

# **Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Services**

## **Placement Strategy for Looked After Children**

**2011 - 2015**

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# Introduction and Purpose

Children and young people looked after by their local authority rather than their parents are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our society. As corporate parents, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in care are positive and improve their ongoing life chances. We must approach this parenting role with as much passion and commitment as any family and ensure that our Looked After Children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This strategy describes the placements we want to provide and commission for our Looked After Children and focuses on how we will improve our current arrangements to improve the lives of the children in our care. However the scope is not restricted to just making good quality placements, the intention is to bring together the range of activity across Children's Services at all stages of the care journey, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, and minimising the need for children to become looked after. This is the first time Children's Services has attempted a 'whole system' approach to supporting Looked After Children and keeping families together. It is a cross-directorate strategy which will require coordinated effort and purpose from teams across Children's Services to deliver.

Throughout, the focus is on describing what will change in relation to our work with children in care or at risk of coming into care. The document is, therefore, an action plan for the future rather than an attempt to cover every detail of our current services and support. Our model continues to be refined and a second updated version of this strategy will be published by the end of May 2011, providing further detail, in particular, of the contribution that schools can make, our early intervention model and the pathways through the edge of care services.

## Objectives and Structure

The scope of this strategy covers five key objectives, these are;

1. **To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after by ensuring a focus on early intervention and preventative action across Children's Services
2. **To manage risk confidently and provide support at the edge of care** to make sure the right children come into care at the right time.
3. **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** to support all children having positive experiences in care, whatever their needs.
4. **To ensure all children in care get a good education**, whether this is in mainstream schools or in alternative arrangements.
5. **To give children clearly planned journeys through care** which enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements and exit the care system positively.

The context and underlying principles which form the starting point for the strategy are on the next two pages. The rest of the document is structured around delivering these five objectives with each section describing what we will do in that area and concluding with a summary of the identified actions.

There is a single-page overview of the strategy on page 25 and fuller details of the workstreams, timescales and lead officers are in the action plan on page 26.

# Principles

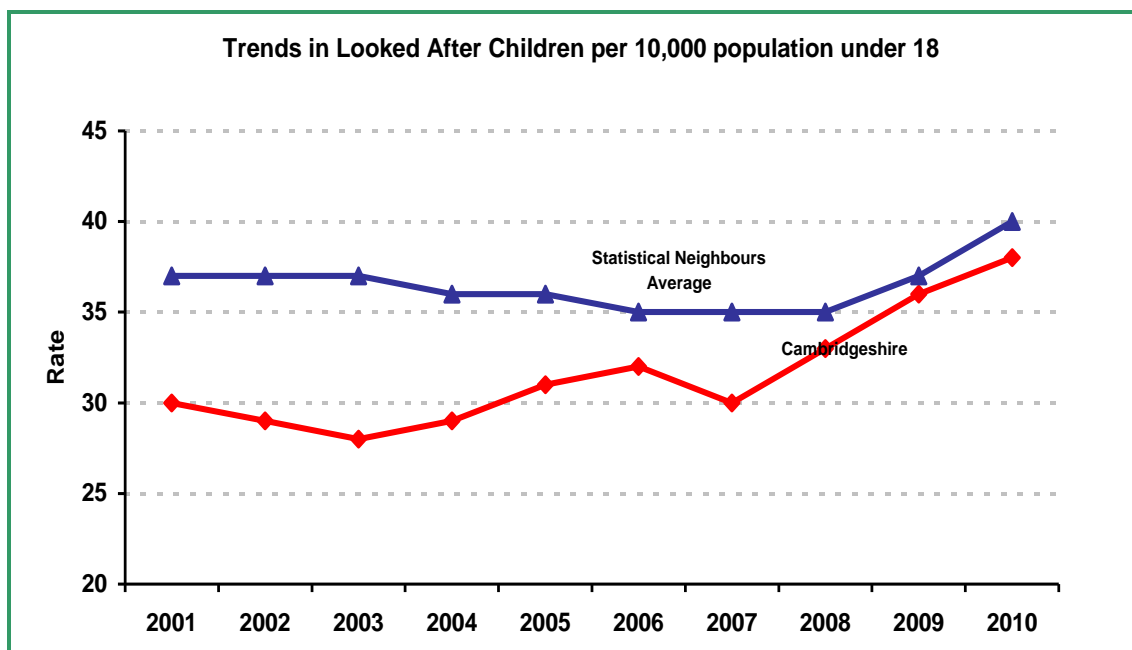
The development and delivery of this strategy are also underpinned by the following key principles. The relevant principles are reproduced at the beginning of each section.

1. The responsibility for meeting the needs of children looked after or at risk of coming into care, rests across all of Children's Services.
2. The vast majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
3. Preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided to give them every chance to stay together.
4. Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, kinship care arrangements will be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement.
5. If children do require alternative provision outside their family or kinship network the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family provided by in house services wherever possible and if not, with Independent Foster Agency carers within Cambridgeshire.
6. Residential placements should only be made where the complexity of a child's needs mean they cannot live in a family setting, or where a child expressly does not want an alternative family.
7. Placements should be sufficiently local to enable Looked After Children to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives. Out of county foster placements or residential homes will only be considered in exceptional circumstances when all options in county have been explored.
8. Placement requests should be defined in terms of a child's needs – It is the role of the Children's Allocation Meeting, or other appropriate panel, to define the placement to meet these needs with due consideration given to the available resources.
9. All Looked After Children of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Finding an appropriate education setting is just as important as finding suitable carers for Looked After Children.
10. Placements should provide stability and permanency for children and young people within their families or alternative care arrangements.
11. Placements should support positive transitions to adulthood, education, employment and training enabling Looked After Children to be part of their community and succeed in independence.

# Context

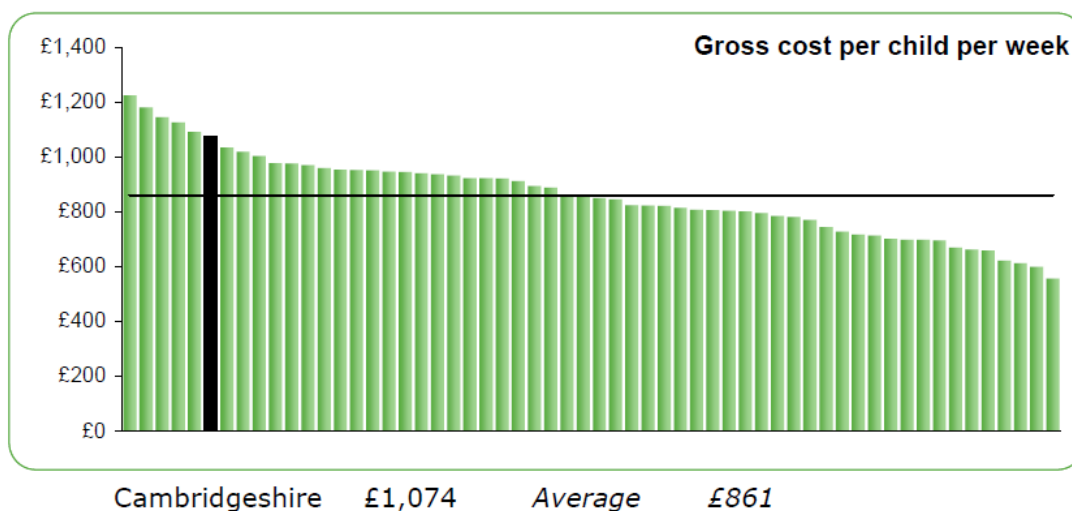
## Numbers of Looked After Children

Since 2007 the number of Looked After Children in Cambridgeshire has increased by over 25% (or by more than 100 children) to around 500 in 2010/11. Although Cambridgeshire's rate of children in care is still below the average for similar authorities, this sharp rise in the number of children in care means it is timely to consider the services we provide and commission to meet their needs.



## Average Cost of Placements

In 2010, Cambridgeshire's average spend on placements for Looked After Children per child per week (£1,074) was significantly higher than the average for other comparable authorities (£861).



Source: CIPFA Children Looked After Benchmarking Club Report 2010

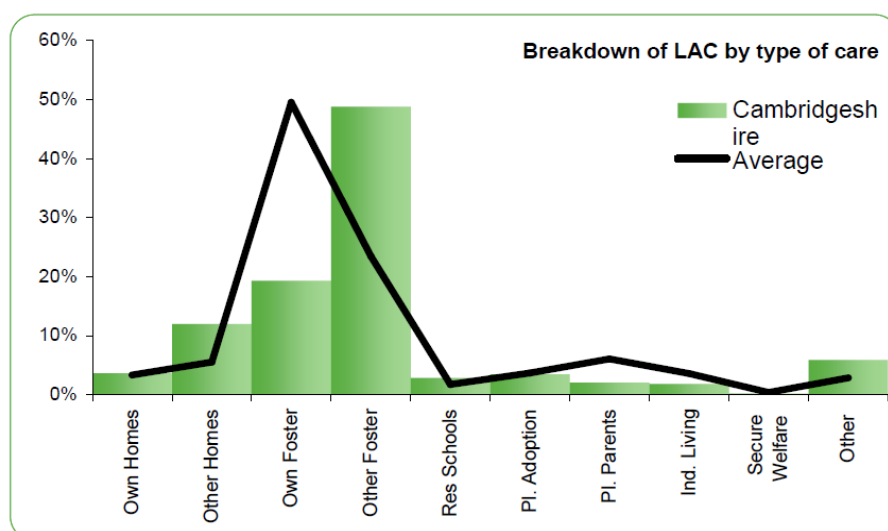
## Unit Costs and Mix of Placements

The high average cost per child shown above is made up of the costs for residential and fostering placements for both in-house services and externally commissioned placements as shown below.

Type of Placement	Cambridgeshire Unit Cost	Average Unit Cost
In-house Residential Children's Homes	£2,278 per week	£2,611 per week
External Residential Children's Homes	£3,290 per week	£2,774 per week
In-house Foster Care	£460 per week	£432 per week
External Foster Care (IFA)	£838 per week	£877 per week

The unit costs in Cambridgeshire do not differ dramatically from those paid by other authorities and the high overall cost per child can therefore largely be attributed to the mix of placements we buy and provide. We have more residential placements than most authorities, a higher proportion of placements with external providers and a lower proportion looked after by in-house carers. This is shown in the diagram below.

**Breakdown of Looked After Children by type of care - 31/3/2010**



## Savings Targets

This combination of a higher number of Looked After Children and a high level of spend on placements occurs at a time when Children's Services is seeking to deliver over £40m of savings between 2011 and 2015. The budgets for commissioning and providing placements for Looked After Children have the following savings targets over this period.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Saving from Social Care Placements Budget	£-1,630, 000	£-2,000,000	£-2,500,000	£-2,261,000
Saving from Social Care LAC Services	£-688,000	£-180,000	£-100,000	£0

## Demographic Changes and Investments

National patterns and our own modelling of demographic changes in Cambridgeshire indicate that the recent increase in underlying demand for placements is set to continue in the coming years. To meet this additional need and alongside the savings described above, Children and Young People's Services is planning additional investment in placements for Looked After Children from demography funding as shown below.

<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>Total</b>
£6,115,000	£2,261,000	£2,261,000	£2,261,000	£12,898,000

The net effect on the placements budget is therefore a planned increase in total spending by the end of the period covered by this strategy. However these demography investments alone will not be enough to achieve a sustainable financial position if we do not also achieve the best possible value for money from placements and to work to keep families together and reduce the number of children and young people coming into care. Only by making these demography investments and meeting the savings targets described above, will we reach a sustainable model which is able to meet the needs of all our Looked After Children.

## Summary

This is a challenging context but we cannot allow financial pressures to prevent us from improving and enhancing the care we provide for Looked After Children. We therefore need a focused strategy to prevent children becoming looked after and to enable those that do come into care to have the best possible outcomes.

# Objective 1: Support families to stay together

Children's needs are best served in their own families if this can be safely supported.

Helping families stay together must therefore be a key focus for all of Children's Services and it begins with early identification of need and effective early intervention.

Preventative and early support services can reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become looked after. Five key areas have been identified to achieve this.

**Principle 1** - The responsibility for meeting the needs of children looked after or at risk of coming in to care, rests across all of Children's Services.

**Principle 2** - The vast majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.

**Principle 3** - Prevention Services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided to give them every chance to stay together

## 1. Support Parents and Parenting

We need to build the resilience of parents and families and give them the skills and confidence to provide a family environment in which children and young people can thrive. This includes direct support when families are struggling, as well as developing and building capacity in families to manage change and difficulty on their own once professionals withdraw.

The Parenting Support Strategy and associated Commissioning plan aims to develop a coherent parenting support offer at all levels of need. This work will include **realigning the current workforce to create a staff who are able to respond flexibly to the particular needs of different families, and re-commissioning a mix of evidence-based specialist and intensive interventions for families with particular and more complex needs. In addition there will be a range of parenting programmes to give parents the skills and confidence to help their children thrive.**

The proposed model of parent support (draft document) is provided as an appendix to this strategy.

## 2. Invest in Prevention

As part of the commitment to prioritising work to keep families together, there will be an **investment of an additional £1m in preventative services in 2012/13**. To guide this investment we will establish a robust evaluation framework which will **build a local evidence base around early intervention for the future**. This will ensure we invest this resource in the programmes and services which will make the biggest impact. We will publish more details about how this £1m will contribute to keeping children safely at home in later updates of this strategy.

## 3. Focus Children's Centres on helping families in need

Children's Centres will be a crucial part of our strategy to support families with young children (ages 0-5) to stay together. **Young parents, children with disabilities, children of disabled parents, children in workless households and also Children in Need or with a child protection plan will all**



**be more specifically targeted to receive support through the work of Children's Centres** and this can make a big impact on our efforts to reduce the number of children reaching the threshold for care.

Children's Centres will continue to provide a variety of universal services, as well as resources and activities specifically targeted at the most vulnerable children and their families. Children's Centres will support families with a Looked After Child where this is considered beneficial within the Care Plan, with a view to working towards the child being able to return home if appropriate. Where suitable, supervised contact may be available at a Children's Centre, and access to training and group activity, where beneficial to a parent, would be encouraged and facilitated.

Children's Centres will be an active part of care plans for Children In Need and will work far more closely with Social Care practitioners to support families where there is a risk of children coming into care. **The offer from Children's Centres to families in need and the way Children's Centres and Children's Social Care should work together in future will be set out in a partnership service level agreement.** The agreement will also cover the information sharing and joint working arrangements to ensure that Children's Centres help Social Care to identify families and children in need of support or intervention.

#### **4. Keep Children in School: Exclusions and Attendance**

Keeping children in school is a major determining factor in preventing them coming into care. Very often an exclusion from school can be the final trigger for a breakdown of home life and can quickly result in a request for accommodation. It is vital therefore that we share information with schools and support them to understand their role in prevention, help and challenge them to keep children in school and manage higher levels of need successfully. Locality Teams and Specialist Teaching Teams have a critical part to play here.

**Where a child or young person identified as a Child In Need is at risk of exclusion we need to develop an integrated response from Access Services and Children's Social Care** which looks at the potential implications of exclusion for that child or young person and works to find solutions. Tackling exclusions as a trigger for children coming into care is especially important in light of the recent Education White Paper which gives schools more freedom and also more responsibility for ensuring ongoing education provision for children who are excluded. **We will work with schools to analyse the impact of this policy and develop a model which supports them to manage exclusions and keep children in school wherever possible.**

Similarly absence from school can be a contributory factor. We will engage with schools to ensure that the focus on driving up attendance remains and that our attendance and absence monitoring systems help us identify children at risk and can inform the involvement of support services before problems escalate.

#### **5. Engage children and young people at risk of disaffection in school**

Disaffection and disengagement in school are causes of escalating poor behaviour which can eventually lead to children being excluded from school. The work of **schools and learning providers to engage children and young people at risk of disaffection through excellent teaching**

**and learning and an engaging curriculum** are therefore crucial elements of our model of prevention to reduce the number of children reaching the care threshold. [We will publish more details about how schools can work with Children's Services to reduce the numbers of children entering the care system unnecessarily in later updates of this strategy]

## **6. Share information and work together as a Team around the Child and Family**

Supporting families to stay together is easier if we think about the needs of the child within the context of their family, their school and their community. Children's needs always come first for Children's Services but often these cannot be removed from the needs of the parents and the wider family.

Where this is the case, we need to **establish a 'whole-family' approach whereby all professionals working with any member of the family operate as a single coherent team rather than individual services and share information and work together on that basis.**

Development of this whole-family approach will be through our ongoing implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will include greater alignment between Children's and Adults Services (especially Adult Social Care and Mental Health Services) using integrated planning processes to highlight gaps in services which in turn will inform commissioning at a local, area and county level. This approach will include implementation of the agreed protocols between children and adult services in respect of Young Carers.

All non specialist services across the children's workforce will use the Common Assessment Framework to assess needs with the full participation of the child and family. By having one common assessment, information sharing between agencies will be supported by one integrated plan and one lead professional, reducing duplication and providing more seamless responses between agencies to the child and family.

### **Support families to stay together**

#### **Summary of Actions**

We will;

- Invest an additional £1million in preventative and early intervention services in 2012/13, with a specific focus on stopping children and families reaching the care threshold.
- Develop a coherent and flexible parenting support offer at all levels of need (Parenting Strategy) and a new job family which covers key roles in supporting families.
- Target the work of Children's Centres to families in need and develop the relationship between Children's Centres and Social Care so that they help build resilience and work effectively together before children and young people reach the edge of care. (Children's Centre Strategy)
- Support and challenge schools to reduce exclusions, promote attendance and keep children in school
- Engage children and young people at risk of disaffection through excellent teaching and learning and an engaging curriculum
- Ensure effective information sharing about children and families with additional needs through the continued roll out of the Common Assessment Framework and development of a Team around the Child and Family model which includes Adult Services.

## Objective 2: Manage risk confidently and support families at the edge of care

We need to ensure the right children come into care at the right times.

To do this we need to be able to manage risk successfully with families that are approaching the threshold for care; providing effective interventions which support families to make changes whilst always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe.

**Principle 2** - The vast majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.

**Principle 4** - Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, kinship care arrangements will be explored as a preferred alternative arrangement.

### 1. Social Work – Working for Families

Children's Social Care are taking forward a major transformation which will aim to **develop a way of working that gives Social Workers far more time to spend on direct intervention with children and families and has a strong emphasis on professional development to support confident risk management**. The focus is on putting practice first, separating out administration and support tasks, to give social workers the time and space to be an active part of finding solutions which can help keep families together. This philosophy will be supported by a re-structure to a model developed initially in Hackney based around the idea of Social Work 'units' – small integrated multi-disciplinary teams which have the mixture of skills to support families to turn things around.

This is a major project which will take at least three years to implement fully, but it represents a crucial element of the Placements Strategy for Looked After Children and will support our efforts to keep families together and reduce the number of children who need to be looked after.

### 2. Engage the extended family and kinship networks prior to entry to care

Where a family is struggling to cope or has reached the point of crisis we will explore whether there is capacity within the extended family or kinship network to provide care for the child or young person.

By facilitating an open and impartial discussion, Family Group Meetings can help to achieve reconciliation between family members to support them to stay together or identify members of the extended family or kinship network who have capacity to provide care.

At present the Family Group Meeting Service operates mainly with families with children identified as Children In Need or with a child protection plan. We want to ensure that extended family and kinship networks are also engaged in other situations including families struggling to cope with severe disability, young people below the age of 18 who present as homeless, families where children are already in care and also families where problems are just starting to emerge, but where Social Services are not yet involved. **For all these groups we will look at how Family Group Meetings and other services focused on engaging the wider family, in particular fathers at an**

earlier stage, could help to identify capacity which would make the family more resilient and reduce the need for Council services to intervene.

### **3. Provide shared care and short breaks to give families a chance to get back on track**

Sometimes families need a break which gives them the time and space to work their way out of stressful, chaotic situations and turn things around. Offering short breaks and shared care arrangements can help minimise the need for children to come into long-term or permanent care.

In particular sharing care responsibility with the local authority can help families cope if they have a child with a severe disability and **we will look at expanding the number of residential shared care beds we have available to help us support families with children with disabilities.**

We will also **test the business case for offering short term foster placements as a form of respite to other families (not just those with disability)** as a time limited measure to create the space for families and other services to work together to turn situations around.

### **4. Provide good challenge and wide input at the gateway to care and reduce the number of placements made in an emergency or at very short notice**

We need to ensure that the right children come into care at the right time and in the right placement. These decisions are taken through the Children's Allocation Meeting (CAM) panel. To ensure the panel makes the best possible choices, in future;

- **Social workers will attend panel to present the case in person in the first instance** rather than relying on paperwork. This will facilitate direct discussion and challenge of the individual needs in each case and will provide learning for social work practitioners.
- **The membership of the panel will be extended to include representatives from other departments and agencies** to ensure that each case is considered holistically and that there is challenge and creative problem solving.
- **It will be chaired in future by the Head of Children's Social Care** in all instances.

It is difficult to provide well-matched and value for money placements in emergency situations or where requests for care are made at very short notice. We need to minimise the placements made through the emergency route to only those which are genuine emergencies, which were unforeseeable and unpreventable. A **new process will be set up to challenge requests made for care within a 24-hour period** so that all options are explored before the request goes through to CAM panel. The threshold for emergency accommodation will also be made more explicit and widely understood. Similarly, the multidisciplinary involvement in CAM will support a reduction in the number of emergency placements as frequently our analysis shows that these cases were already known to other agencies.

### **5. Establish a community model which uses volunteers to support struggling families**

Alongside the work of professionals, volunteers in the community can help play an important, distinct and complementary role in helping families through difficult situations and preventing the need for children to come into care.

We want to **establish a scheme which matches families with children on child protection plans with volunteers who offer advice and practical help to turn chaotic homes into stable and safe environments**. As well as practical parenting experience, volunteers can offer friendly, neutral advice and establish trust and openness with families. In this way, the scheme could complement professional social work by offering something which is different and less intrusive. Volunteers are seen as distinct from social workers and are there to listen, not judge and decisions about children coming into care remain with social work professionals.

## **6. Create short term accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 Year Olds**

Another key group on the edge of care are 16 or 17 year olds who present to Social Services or Housing Departments as homeless. In the majority of cases, with good social work these young people can be supported to return home. It should be those young people who genuinely do not have a suitable place to live that should become looked after by the authority.

If we are to succeed in supporting this group of young people we need to **develop specific capacity for 16 and 17 year olds reporting as homeless to allow us to assess their needs and work out the best plan for them**. This capacity would allow us to avoid making more expensive short term arrangements which create false expectations and hamper the efforts of social workers to help young people to go home.

### **Manage risk confidently and support families at the edge of care** **Summary of Actions**

We will;

- Support Social Workers to manage risk successfully at the edge of care through the development of the Social Care Unit Model
- Expand the use of Family Group Meetings and other strategies to make sure we always explore capacity within the extended family before children come into care
- Test the business case for expanding the provision of short breaks to families that might benefit from time-limited foster placements to prevent children having to come into care permanently
- Provide good challenge and wide input at gateway to care (CAM Panel Review)
- Reduce the number of requests for accommodation made through emergency procedures so that care decisions can be properly planned
- Establish a scheme which uses volunteers to complement the work of professionals to support families in need
- Make short term assessment provision for homeless 16 and 17 year olds

## Objective 3: Provide and commission a flexible and affordable range of high quality placements

For children and young people in care we need to make sure we have the right range of placements which promote positive experiences whatever their needs.

At present we do not have sufficient placements available in Cambridgeshire to meet all types of need, which means that too many children have placements a long way from their home and community.

We also need our range of placements to be good value for money and affordable within the budget available.

**Principle 5** - If children do require alternative provision outside their family or kinship network the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family.

**Principle 6** - Where a child cannot or does not want to live in a family setting, a residential home could be the placement choice, especially where the child's needs are very complex. Children below the age of 12 years should not be placed in residential homes.

**Principle 7** - Placements should be sufficiently local to enable Looked After Children to remain in their communities, maintain their networks, and minimise disruption in their lives

### 1. Increase the number and capacity of In-house fostering and adopting families

A priority is to focus our effort and resource on recruiting and retaining new foster carers to ensure we have enough families with the right combination of skills and support to meet the needs of the higher number of children we now have in care.

We are particularly in need of foster carers who can manage very challenging behaviour, provide parent and child placements, placements for disabled children and emergency or short-term placements. To achieve this we will **re-establish a dedicated marketing post and increase the recruitment and assessment resource within the Fostering and Adoption Service to find, assess and train new carers**. This team will work to a specific recruitment strategy and will commit to increase the capacity of the service by at least fifty-five placements over the next four years.

**We will also explore regional and sub-regional collaboration options as a way of increasing the capacity of the service**. This could include regional recruitment and assessment work or establishing a regional framework contract for Independent Fostering Agencies.

To support better matching of children and families we will **identify retained emergency foster carers and assessment foster carer placements which can provide a safe and welcoming place for young people to stay for a time-limited period while we find an ideal placement which best meets their needs**. This will give us a flexible response to requests for placements made by the Emergency Duty Team or at very short notice

### 2. Reduce our dependence on Independent Fostering Agencies and clearly specify their role

In the long run, a successful recruitment strategy for the in-house service will mean a reduced reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies. These agencies will continue to play an important role which complements our in-house provision, but in future they will be commissioned to provide a specific type of placement for a smaller cohort rather than being a fallback when an in-house placement is not available.

### **3. Make residential placements for fewer children and make them closer to home**

For some Looked After Children, a residential children's home will be the best environment to meet their needs and help them succeed, where this is the case there should be a positive choice for this type of provision.

Being with a larger staff group and alongside their peers in a residential placement offers children and young people a greater variety of relationships and allows 24-hour support to be provided for the highest levels of need and most challenging types of behaviour.

The long term vision is to reduce reliance on residential placements and move from a comparatively large cohort, spread across a number of counties and providers to a smaller cohort receiving higher quality and more consistent provision mainly provided in-house and always within Cambridgeshire. Reducing the number of children in residential placements will be supported by the planned increase in the capacity of our fostering service (see above) as well as the efforts of preventative and edge of care services to reduce the total number of children in care.

To support a higher proportion of in-house rather than private out of county residential placements we will **develop a specification for our in-house residential homes and establish a commissioning relationship** with a strong emphasis on finding flexible solutions and support packages to allow our homes to meet their needs.

Alongside this we will **establish a multi-agency virtual team of professionals to support our residential homes in order to 'skill up' staff in working with young people with specific and more complex needs and provide direct support onsite**. This team will include professionals from education, health, mental health and other services and will be enhanced by the development of a case management approach designed to coordinate a consistent approach to young people with complex needs in all settings.

More immediately **we will develop block contracts to secure a number of high quality residential placements with independent providers in Cambridgeshire**. In the medium term this will provide access to additional local vacancies at certain and reduced costs which can be more easily supported by the multi-agency team described above.

### **4. Establish new provision for Looked After Children with Disabilities**

Children and young people with a disability make up nearly 11% of our care population compared to approximately 2% of the child population nationally. We need more placements in county with the appropriate facilities and staff to meet the needs of those disabled children where alternative support for their families has been exhausted. This will reduce the current reliance on extremely



expensive placements purchased from private providers sometimes a long way from Cambridgeshire.

To address this, we will **explore the expansion of our in-house residential provision for children with disabilities**, by developing more shared care beds to be available from 2012/13 onwards.

**5. Jointly commission accommodation for children between the ages of 16 and 18 that provides a pathway between care and independence**

We need to transform our placements for young people in care between the ages of 16 and 18 to create a flexible range of different types of accommodation which supports different levels of independence and transitions to adulthood.

At present we do not have enough independent or semi independent living placements, such as supported housing, training flats and foyers, so we will **enter a joint arrangement with Supporting People and District Housing Teams to commission a new extended and more flexible portfolio of placements from social landlords and other third sector providers.**

This new range of placements will be commissioned to meet the needs of children who have come through the care system and are moving towards independence and also those children who come into care as 16 or 17 year olds as a result of their homelessness.



## **Provide and commission a flexible and affordable range of high quality placements**

### **Summary of Actions**

We will;

- Develop an effective recruitment strategy for new in-house foster carers to increase the number of fostering households supported by the in-house service by at least fifty-five placements over four years and therefore reduce the reliance on independent fostering agencies and residential placements
- Explore regional collaboration options as a way of increasing the capacity of the Fostering Service. This could include regional recruitment and assessment work or establishing a regional framework contract for independent fostering agencies.
- Explore the viability of recruiting and employing retained emergency foster carers to provide a response to requests for placements made by the Emergency Duty Team or at very short notice.
- Develop a specification for our in-house residential homes and establish a commissioning relationship.
- Create a virtual multi disciplinary team which can work with, and upskill, in-house and in-county residential homes to allow them to support a greater level of need. This team would include professionals from health, mental health, education and others.
- Explore a block-contract to secure a small number of high-quality residential placements from the independent sector located in Cambridgeshire.
- Explore how parent and child assessments placements with foster carers could be provided or commissioned as an alternative to using independent residential homes
- Consider expanding our residential or shared care provision for Looked After Children with disabilities
- Jointly commission accommodation for children between the ages of 16 and 18 that provides a pathway between care and independence.

## Objective 4: Ensure all children and young people in care get a good education

If children in care are to thrive, finding the right education setting is just as important as providing a suitable home environment.

Coming into care means a dramatic change in the home life of a child or young person. If it results in a change of school at the same time that means a break from all previous routines, friendship groups and support networks simultaneously.

**Principle 9** - All Looked After Children of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school.

For children already in care, a breakdown of a school placement is very often a trigger for the breakdown of their home placement and, similarly, problems at home very often manifest themselves at school. This dynamic relationship between home and school life makes providing and maintaining the right education a crucial element of our strategy for Looked After Children.

### 1. Find the right education setting

We will ensure that the education of a child coming into care is given due consideration when making a care placement and that this is considered to be of equal importance as identifying a suitable family. The Virtual School for Looked After Children (ESLAC Service) will lead on any transfer which becomes necessary between educational providers to ensure smooth transition.

### 2. Improve joint working between social care and schools to help children stay in mainstream education

Where possible we need to keep Looked After Children in their schools and ideally in the school they were already attending prior to coming into care. To make this work, schools, social workers and carers need to plan, share information and work together.

We will **develop a more effective approach to case management with a single care plan devised to be consistent across all settings** rather than separate plans existing for the placement and school life of Looked After Children. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) which exists for all Looked After Children is an integral part of the care planning process. The PEP must feed into the Looked After Child reviewing process to ensure all information is available and discussed together. Similarly approaches to behaviour management and tackling other issues should be the same in the two settings so that children have a consistent set of boundaries, routines and norms in which to find security and stability. Similarly there needs to be good communication between schools, social workers and carers so that when issues do arise they can be tackled jointly, or if things are more serious, plans can be put in place early for a move of placement or a change of school. The Virtual School staff will lead on this process to ensure continuity.

We will work through the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnerships and Headteacher groups to establish working protocols to support better collaborative working with schools.

### **3. Support special schools to meet the needs of more Looked After Children with disabilities**

**We will develop a specification for special schools to provide education for children and young people with complex and severe levels of need.** The specification will set out the expectations of Area Special Schools, in terms of the services they deliver and the types of need they will be able to meet. The objective of this work is to reduce the requirement for children and young people with challenging complex needs to be placed out of county and includes considering increasing capacity in Cambridgeshire schools.

Through the work to develop the specification we will identify gaps and issues with accommodation and facilities, develop an admission policy, define the Health Core offer for Area Special Schools and the outreach support arrangements.

Within the re-structure of the Virtual School, from September 2011, the teachers will provide more support to Area Special Schools in terms of their Looked After Children. Whilst their statement is the leading driver for their Special Educational Needs, the ESLAC teachers will pick up the completion of the Personal Education Plan and work with Social Care to ensure that the educational needs of this group are being met with particular regard to their Looked After status.

### **4. Provide residential placements with on-site education**

We need to ensure we can meet the needs of the approximately 25% of Looked After Children of school age in Cambridgeshire who have statements of Special Educational Needs and children who cannot attend mainstream school due to a disability. At present, these children and young people are often placed in very expensive independent residential schools a long way from Cambridgeshire or in residential placements with some limited education provision included.

To address this **we will create new residential provision, if possible on a shared site of existing SEN schools in Cambridgeshire** for those young people who have such complex disabilities that despite a range of interventions their families are unable to continue to care for them. The Harbour School has been identified to explore re-targeting 6 to 8 residential places as 52-week provision for children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties and statements of Special Educational Needs. The Virtual School staff would be able to support this provision within Cambridgeshire.

### **5. Make our Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) arrangements work for children in care**

We will continue to work closely with the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnerships (BAIPs) to explore how ongoing changes to the EOTAS structures will impact on Looked After Children and whether there is potential to **develop existing provision into a specific education resource for a small proportion of the children in care where finding a suitable education place is not immediately possible.**

### **6. Support care leavers into education, employment and training**

The future life-chances of care leavers are dramatically improved if they can be supported to move into education, employment or training and we recognise that young people within the care system are often at the disadvantage of a poor start and require assistance to catch up. We therefore commit to developing the 'From Care to Work' initiative and to encouraging ambition and achievement from as early an age as possible.

In addition, joint work with Locality Teams will ensure young people have support to enable them to remain in education, employment and training and to access positive activities.

## **Ensure all children and young people in care get a good education**

### **Summary of Actions**

We will;

- Improve joint working between Social Care and schools so that children in mainstream schools have a single plan and consistent, coordinated support
- Develop residential provision at the site of existing SEN schools in Cambridgeshire, including exploring the use of the Harbour School for Looked After boys with SEBD
- Create a specification for special schools which allows children and young people with complex and severe levels of need to attend in-county special schools rather than independent residential schools or homes a long way from Cambridgeshire
- Explore how ongoing changes to the EOTAS structures will impact on Looked After Children and whether there is potential to develop existing provision into a specific education resource for a small proportion of the children in care where finding a suitable education place is not immediately possible
- Develop the 'from care to work' initiative for all Looked After Children and ensure clear access routes to impartial advice, information and guidance and targeted youth support to enable young people leaving care to remain in education, training or employment and to engage in positive activities.

## Objective 5: Give children and young people clearly planned journeys through care

For children and young people in care, having a clear plan is essential. A good plan ensures that children come into and exit care at the right times and that throughout they have the security and confidence of knowing what the future holds.

We need to ensure that children do not 'drift' through care, but have clearly-planned journeys which allow them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements with alternative carers and exit the care system positively at whatever age this happens.

**Principle 8** - Placement requests should be defined in terms of a child's needs – It is the role of CAM, or other appropriate panel, to define the placement to meet these needs

**Principle 10** - Placements should provide stability and permanency for children and young people within their families or alternative substitute care

**Principle 11** - Placements should support positive transitions to adulthood, enabling Looked After Children to be part of their community and succeed in independence.

### 1. Find the right Placements

We need to ensure that the processes for referral for a placement are rigorously complied with and detailed information is provided to support placement finding. We need a wide range of high quality independent providers and placements to complement our in-house provision, although in-house provision will always be the preferred option. All placement decisions should be supported by integrated assessment and planning.

### 2. Give children stability and permanence as quickly as possible

Giving children and young people in care a sense of security, continuity and commitment is crucial to their experience of care. This sense of 'permanence' includes emotional, physical and legal stability and, as corporate parents, we must commit to providing a plan to achieve permanence for all Looked After Children. This can be achieved through:

1. Reunification with the birth family
2. Living with other family and friends
3. Placed with permanent foster care until adulthood.
4. Adoption

**A new permanence framework has been developed alongside this strategy and will be embedded in practice to ensure we achieve permanence in one of the ways described above for all Looked After Children in Cambridgeshire by the time of their second care review.**

### **3. Monitor drift in care planning through a permanency panel and 'Going Home Audits'**

To support the delivery of the new procedures, **in future a Permanency Panel will meet bi-monthly to chase progress at an operational level and check that actions are being taken appropriately to avoid any drift in care planning.**

We will undertake audits of our cohort of Looked After Children will be undertaken with a view to identifying any cases where the child or young person could be supported to return home. Looked After Children over the age of 16 and those accommodated under section 20 arrangements but not in permanent placements have been identified as groups to focus on for future 'Going Home' audits.

### **4. Find adopters for all relinquished babies within four months**

**We will establish a concurrent planning team from within our Social Work teams whose remit will specifically be to 'fast track' relinquished babies into adoptive placements within four months of their coming into the care system.** Looked After Child Reviews will be undertaken at no more than 14 days following the child's birth.

### **5. Help young people prepare for adulthood and make staged increases in their independence**

A vital part of our role as corporate parents is to prepare the children and young people we look after for their independent adult lives. We need to give these young people the necessary life-skills, experience and confidence for them to thrive when they leave care.

A part of our 16+ strategy will be **the establishment of a coherent 'moving on' structure which supports young people to make staged increases in their independence.**

This structure for young people 16 years or older will be complemented by the **roll-out of an independence tool which will help foster carers to teach children and young people placed with them the skills they need and prepare to cope on their own or with less direct supervision** towards the end of their time in care.

Through the Enhancing Transitions Project, we will work in collaboration with Adults Services in planning the placements and transitions for Looked After Young People with disabilities age 17 plus.

## **Give children and young people clearly planned journeys through care - Summary of Actions**

We will;

- Implement a new Permanency Framework to ensure all children in care have a plan for permanence by the time of their second review.
- Use 'Going Home' audits and a newly formed permanency panel to check that there is no drift in care planning and that children and young people are being supported to go home where this is in their best interests
- Create a concurrent planning team or dedicated social worker resource to find adopting families promptly for all relinquished babies
- Establish a 'moving on' structure which supports transitions to independence as children reach the end of their care journey.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

This strategy sets out how we will deliver our commitment to Looked After Children and to supporting families to stay together in children's interests.

However its creation marks only the start of the journey, it will be the delivery over the next four years that will make the difference, and that will require coordinated and sustained effort across Children's Services and its partners.

Children's Services Senior Management Team will be part of a Sponsor Group for the Placements Strategy (see appendix 3 for membership), tasked with overseeing its delivery, monitoring the impact on children and families and driving forward the focus on Looked After Children as a key priority for Children's Services. A performance framework which measures the impact of the Strategy has been created (see appendix 1 for outline) and will be reported against on a six-monthly basis for the duration of the strategy.

Workstream leads have been identified for each of the actions in this strategy and together they will form the Placements Strategy Task Group charged with putting the strategy into practice and implementing the decisions of the Sponsor Group. The following pages show an overview of the workstreams within the strategy and a high-level version of the action plan that this task group will be working to.

We will continue to refine our plans and build our evidence base over the coming months and, as our thinking evolves, so will this strategy. We will publish an updated version of the document by the end of May 2011 which will include, in particular, further detail of the contribution that schools can make, our early intervention model, our investment in preventative programmes and the pathways through the edge of care services. This update will also describe in more depth the role schools and other universal settings can play in supporting our efforts to keep families together.

This strategy and the associated action plan will continue to be live documents, regularly updated as each of the projects moves forward however our commitment to Looked After Children, to the principles in this strategy and to working together to provide the best possible services will remain constant.



**Aim: For children and young people to be in care at the right times  
and for their experiences in care to make their lives better**

**Support Families to  
stay together**

Support parents and  
parenting with a coherent  
offer at all levels of need  
(Parenting Strategy)

Invest in prevention and  
focus on stopping children  
and families reaching the  
care threshold

Focus Children's Centres  
on helping families in  
need (Children's Centre  
Strategy)

Keep Children in School  
and engage those at risk  
of disaffection

Share information and  
work together as a Team  
Around the Child and  
Family

**Manage Risk  
Effectively at edge of  
care**

Transform Children's  
Social Care to help Social  
Workers manage risk  
confidently

Engage extended family  
and maximise capacity  
within kinship networks  
prior to entry to care

Provide good challenge  
and wide input at the  
gateway to care

Establish a community  
model which uses  
volunteers to support  
struggling families

Make short term  
assessment provision for  
young people aged 16+  
presenting as homeless

**Provide high quality  
placements for all  
children in care**

Increase number and  
capacity of in-house  
fostering and adopting  
families

Explore the potential of  
regional collaboration on  
fostering services

Explore expanding respite  
for families with non-  
disabled children

Develop short term  
assessment placements  
for emergency situations

Create a virtual multi-  
disciplinary team to  
support placements and  
in-county teams

Make residential  
placements for fewer  
children and make them  
closer to home

Secure in-county  
residential places through  
a block contract

Establish new residential  
or shared care provision  
for Looked After Children  
with disabilities

Commission placements  
for 16+ that provide a  
pathway between care  
and independence

Block contract for parent  
and child assessments as  
an alternative to  
residential

**Ensure all children in  
care get a good  
education**

Provide residential  
placements with onsite  
education at existing  
Special School sites

Increase Capacity of  
schools to meet needs of  
more Looked After  
Children in mainstream

Improve joint working  
between Social Care and  
Schools to support  
children in care

Make our EOTAS  
arrangements work for  
Looked After Children

**Clearly planned  
journeys through and  
safe exits from care**

Reduce placement drift  
and achieve permanency  
for Looked After Children  
as quickly as possible

Allocate dedicated social  
worker resource to finding  
placements for  
relinquished babies

Establish a 'moving on'  
structure which supports  
transitions to  
independence

Use Going Home audits to  
check children are being  
supported home  
wherever this is safe

**Tight Supporting Processes**

- Performance & Financial Commitment Monitoring
- Partnership Working Arrangements
- Communications
- Voice of Children & Young People

## Action Plan

Support Families to Stay Together				
Workstream	Actions	Lead	Due By	Saving Attributed
<b>Deliver the Parent Support Strategy</b>  Develop a coherent parenting support offer for all levels and types of need to help families stay together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remodel the Parent Support workforce to create a new job family able to meet the full range of need</li> <li>Determine and commission the optimum profile of specialist interventions to support parents</li> <li>Define and commission a range of effective parenting training and support programmes</li> </ul>	Sarah Ferguson / Andy Burgess	Sept 2011  Apr 2012  Sept 2011	<b>2011/12 = £241,800 (6)</b>  <b>2012/13 = £201,500 (5)</b>  <b>2013/14 = £805,000 (10)</b>  <b>2014/15 = £201,500 (5)</b>  Savings based on <b>fewer children looked after</b> as a result of effective early intervention
<b>Focus Children's Centres on helping families in need (Children's Centres Strategy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Service level Agreement between Children's Centres and Children's Social Care defining how they will work together and offer from Centres to families in need</li> <li>Provide Supervised Contact Arrangements at Children's centres</li> </ul>	Jo Sollars	Sept 2011  Sept 2011	
<b>Invest In Prevention</b>  Proposed Investment of £1m in preventative services in 2012/13 to reduce the number of children reaching the threshold for care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop robust evidence base and impact evaluation framework for preventative and early intervention programmes</li> <li>Determine how to invest additional £1m in preventative services based on the above</li> </ul>	Charlotte Black  Charlotte Black	Sept 2011  Sept 2011	

<b>Share information and work together as a Team around the Child &amp; Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a team around the family model which includes Adult Services and partners</li> <li>• Develop protocol for joint assessment of families with complex and inter-related needs</li> <li>• Explore joint commissioning for families with complex and interrelated needs</li> </ul>	Lorraine Lofting	Sept 2011	
<b>Keep Children in School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop integrated response between schools, Access Services and Social Care where a child in need is identified as at risk of exclusion or where there are attendance issues</li> </ul>	Jane Ryder-Richardson	01/09/11	None
<b>Preventing disengagement and disaffection in schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage children and young people at risk of disaffection through excellent teaching and learning and an engaging curriculum</li> </ul>	Gayle Gorman	01/04/12	None
<b>Manage Risk Effectively at the Edge of Care</b>				
<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Detail &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Due By</b>	<b>Saving Attributed</b>
<b>Social Work – Working for Families (Social Care Unit Model)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation of Social Care practice and structure informed strongly by model used in Hackney</li> </ul>	Elaine Petch	2012/13	<b>2011/12 = £206,000 (6)</b>  <b>2012/13 = £432,900 (5)</b>  <b>2013/14 = £982,500 (20)</b>  <b>2014/15 = £780,000 (5)</b>  Savings based on <b>fewer children looked after</b> as a result of successful management of risk at the edge of care
<b>Work with extended families and kinship networks (Expansion / Refocusing of FGM Service)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will examine which target groups the FGM service could best work with</li> <li>• Determine future remit and scope of FGM Services</li> </ul>	Julie Collinson	07/02/11	
		Sponsor Group	16/03/11	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine other approaches to engaging extended families and kinship networks based on above</li> </ul>	Sponsor Group	01/06/11	and effective procedures to ensure the right children come into care at the right times
<b>Community Model / Volunteers in Child Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a community model which uses volunteers to support families in crisis</li> </ul>	James Wilson	01/04/11	Note – figures in brackets show how many fewer children in care per year as basis of saving.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine which families would be most appropriate to be the focus of this provision</li> </ul>	Sponsor Group	01/04/11	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and test business case and establish scheme</li> </ul>	James Wilson	01/04/12	
<b>CAM Panel Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new CAM panel procedures, membership, systems and processes, cases and data management</li> </ul>	Elaine Petch	01/04/11	
<b>Reduce placements made in an emergency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review threshold for emergency accommodation</li> </ul>	Sarah Adams	01/04/11	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new process to challenge emergency requests for care prior to CAM panel</li> </ul>	Sarah Adams	01/04/11	
<b>Expand Respite and shared care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of number of residential shared care beds for children with disabilities</li> </ul>	Judith Davies	01/04/12	<b>2012/13 = £200,000</b> Saving based on 4 fewer high cost specialist residential placements minus estimated cost to run provision
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test business case for offering respite fostering placements as a preventative edge of care service</li> </ul>	Jill Blose	01/09/11	
<b>Create short term accommodation for homeless 16 &amp; 17 year olds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop specific capacity for reception and assessment of 16 and 17 year olds reporting as homeless</li> </ul>	Peter Jackson	Sept 2011	None

## Provide and commission a flexible and affordable range of high quality placements

Workstream	Detail & Actions	Lead	Due By	Saving Attributed
Increase the number and capacity of Fostering and Adopting Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm future Fostering Service Model &amp; Structure</li> </ul>	Sarah Gawne	07/02/11	<b>2011/12 = £241,800 (6)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop specific carer recruitment resource and recruitment strategy</li> </ul>	Sarah Gawne	01/04/11	<b>2012/13 = £403,000 (10)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore regional collaboration options as a way of increasing the capacity of the fostering service</li> </ul>	Sarah Gawne	June 2011	<b>2013/14 = £811,200 (20)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit and revision of allowances paid to foster carers</li> </ul>	Pru Maple	01/04/11	<b>2014/15 = £1,505,400 (20)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Retained Emergency Foster Carers</li> </ul>	Jill Blose	01/09/11	Savings based on increasing the capacity of the in-house foster service and reducing reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreeing flexible working arrangements for staff wanting to become foster carers as part of strategy to recruit more carers</li> </ul>	Niki Clemo	01/04/11	Note - figures in brackets are additional number of new foster placements required each year
Make Residential Placements for fewer children and make them closer to home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Service Specification and establish a commissioning relationship with the service to deliver required occupancy level.</li> </ul>	Task Group	June 2011	<b>2011/12 = £624,000</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Block Contract for circa 6 residential placements in Cambridgeshire from independent providers</li> </ul>	Sally Stubbings	Sept 2011	Saving based on reducing demand for independent residential placements by 4 beds at approx £3000 pw
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a specific contract for parent and child assessments which are currently spot purchased from IFAs and residential providers</li> </ul>	Sally Stubbings	Sept 2011	<b>2012/13 = £140,000</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a virtual multi-agency team of professionals</li> </ul>			<b>£75,000</b> Saving based on 15% reduction in cost for 6 placements through block booking.

	to skill up and support residential homes to work with children and young people with greater levels of need	Task Group	August 2011	
<b>Accommodation for children between the ages of 16 and 1816+ Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter joint arrangement with Supporting People to commission a new extended and more flexible portfolio of independent of semi-independent placements Strategy.</li> </ul>	Peter Jackson	Sept 2011	None
<b>Give Looked After Children a Good Education</b>				
<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Detail &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Due By</b>	<b>Saving Attributed</b>
<b>Provide residential placements with on-site education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish residential accommodation at the Harbour School to provide 52-week provision for LAC with SEN and SEBD</li> </ul>	Judith Davies	01/04/12	<b>2012/13 = £706,000</b>  Saving based on 6 independent placements not used – operating costs
<b>Special Schools – Specification</b>  Will define our expectation of special schools in meeting the needs of Looked After Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new on-site residential provision at Highfields School for children with learning disabilities</li> <li>Create and implement a specification for special schools which allows children and young people with higher levels of need to remain in-county.</li> </ul>	Judith Davies	01/04/12	<b>2013/14 = £500k</b>  Saving based on establishment of 6 additional placements at Highfields
<b>Joint working arrangements between Social Care, placements and Schools to support LAC to stay in mainstream school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree joint planning and information sharing protocols for Looked After Children in mainstream schools</li> <li>Agree consistent approach(es) to behaviour management to be used across school and placement settings</li> </ul>	Sue Haines  Tom Jefford	June 2011  June 2011	None

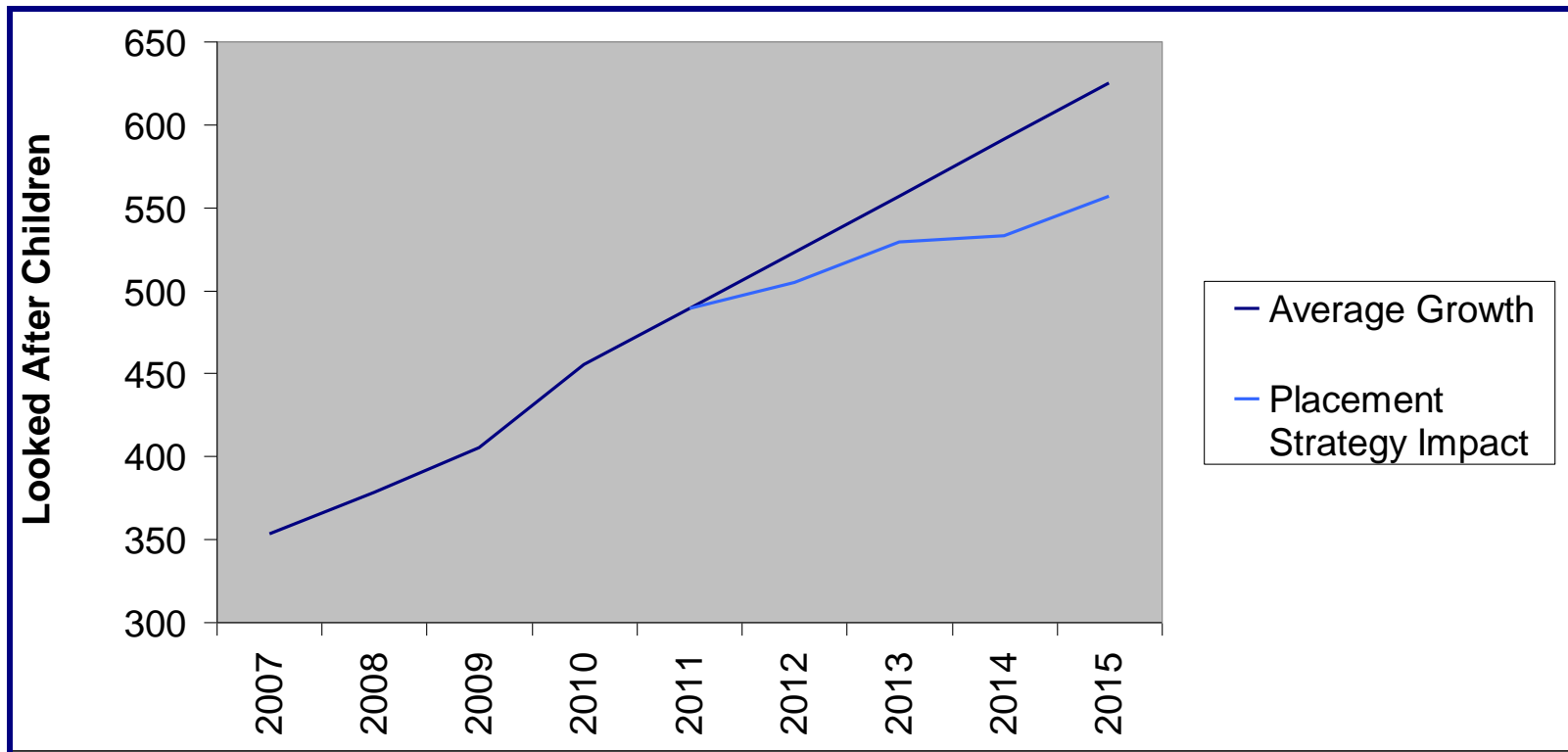
Explore how EOTAS arrangements can be developed to meet the needs of Looked After Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Behaviour Improvement and attendance Partnerships to explore how ongoing changes to the EOTAS structures will impact Looked After Children and whether there is potential to develop existing provision into education resource that would work for children in care</li> </ul>	Tom Jefford	01/04/12	None
<b>Give children clearly planned journeys through care</b>				
Workstream	Detail & Actions	Lead	Due By	Saving Attributed
Give children permanence as quickly as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm and embed new Permanency Procedures in social work practice</li> </ul>	Maureen Cavanagh	01/04/11	<b>2011/12 = 241,800</b>  Saving based on 6 fewer children looked after as a result of being supported to go home earlier and achieving permanence more quickly.
Monitor and eliminate drift in care planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new Permanency Panel to track actions in care plans</li> </ul>	Maureen Cavanagh	01/04/11	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake further Going Home Audits of 16+ cohort</li> </ul>	Pru Maple	01/04/11	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake 'Going Home' audit of section 20 cohort not in permanent placements</li> </ul>	Elaine Petch	01/06/11	
Find adopters for relinquished babies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish specific relinquished Babies / Concurrent Planning Team to drive out any delay in placing relinquished babies</li> </ul>	Jackie Coventry	01/09/11	
Support young people into adulthood and increase their independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a moving on structure as part of 16+ strategy</li> </ul>	Peter Jackson	Sept 2011	None
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll-out independence tool for use by foster carers</li> </ul>	Jackie Coventry	01/02/11	

## Appendix 1 - Placements Model and Impact Measures

The number of children in care, projected spend from the placements budget and the mix of placements we have will be monitored over time to ensure they are on-track to deliver the savings requirements.

### Numbers of Looked After Children

The graph below shows projections of the number of children in care in future years. Our analysis of demographic trends and pressures suggests a continued growth in the number of Looked After Children in a 'do nothing' scenario (top line). The lower line shows the predicted impact of this strategy on the net number of children in care to help us reach a financially sustainable model. The actual trend in the number of children in care will be closely monitored over the duration of the strategy and compared to this projection.





## Composition of Placement Mix

As well as impacting on the overall number of children in care, implementation of this strategy will alter the mix of placements we provide and commission for Looked After Children. The table below shows an approximation of how this mix of placements will change. The table is somewhat simplified and of course individual placement decisions will continue to be made on a case by case basis to best meet the needs of the child or young person; however the table gives an indication of the direction and scale of change for different types of placement between 2011 and 2015.

Placement Type	Projected Change in Placement Mix				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Overall Change
Private Residential Placements (Children's Homes & Residential Schools)	-4	-12	-15	-15	-46
Placed in CYPS Residential Placements (Children's Homes & Residential Schools)	+4	+10	+6	-	+ 20
Placed with Independent Foster Care Agencies	-24	-18	-41	-15	-98
Placed with CYPS Foster Carers	+6	+10	+20	+20	+56
Net Reduction Total Number of Children in Care	-18	-10	-30	-10	-68

## Key Impact Measures for Placements Strategy

The following impact measures have been identified as the key indicators of the success of the strategy and will be closely monitored by the Sponsor Group and reported on formally every six months for the duration of the strategy. These measures have been selected from the comprehensive performance monitoring that exists for Looked After Children with Children's Social Care.

- Overall Number of Children in Care
- Projected Spend on placements with independent providers based on commitment record
- Number of Looked After Children placed out of county
- Number of Children beginning/ceasing to be Looked After per month
- Proportion of Residential, Fostering and supported living placements
- Level of occupancy in in-house residential homes
- Level of capacity and actual placements made to in-house foster service
- % of Looked After Children cases reviewed within the agreed timescales
- % of Looked After Children with three or more placements during a single year
- Attainment outcome measures for Looked After Children
- Health & Wellbeing outcome measures for Looked After Children

## Appendix 2 - Expectations of Placements

Based on the principles described in the introduction to this strategy we expect to deliver or commission placements which;

- **Are close to home** (in Cambridgeshire), so that children and young people are able to maintain links with family and friends.
- Allow the child or young person to be **fully included within the community in which they live** and supports them to develop pastimes, activities and participate in a range of sport and leisure activities in the local community.
- help the young person **develop skills to live independently / semi-independently**
- Support young people leaving care moving into their own accommodation and make the transition into adulthood.
- include arrangements **for appropriate education provision**. Usually this will be through regular school attendance but young people who are unable to access school should also receive education provision as part of their residential or foster placements
- **Provide security, stability and a sense of permanence**. We want reduced placement breakdown with carers who have a relationship with the child or young person that continues appropriately beyond the duration of the placement.
- **Recognise the child or young person's cultural heritage / religion**
- **Have clear boundaries with a restorative approach** with physical interventions kept to a minimum.
- **Deliver High quality, robust assessment of need and detailed care plans** which specify outcomes, services and time frames. Not only will this support good place matching, but will also support commissioning decisions.
- **Have links to local health services**, including GPs, dentists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other specialist services such as Health Promotion and Family Planning and Sexual Health.
- Have physical **adaptations for children with disabilities** where necessary

## Appendix 3 - Terms of Reference for Placements Strategy Sponsor Group

A Group Sponsor Group for the Placements Strategy will meet every two months for the duration of the Strategy and will act as a strategic board for the project.

This group will have overall responsibility for oversight of the strategy and associated action plan and specifically will;

- Commission workstreams - reviewing briefs and business cases and agreeing work required
- Monitor progress – through reviewing the action plan and exception reports
- Monitor the financial model and performance framework to ensure the project is on-track to deliver the required savings
- Consider and address exceptions, risk and issues as they are reported upward by the Project Manager from the Task Group

Name	Role
Adrian Loades	Chair
Hannah Woodhouse	Project Sponsor
Niki Clemo	Lead for Social Care Workstreams in action plan and complementary transformation of Social Care to unit model
Charlotte Black	Lead for preventative elements of strategy and related strategies across E&P Services
Gayle Gorman	Lead for education and role of schools in both prevention and meeting needs of looked after children
Elaine Petch	Lead for Social Care Workstreams in action plan and complementary transformation of Social Care to unit model
Judith Davies	Lead for Placements Commissioning and Placements Budget elements
Laura Wilkinson	Coordination with wider CYPS policy and transformation agenda
James Wilson	Project Manager
Justine Hartley	CYPS Finance Manager – Reporting on budget position and savings plan

### Frequency, length of Meetings and reporting

Meetings will be held every 2 months for 2 hours. The sponsor group will receive the latest highlight / exception report from the Project Manager, a report against the identified performance framework and budget position and any workstream briefs, business cases or other key proposals

## Appendix 4 – The Proposed Model of Parent Support (draft)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Emerging Needs	Additional Needs	Complex Needs	Severe Needs/Protection
Adult social care - disability			
<div>Early support and assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early identification of needs and signposting to appropriate services through high quality information which is available through a range of outlets</li><li>• Support provided in schools and Early Years settings</li><li>• Support provided to schools to build capacity around early years intervention and family support work</li><li>• Transitions support</li><li>• Debt and welfare advice</li><li>• Early identification of families health needs and support provided as appropriate</li></ul></div>	<div>Parenting workforce<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working at levels 2 &amp; 3 and up to Social Care thresholds<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong theoretical grounding</li><li>• Clear evidence of impact</li><li>• Potential to include specialist</li></ul></li><li>• Potential to deploy workforce in a mixture of settings</li></ul></div> <div>Evidence-based parenting programmes<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building the capacity of the workforce to deliver evidence-based programmes to targeted groups of parents</li><li>• Joined-up approach to coordination, provision of resources across CYPS and external partners</li></ul></div>	<div>Specialist interventions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A mixture of specialist interventions with a clear evidence-base</li><li>• Demonstrable impact</li><li>• Work to build the resilience of families to ensure long term changes</li><li>• Interventions clearly targeted at those with the greatest levels of need</li></ul></div>	
Building the capacity of the Voluntary & Community Sector			
Parent and carer engagement to influence and shape services			
Assessment processes to ensure appropriate access to services			
Organisational change to ensure processes and services work around the needs of the family			