service, as well as commercial and collaboration agreements for governance and management of the service. The home's design, renovation, and operation can be in line with Cambridgeshire's green, energy-efficient principles and objectives to reduce carbon emissions and utilize renewable resources where possible which would be delivered through the service specification and design. Should this be the preferred option a full market engagement/strategic provider event would be arranged and delivered to understand the appetite for this type of tender.

For both options it is important to note that should Cambridgeshire so desire, any voids in the service [or empty beds] could be sold to neighbouring Local Authorities in the Eastern Region. The ICHA reports that the residential sector "have a strong desire to make commissioning, procurement and purchasing more personal. Providers feel that relationships and partnerships are needed more than systems and processes." This is something that Cambridgeshire is very strong on delivering with the commissioned providers we are engaged with. Either option could be extended to sell voids for the commercial benefit of Cambridgeshire. By exploring the commercial aspect of the service offer, the residential service will maximize occupancy and has the potential to generate income.

A key recommendation Josh McAlister made, was the call for 'regional cooperatives' to manage the running and commissioning of children's homes. In developing the residential service in this way, it could potentially put Cambridgeshire at the forefront of this process whilst putting Cambridgeshire forward as a lead LA if regional cooperatives become a requirement from central government.

7

Conclusion

This strategy paper demonstrates that there is clear evidence that Cambridgeshire children and young people with complex needs have limited access locally to the services that are able to support them most effectively. Further to this, there is an established requirement to increase the availability of good quality, local residential homes for our children and young people in care and mitigate the sole reliance on the external market to deliver these services (as this alone will not meet the Local Authority's sufficiency duty in a timely manner).

In keeping with similar practices seen locally and nationally by other Local Authorities, Cambridgeshire must take measures to develop homes which are for the sole need of Cambridgeshire children (whilst where necessary offering opportunity for Cambridgeshire to generate income through selling any voids to other Local Authorities).

To achieve this, it is recommended that the Authority seeks to acquire homes locally, gain the necessary planning permissions, and commence regulatory procedures. In parallel, we will undertake market testing to explore the viability of a partnership with a VCS organisation for service delivery..

This proposed approach will work toward increasing the overall sufficiency of residential placements within Cambridgeshire and specifically increase the number of placements directly available for Cambridgeshire children. This strategy is expected to have a direct impact on reducing the use of unregistered placements for our most complex young people.

A Commissioning Programme Management approach will be instigated with governance processes clearly outlined should the principles within this draft strategy be endorsed [Appendix A].



Appendix A

Date	Activity / Governance
Feb 2023	Approval at Commissioning Management Team
Feb 2023	Approval at Joint Commissioning Board
March 2023	Approval at CSDMT
March 2023	Approval at CLT
April 2023	Approval at Children & Young People's Committee
May / July 2023	Approval at Strategy & Resources Committee (with CYP Committee support)
June / August 2023	Commence Commissioning and Programme Management Activities