



Cambridgeshire Children, Families and Adults Services

Sufficiency Statement 2014-2016

January 2014

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out how Cambridgeshire County Council will meet the placement needs of current and future Looked After Children (LAC) and care leavers, and improve their outcomes, in light of our understanding of their needs and current provision.

This strategy is set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance. It is linked to key local planning documents, in particular the Looked After Children Placements Strategy 2011-2015. All figures are taken from October 2013 unless stated otherwise.

Local Authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local area. In 2010, the Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on Local Authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

The Children Act 2008 defines Sufficiency as “a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, Local Authorities and their Children’s Trust partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area.”

This approach is consistent with Cambridgeshire County Council's strategies and plans relating to Looked After Children. The reduction in the level of funding for Local Authorities over the next four years means that the focus on efficiency and value for money will be stronger than before. The challenge for Local Authority Children's Services will be to sustain or improve on service quality and good outcomes for service users.

This strategy addresses the needs of children and young people from birth to the age of 21, (or 25 where Children’s Services continue to have statutory responsibility) including disabled children and young people who are, or who may be, accommodated by Cambridgeshire County Council. It meets the requirements of the sufficiency duty by collating needs and resource information and market analysis but also describes what needs to happen in relation to work with children in care or children at risk of coming into care.

It is consistent with “The Pledge: Our Promise”- our pledge to all looked after children. The following sections of “The Pledge” are particularly relevant:

- **Corporate Parents:** As corporate parents we will ensure you feel safe supported and cared for. We will respect and listen to you and involve you where possible. This is our pledge and our promise to you
- **Care Plans and Reviews:** We will always try to involve you when we are making decisions that will affect you. We will be understanding & listen to your opinions. We will give you clear information in a way you understand.
- **Care Leavers:** When you are ready to leave care we will fully support you in your decisions as stated in the care leavers charter.
- **Placements:** We are fully committed to finding you a caring place to live and we will make sure you feel loved, cared for and safe and receive the right information for you about your placement.
- **Social Workers:** We will provide you with a social worker who will listen to you, be supportive and honest. They will work on your behalf and make sure you have access to all your rights and entitlements. They will be contactable when you need them.

This Sufficiency Strategy forms a key strand of work under our high level Looked After Children Placements Strategy which 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. Its 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.

The Looked After Children Placements Strategy covers five key objectives:

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 keep children in education** and engaged in learning, recognising the vital importance of stable and successful education to enable the most vulnerable children to achieve their full potential. We also aim to offer consistency in education, supporting children and young people to remain in the same education provision they were in before they became looked after, or before a placement move.
3. **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.
4. **To provide high-quality care placements that include appropriate education** so that all Looked After Children have a positive experience of care and education, whatever their needs.
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.

2. Demographics of Cambridgeshire

It is estimated that there are around 136,000 children and young people under the age of 19, living in Cambridgeshire. This is approximately one-fifth of the total population of the county.

Although Huntingdonshire currently has the highest number of children and young people, Cambridge City is predicted to have the greatest increase in the number of children, with growth of 15.8% predicted by 2016. The three districts projecting the highest 0-19 population growth are South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City and East Cambridge. Overall, the population of children in Cambridgeshire is due to rise by 3.9% by 2016, and by 10.3%, by 2021 (based on the 2011 figures).

Since 2010, there has been a growth in the county's population for children and young people under 24 years, from 186,100 in 2010 to a predicted 196,400 in 2016. This number is projected to grow to 366,300 by 2025. A corresponding 5.5% growth in our LAC population would mean an extra 28 Looked After Children by 2016. We also know from the 2011 census that Cambridgeshire has the fastest growing population of all the Local Authorities in England.

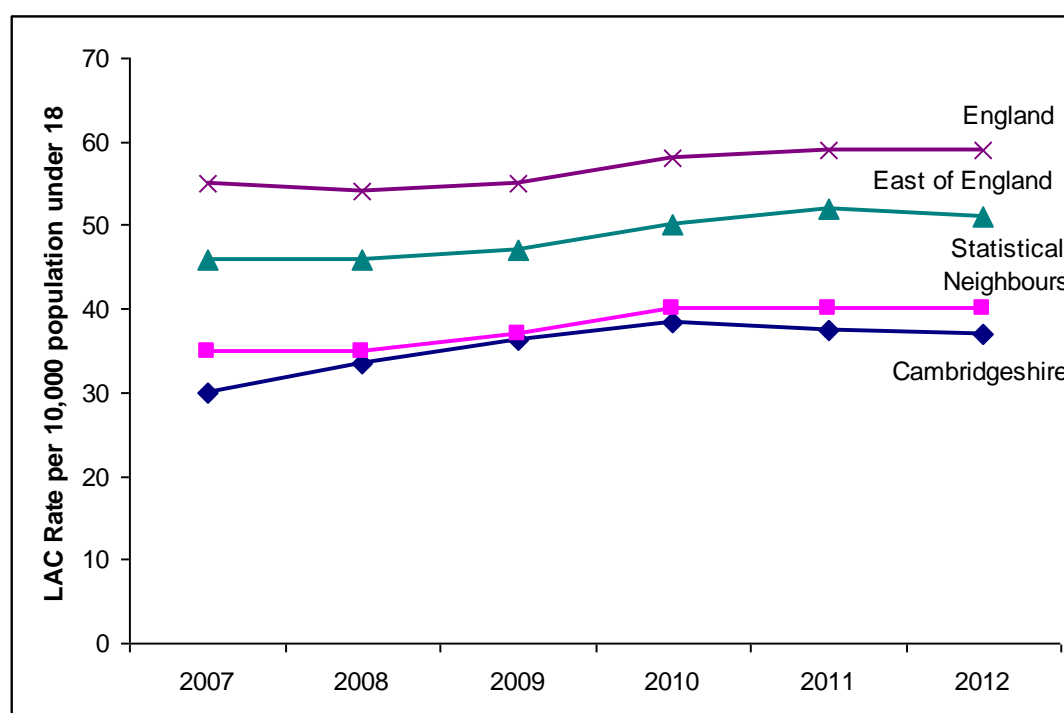
According to the 2010 Index of Deprivation, North Fenland, Huntingdon North and North East Cambridge have the greatest levels of relative deprivation. Waterlees in Fenland and Abbey in Cambridge City have the highest levels of child poverty within the county, with over half of all children living in means-tested, benefit-reliant families. There is a correlation between child poverty and poor outcomes for children, and there is a need to monitor and assess the impact of the forthcoming welfare reforms.

3. Looked After Children population

Since October 2010 the total number of LAC in Cambridgeshire has decreased from 502 by 5% to 480 children in October 2013, which equates to 37 per 10,000. This is a decrease from 38 per 10,000 in 2010/11. This rate is below the average for the East of England, which is 51 and our statistical neighbours, which is 40. It is also well below the national average of 59. This shows that we are already successfully keeping children with their families and out of care. If the rate did increase to the average or our statistical neighbours we would expect an additional 41 children to become looked after.

Looked After Children per 10,000 child population

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Cambridgeshire	30	33.4	36.2	38.4	37.4	37
Statistical Neighbours	35	35	37	40	40	40
East of England	46	46	47	50	52	51
England	55	54	55	58	59	59



In October 2013, 43 of our LAC had a disability. Alongside this, 131 of all Looked After Children had a Statement of Special Educational Need. This is 27% of the total LAC population. This means that we need carers who are able to meet the needs of children with a range of additional needs. These additional needs include complex disabilities, difficulty with learning, concentration, social integration and behaviour.

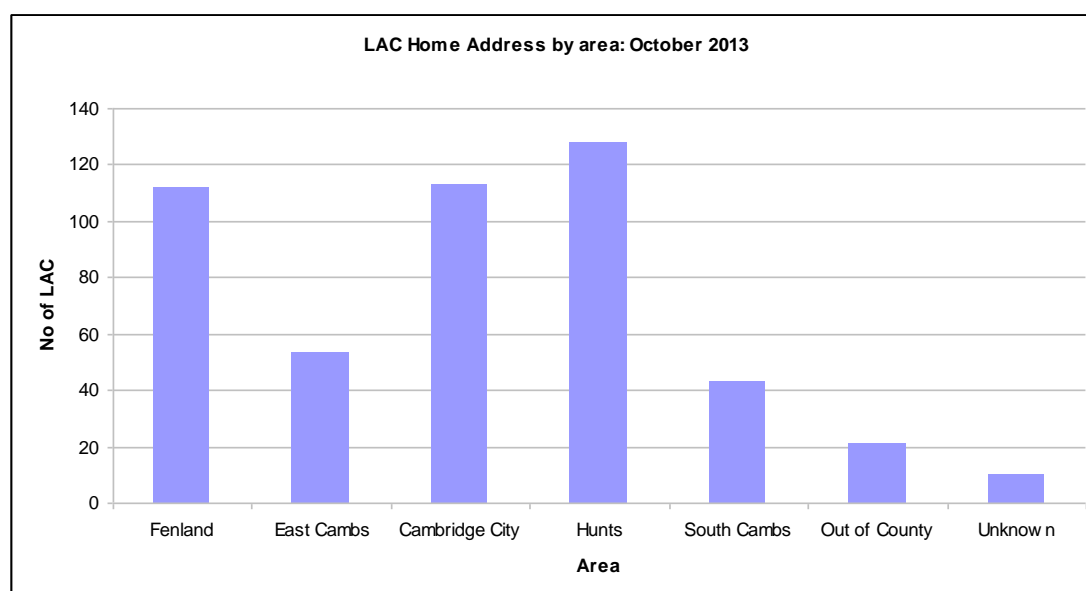
Our aim is to ensure that we are looking after the right children, at the right time and in the right place, and we will closely monitor our figures in relation to all children in our care.

3.1 Home Area of our Looked After Children

Cambridgeshire is divided into five distinct areas; South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. As described above the areas have quite different demographics.

Looked After Children's Home Address by Area

Area	Number of Looked After Children	% of total LAC population
Fenland	112	23.3%
East Cambs	53	11.0%
Cambridge City	113	23.5%
Hunts	128	26.7%
South Cambs	43	9.0%
Out of County	21	4.4%
Unknown	10	2.1%
TOTAL	480	



What this shows is that over 50% of Looked After children and young people are from the Fenland and Huntingdon area, with the least coming from the south and east of the county.

3.2 Diversity of our Looked After Children

As would be expected in an area with Cambridgeshire's demographic profile, the largest ethnic group in our LAC population is White British (83%). The table below demonstrates the range of diversity of LAC compared to the under 18 population as a whole.

Ethnicity	Cambridgeshire	Looked After Children
	Under 18 population	March 2013
White	84.7%	83.1%
Asian	3.8%	4.2%
Mixed	6.2%	6.6%
Black	1.9%	1.8%
Other	2.5%	4.2%

This illustrates that the LAC population broadly reflects the total population of children in Cambridgeshire. The LAC population with White ethnicity are 95% White British, which shows a slight over representation of White children who are not British. This group are primarily made up of children from other European countries. Children from other ethnic backgrounds are over represented in our LAC population and all of these children have their ethnicity recorded as not known. Analysis of these figures suggests that most of these children are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

3.3 Age range of LAC

Total LAC	March 2012	October 2013	Average per year *
0– 4 years	93	91	18.2
5– 9 years	72	100	20
10 – 15 years	173	181	30.2
16+ years	112	106	53
Total	450	478	480

* Average number of children per year of age for October 2013

The largest cohort is the 10-15 year olds which equates to an average of 30 children per chronological age of the child. We have also seen a growth in the 5-9 age group which means we need more permanent placements available for children where adoption may not be an option. We also have a significantly higher number of children aged 16 and 17, 53 per year. This shows that we have a significant number of children who become LAC and remain LAC throughout their childhood, until they become care leavers at 18. This cohort are joined by children entering care, many between the ages of 10-17, where the average number per chronological age is increasing each year. There is a significant jump in the increase at 16 and 17, suggesting a need for additional provision for this age group.

3.4 Legal Status of LAC – October 2013

Legal Status	Age Group				Total
	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 15	16+	
EPO/PP	0	0	0	0	0
ICO	29	12	8	0	49
CO	3	41	124	42	210
S20	10	10	44	62	126
Placement orders	49	37	7	0	93
Remand	0	0	0	2	2
Total	91	100	183	106	480

This shows that 10% of our current LAC population are subject to court proceedings, which means that their future is unclear for them and they are not in a permanent placement. A further 25% are accommodated without an Order and with parental agreement. 46% have their future as a LAC secured either being subject to a Care Order or a Placement Order. This shows that we need a mix of short term and permanent placements, approximately a 50/50 split, to meet the needs of the LAC population.

3.5 Disabled Children and Young People

There are 34 LAC who are open to our Disabled Children Services. In addition to this there are nine children and young people who have a disability who are open to the LAC units, giving a total of 43 children and young people, approximately 9%. It is acknowledged that there are multiple definitions of disability and the definition used by Cambridgeshire has changed over time. We are currently working to defining children and young people by their likely need for life long services and the 'fair access to care' criteria.

Numbers of disabled LAC are increasing, as a result of demographics, reducing infant mortality due to medical advances and the association between disability and poverty. Placements are needed for children with challenging behaviour associated with autistic spectrum disorders which lead to family breakdown, as well as for younger disabled children who have experienced neglect. There is a higher percentage of disabled children in residential provision than non disabled children which shows a need for an

increase in foster care placements for disabled children. 101 disabled children use overnight short break provision on a regular basis, with 48 accessing residential short break services. This number has remained relatively static over the previous few years.

3.6 Children Subject to Court Proceedings

Cambridgeshire County Council is working closely with legal services to meet the requirements of the Family Justice Review and achieve more timely resolution of court proceedings, aiming for 26 weeks.

3.7 Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

An increasing number of children are exiting the care system as a result of adoption or SGO. The numbers of SGO's granted have moved from 1.5 per month in 2011-12, to 1.25 per month in 2012-2013 to 1.43 from April-October 2013. Cambridgeshire has a Permanency Monitoring Group in place which has set targets to increase the number of children adopted, adoptive parents recruited and speed up the adoption process.

19 children were adopted between April and October 2013, which equates to 2.7 per month. They spent an average of 436 days in care prior to moving to this adoptive family. Cambridgeshire's three year average is 511 days, which shows a significant reduction over the preceding eight months. This compares favourably with a national average of 647 days and 578 days for our statistical neighbours. Cambridgeshire has consistently been placing an average of 2.7 children per month since 2011.

These figures show that on average four children per month are exited from care to either adoptive parents or to special guardians. The numbers have remained consistent since 2011.

In 2011-2012 we were approving an average of three adopters per month. This has decreased to two per month since April 2013.

Given the number of young children coming into care on statutory orders, the focus on adoption as a means to meet children's need for permanency must be sustained, and a targeted plan for maintaining a growth in the number of adoptive parents is needed.

Cambridgeshire has entered into a pioneering partnership arrangement with Coram, a nationally based adoption charity to provide expertise on adoption and to improve the delivery of services. This relationship was recently the subject of an independent evaluation by Red Quadrant Consultants and recently concluded that the partnership had delivered the following achievements;

- Delivering a more child centred service
- Early identification of permanence options
- Early permanence decision making

- Children being placed earlier i.e. younger
- Better tracking of cases
- Improved practice in casework
- Introduction of concurrent care

As an Adoption Agency we have continued to compare favourably with our comparator authorities in the National Adoption Scorecard performance data, especially in the timescales for achieving adopted placements, following court agreement to place.

3.8 Siblings

From April 2012-March 2013, there were 21 referrals for external placements for sibling groups. There are currently (October 2013) 69 sibling groups, comprising of 43 with 2 siblings, 18 with 3 siblings, 4 with 4 siblings and 4 with 5 siblings. The majority of these are placed together with Independent Fostering Agencies or are placed separately either in independent residential or foster placements. This shows that 35% of LAC are part of a sibling group comprising of other LAC children, highlighting the need for a range of sibling placements and good contact opportunities when these children are not placed together. Sibling groups are more likely to be placed with IFAs and more likely to be placed out of county. This means we need increased provision in county for foster placements for siblings.

3.9 Young People Known to Youth Offending Services

The '*Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012*' introduces changes to the remand powers of Courts with a view to achieving a reduction in the numbers of children and young people who are remanded into custody. It also brings about the change of Looked After Children status for all remanded young people and leaving care status for those who remain in custody for 13 weeks or more as well as the transfer of financial responsibility to local authorities. The policy direction is to manage all young people on remand in the community unless there is a serious concern for public safety.

From April 2013 to November 2013 there were two young people who were on custodial remand. We have one Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) bed at an in house children's homes available for children who are remanded. The numbers suggest that we do not currently need additional provision

3.10 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Historically Cambridgeshire had a specialist team to support UASC. This is no longer in place due to the reduction in the number of UASC for whom Cambridgeshire is the responsible authority. There are currently 6 UASC who are LAC which represents 1% of the total LAC population. Four of these are in supported accommodation, one in foster care and one in residential care. Due to the current low numbers of UASC, it would not seem necessary to identify additional provision for this group.

When the UASC reach 18 they are entitled to the same leaving care provisions as any other Looked After Children under Section 23 of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

3.11 Young People leaving care - 16+

All young people who are looked after between the ages of 16-18 remain the responsibility of the Looked After Children Units, transferring to the 18+ team before their 18th birthday. Any child who is looked after for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, and were looked after at some point over the age of 16, is entitled to leaving care services from the 18+ Team, either as an eligible, relevant or former relevant child.

We currently have 256 places available in housing benefit sustainable supported accommodation, including YMCA and foyer accommodation across the county. Whilst these are not for the exclusive use of LAC, the contracts and budget for the support element of the provision are managed by the Access to Resources Team. This means that we have good access to the beds and can help prioritise LAC children.

A further 31+ places are available with independent providers of Supported Accommodation. There are currently 10+ within Cambridgeshire with an additional 18 in the process of being set up. Whilst we do not have exclusive access to these places, many have been set up as a direct response to a recent tender process (May 2013).

Alongside this 20, young people are in staying put placements, with 12 having left a staying put placement in the last 12 months. All IFA placements are contractually obliged to offer staying put as an option for Cambridgeshire LAC. The in house fostering service run a supported lodgings service. There are currently four placements across the county.

This range of accommodation plays a critical part in the housing and support options available to young people in transition from foster and residential care to greater independence.

There are currently 106 young people aged over 16 who are looked after. See 5.5 for table detail of the different types of placement.

3.12 Young People Aged 16+ who are Vulnerable and at Risk of Coming into Care

The Southwark Judgement 2009 clarified the responsibility of Local Authorities to assess the needs of a young person who presents as homeless and to provide accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 if that young person is assessed as a 'child in need'. In all but the most exceptional cases, 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless are, by nature of their homeless status, children in need. An assessment must

determine whether they need to be accommodated under S20 of the Children Act 1989. Where this is not appropriate or the young person refuses, they will be considered a child in need and offered services and support as required.

In 2012-2013 there were 419 referrals for 16-17 year olds to the contact centre, of which 222 were 16 and 197 were 17. During this period 34 children aged 16 and 17 became looked after. This suggests that the majority of children were prevented from becoming accommodated, although not every referral may have been requesting accommodation. Further work on the number of referrals for homeless that result in children becoming looked after, broken down by area, is needed to help guide preventative work.

4. Views of Children and Young People about Choice and Sufficiency of Placement

There are a range of processes in place to consult with children and young people and fulfil our commitment to engage and consult with them and involve them in the design and delivery of services. The table below summarises views of young people which should impact on decisions about securing placements and how we meet their needs in a holistic way.

Source/process in place	Key messages from young people
Participation team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to listen to me • Give me stability • Include me in decisions • Let me know what is going on • How far away is it? • Why have my family disowned me? • Will there be other young people there? Will they like me? • Why is it just me? What will happen to my brothers and sisters? • How long will I be there? • I've never seen a picture of my new carers. Who are they? What are they like? • Will I lose my friends? • Everything I own is in boxes. Don't know where to put them. Can I unpack and place it all where I want?
Just Us	
NYAS	
IRO's	
Voicability	
Children in Care Council – Voice Matters	
Monitoring of providers	

4.1 Planning Meetings

In February 2012 we introduced Placement Planning Meetings primarily to include children in their placement finding and to address placement breakdown rates. The purpose of the meetings is to:

- (i) identify any additional support needed to help sustain the placement and set a review date;
- (ii) have a greater understanding of why the placement is not working and gather information;
- (iii) promote the child and young person's involvement where appropriate in any decision making about their future, providing them with the opportunity to share their views, make changes, reflect on any behaviours and increase their understanding of any implications of a placement move;
- (iv) use the information gathered at the meeting to help inform the Individual Child Contracts which detail what the local authority expects from a Provider to ensure the child or young person's needs are met if the outcome of the meeting is a placement move

Whilst the LAC population has stayed relatively stable, the numbers of children and young people who have moved in an emergency have reduced from 71 in 2011 to 50 in 2012 and have increased slightly to 53 in 2013. Although there are other variables, it suggests that a prompt placement planning meeting may have a positive impact on placement stability. Whilst all of the planning meetings were managed by the Access to Resources Team (ART) in the first 12 months, they have now primarily been taken on by the Units with involvement from ART.

5. Current Placement Provision

5.1 Placement Mix and Cost

Cambridgeshire has, as of October 2013, 305 children placed with private providers, accounting for 64% of all looked after children, in a mix of supported accommodation, foster care, children's residential homes and residential schools. 53% are in foster care and, of the remaining children, 32% are placed with in house foster carers, 2.5% in In House children's homes and the remaining are placed at home.

Whilst 32% of our children are in In-house foster care (104 in October 2013), we currently have 230 children placed in Independent Foster Agency placements. This figure is up from 222 in October 2012 and from 217 in October 2011. This shows a 6% increase in the use of IFA placements over the last 2 year.

The percentage of children placed with a connected person remains static at 6%. A recent review of children in high cost placements demonstrated that 44% of children in IFAs and 78% of children in residential placements have challenging or risk taking behaviour as their primary need.

The mix of placement is shown below:

Placement type	October 2013
CCC foster carer	104
IFA carer	230
Friends, family, connected person	31
Adoption	27
In-house Residential	12
Private and voluntary sector residential	44
Supported accommodation	22
Other	5
Total	480

Placement Cost

The weekly unit cost of an in-house fostering placement is £487, compared with a national average of £428. IFA placements cost £831 per week, compared with a national average of £864. The establishment of the new Eastern Region Fostering Contract is expected to improve capacity and availability of IFA placements in county. We will work with the independent providers on the framework to develop innovative and cost effective provision to meet identified needs within our budgetary constraints.

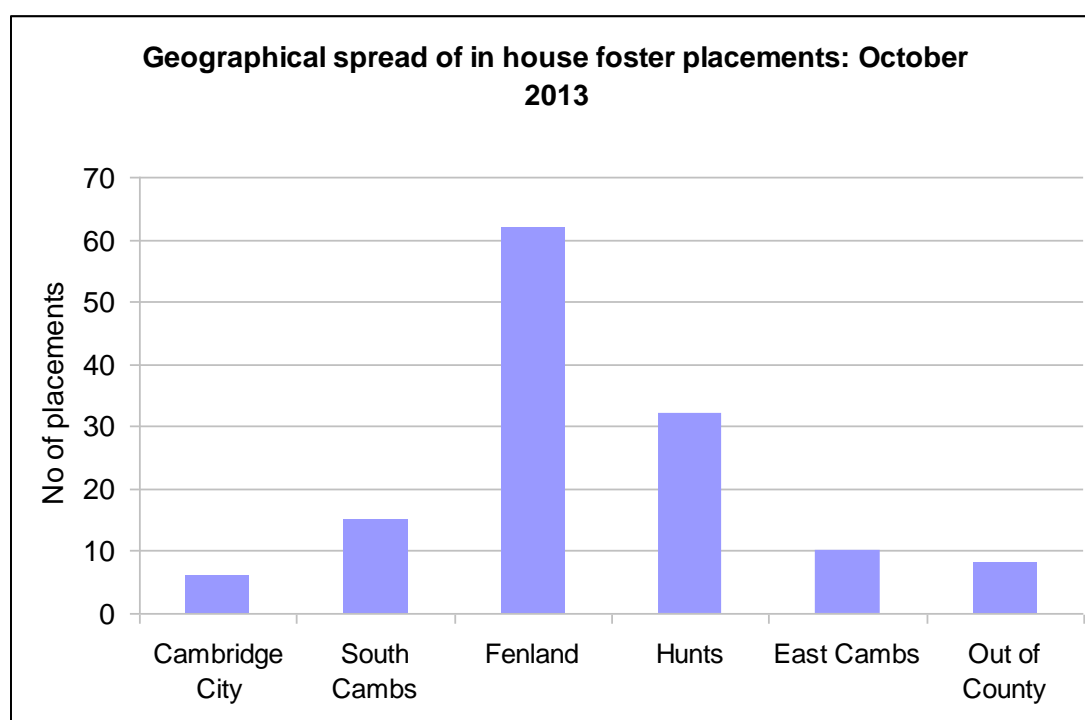
The average weekly unit cost for an in house residential placement is £2848 per week, compare with independent residential provision costing £3162 per week. These placements are for children with the most complex needs that require specialist provision, including disabled children. Where health and education services are provided in the placement, contributions are received from these agencies, although there are minimal recharges to Health.

5.2 In-House Fostering

Cambridgeshire has its own in-house fostering service, run centrally. As of October 2013, there were a total of 77 fostering households approved for 119 placements (based on full occupancy) with 104 children in placement. This is a small reduction from 78 households in March 2011 and an increase from 59 in March 2012.

In House Fostering Oct 2013

Area	Households	Placements	Children in Placement	Vacancies
Cambridge City	3	6	4	1
South Cambs	9	15	12	0
Fenland	36	62	56	2
Hunts	19	32	25	4
East Cambs	5	10	7	1
Out of County	5	8	4	3
Total	77	133	108	11



This shows that over 47% of in house foster carers are in the Fenland area with only 4% in the city. This means that we need to increase capacity in the city as 24% of LAC are from Cambridge. We also need to increase capacity in the Huntingdon area to match the 27% of LAC who are from the Huntingdon area. There is a review of the in house fostering service taking place, looking at how we can increase capacity and the total number of foster households.

5.3 External Fostering

Cambridgeshire is part of a group of four Council's who developed a regionally commissioned rolling select list for Foster Care services. Contracted providers are divided into three groups, providing a service to children and young people with limited, standard and intensive support needs. Within each category they are divided into three tiers based on an evaluation

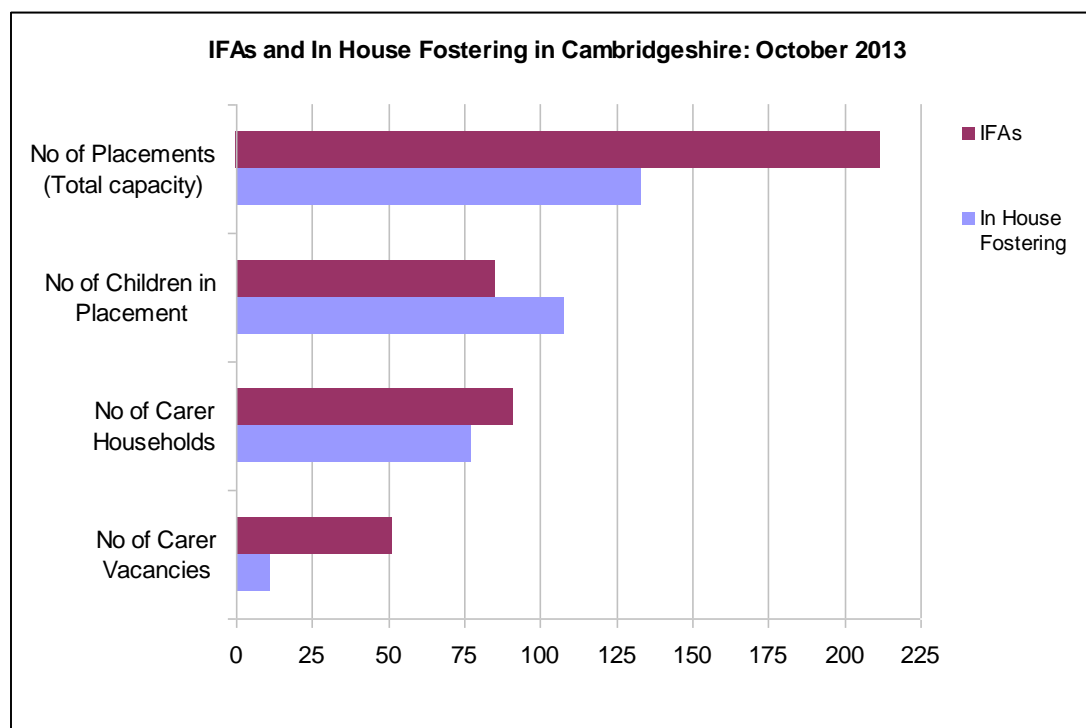
of their response to a number of processes including questions evaluated by practitioners, children and young people, placement capacity within our area, self reported assessment and price.

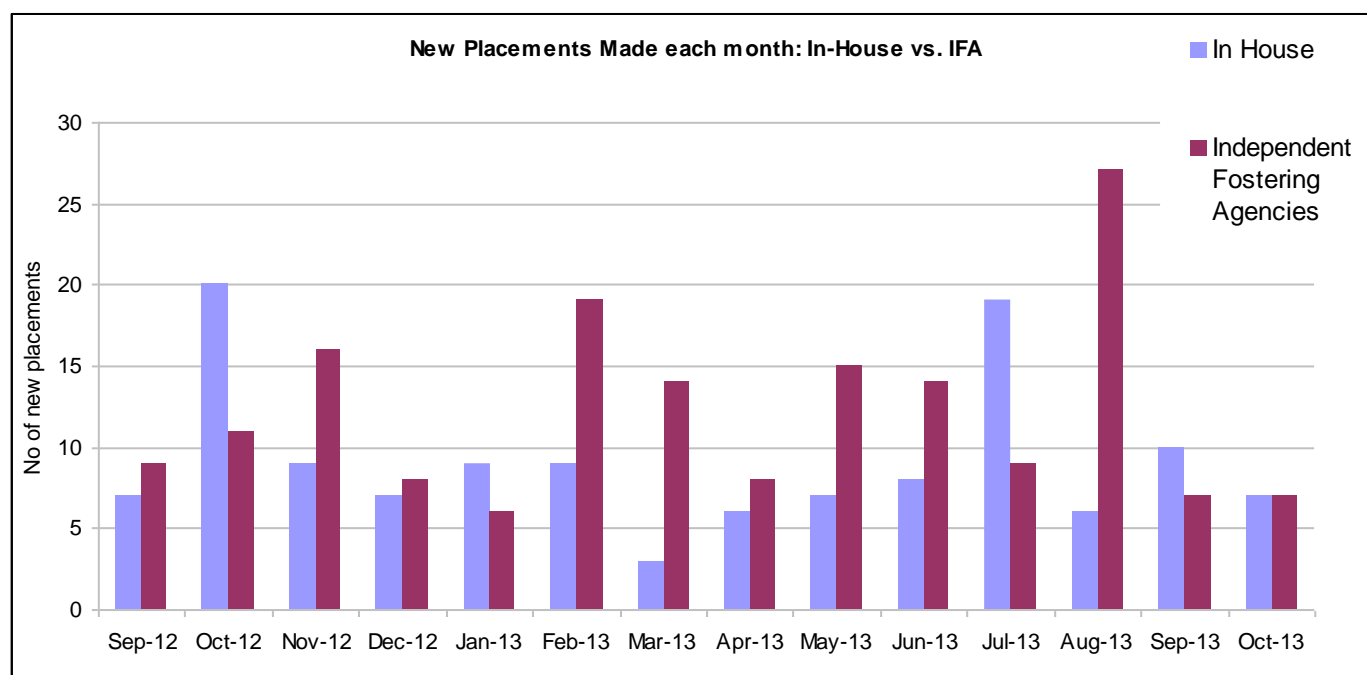
The Select List is open on an annual basis to allow new providers to join, and existing providers to amend their information and move either up or down the tiering. The aim of the contract is to build capacity within the Council's boundaries and set out a clearer, outcome focused specification. Cambridgeshire have a contract with 25 Providers under the Select List which runs until 2017 (with an option to extend the Contract for a further two years). All previous placements are under the Contract issued by London Care Placements on a spot purchase basis.

There are currently 93 IFA fostering households in Cambridgeshire (total number of IFA carers who are registered with a provider who is part of the regional fostering contract) offering 217 beds with 87 Cambridgeshire young people placed with them. This means that there are a considerable number of children from outside of Cambridgeshire placed with foster carers who live in county. It may also mean that the foster carers in Cambridgeshire are not able to meet the needs of the LAC population.

	No of Carer Households in Cambs	No of placements in Cambs	No of vacancies in Cambs	No of Cambridgeshire children and young people in placement
IFA Providers	93	217	51	87

Comparison of IFA and In House Foster Placements





These charts that we show that there is more capacity in county with the IFA providers than with In House provision. It also demonstrates the current vacancies available within Cambridgeshire. Most months we are placing more children in IFA placements than with In House Carers, the exception being October 2012 and July 2013. It is notable that the month following high numbers of placements with In House Carers we need more placements with IFA carers, suggesting that the In House Carers were full. The new regional fostering contract is now in place and 12 weekly meetings are taking place with the top tier providers to help increase capacity within Cambridgeshire.

5.4 Residential Provision

Cambridgeshire are part of the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group and currently have a Contract with 20 residential care home Providers and 23 residential schools Providers in and out of the county. Cambridgeshire use the national contract templates (NASS Contract for residential schools).

Cambridgeshire has in house residential provision for 17 children, including 5 disabled children. There are currently 12 LAC placed in these provisions (4 homes). There are currently 44 children who are in external residential care placements and 9 of these are in county (20%) placed in 4 different homes. This shows that 48% of children in residential children's homes are placed in county.

There are further registered children's homes in county that are not currently used by Cambridgeshire. This is due to one of the following reasons:

- They are able to meet the needs of the children and young people that we need to place

- There have been concerns raised through previous monitoring visits
- They do not have a good / outstanding OFSTED rating

5.5 16+ Accommodation Provision

The 18-25 team currently provide a leaving care service and work with young people from just before their 18th birthday. They do not work with disabled young people or UASC, who are supported by specialist teams. Of the 16 – 18 year olds who are in care, the range of accommodation provision is as follows:

PLACEMENT TYPE	Number
Placement with other foster carer	42
Children's Home	28
Residential School	5
Residential accommodation not subject to children's home regulations	25
Independent Living	2
Foster placement with relative or friend	4
TOTAL	106

Providing a choice of accommodation to support young people in their transition from foster care or residential care to greater independence is a challenge and work is ongoing with housing authorities and the ex Supporting People providers to extend this range of provision.

6.0 Out of County Placements

We always look to place young people in county whenever possible and will always initially approach local providers. We would only place children or young people out of county in circumstances, which may include, but are not limited to:

- if the child or young person is in an existing out of county placement
- if the child or young person's safety is in question in county
- to move to be nearer to the child or young person's friends or relatives
- if specialist provision is not available in county including specialist care /educational for those with complex needs and disabilities.

Why does Cambridgeshire have a high number of out of county placements?

Cambridgeshire has a high population of LAC placed out of county. This is for a number of reasons, including limited specialist residential provision, too few foster carers in county for the growing population and our strategy to place children and young people in a family placement, rather than residential care.

In addition it is our practice is to keep sibling groups together and as previously noted this increases the possibility of an out of county placement.

There have been three cases in the last six months when we placed a young person out of county for their own safety.

Analysis of the data

90% of Cambridgeshire Looked After children and young people are placed either in county or in one of our neighbouring authorities. Those placed further away are almost always in specialist or permanent placements. Between April and December 2013, 71% of placements were in county.

Out of 480 LAC, we have 205 (43%) children more than 20 miles from home and 91 (19%) more than 50 miles from home. Of those over 20 miles away, 30% are placed in county, 70% out of county. They are in the following placement type:

Placement Type	No.	% of total out of county placements
Foster placement with relative or friend	10	5%
Placement with other foster carer	124	62.6%
Secure Unit	0	0%
Children's Home	30	15.1%
Residential school	9	4.5%
Residential accommodation not subject to Children's homes regulations	19	9.6%
Placed with parents or other person with parental responsibility	1	0.5%
Health or other establishment providing medical or nursing care	1	0.5%
Independent Living	4	2%
Total	198	

40% of children placed out of county have been in their placement for more than two years and only 26% were made in the preceding six months. Many of these were specialist placements, such as residential schools and alternatives to secure accommodation for children and young people with complex needs.

The above data shows that we need to utilise the IFA placements in county for Cambridgeshire children or identify 100+ additional foster placements

available in county and additional children's home provision. It is of note that most of the young people who have recently moved to out of county children's homes have been as a result of their social worker requesting placements away from their community.

7.0 Other Support Services

Cambridgeshire Children, Families and Adults Services have invested in a range of services to support children, and these services will be available to all LAC in order to support placements and improve placement stability. These services include:

Unit Clinicians attached to every Social Work Unit.
Virtual School Cambridgeshire – a service to work with LAC and support them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes.
LAC Psychology Support
Sexual Behaviour Service
Family Group meeting service
LAC health team

8.0 Gap Analysis

There is a notable lack of foster placements available to children in county. Currently we have 337 foster beds in Cambridgeshire and 334 children in foster care. This means that we need to make better use of the foster carers who are available locally and make sure that we are notified when they have vacancies and also develop the market within Cambridgeshire. This is being addressed with the new fostering contract and also with 12 weekly meeting with top tier providers to encourage capacity to increase.

There are approximately 25% of Looked After children and young people from each of the following area: Cambridge City, Fenland and Huntingdon. Further development of provision within the City and Huntingdon is needed to allow children and young people to be placed close to their family. Further comparison of the total number of children and the number of looked after children in each area would be helpful to identify any future gaps or trends. This will be addressed through the Placement Strategy.

There has been development of Supported Accommodation in Cambridgeshire over the last six months resulting from the new Supported Accommodation contract. This appears to meet the demand of the number of placements that are needed both for looked after children and care leaver., Further development is needed of Supported Lodgings to be able to offer young people a range of options when they turn 16. Provision for Care Leavers also includes Staying Put provision and the number of Care Leavers accessing this provision is increasing. This will be addressed through the Placement Strategy.

We need a mix of short and long term placements, with approximately 50/50 split. We particularly need long term placements for children entering care over the age of 10. This will be addressed through the fostering contract and through the review of in house fostering services

35% of Cambridgeshire LAC have a sibling who is also looked after. This means that a third of placements need to be sibling placements. We need more foster placements that can offer sibling groups, including large sibling groups and can manage a number of children with competing needs. This will be addressed through the strategic meetings with the IFA's and also through sharing this report with in house and private fostering providers.

Approximately 30% of all children in foster care are placed with in house care carers. As children placed with in house foster carers are more likely to be in county, we would benefit from focusing on recruiting more in house foster carers, focusing on the target areas mentioned above. The need to increase in county in house provision will be considered in within the current of the Fostering Review that is focusing re-commissioning this provision.

There are 11% of children and young people are in residential care, and they are more likely to be placed out of county. Further development of residential provision in county is needed that can meet the particular needs of the young people who need residential care, including emergency and long term placements. There is a particular need for them to be linked with education provision and to work closely with our in house children's homes. This will be addressed through the Residential Children's Home tender that will be advertised in late spring 2014 following the Residential Review.

We need to develop provision in county for disabled children. This is being addressed through the shared care strategy and will also be addressed through the Residential Children's Home tender that will be advertised in late spring 2014. We are currently working to establish provision for young people returning from Kisimul (52 week) back to in county. This project combines their housing, care and educational needs and see the county working collaboratively with the independent sector

There is a need to reduce the number of emergency referrals and ensure the majority of requests are for planned placement moves. There is a working group set up as a work stream as part of the LAC Placements Strategy addressing this.

Developing provision in Cambridgeshire needs to be a priority to address the number of children placed out of county. It is expected that this will also minimise disruption in education placements for Looked After children and young people. We have seen an increase in capacity for Supported Accommodation, following the recent tender process, and we are expecting to see an increase in fostering following the new fostering contract starting in October 2013 and will likely see an increase in residential provision following the tender process due for late Spring 2014 which will benefit from the additional detail in this strategy.

Finally, we are predicting an increase in the population in Cambridgeshire over the coming years. We need to keep the number of LAC under close review to ensure that we have the capacity and mix of placements necessary to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire's Looked After children and young people.

9.0 Next Steps

This strategy will be shared with all key stakeholders and partners. An updated version will be produced in July 2014 which will include an expanded section on joint commissioning plans with Health Partners.

Most children or young people who come into care have had traumatic life experiences and are more likely to have unmet health needs, sometimes multiple and complex. We need to work closely with our Health partners to identify the health needs of looked after children and ensure these are met. A joint protocol is already in place between CCC, Children's Health Commissioning and Cambridgeshire Community Services which describes our relationship with Health partners and sets out quality standards. This will be refreshed this year.

This Sufficiency Strategy will be discussed with Health partners so they are clear on our numbers of Looked After Children and levels of need. We can then jointly plan and commission sufficient dedicated resources to meet the needs of our looked after children and manage the pressure on services. The outcomes of these discussions will be reflected in the July 2014 updated document.

10.0 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people and teams who have helped us to develop this strategy:

- Senior Managers in Children's, Families and Adults Services
- Social Care Units
- Fostering and Adoption teams
- Disability Services
- Children's Participation Team
- Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) in Cambridgeshire
- Education Services for Looked After Children (ESLAC)
- Statutory Assessment and Resources Team (StART)
- Children and Young People's Management Information Team
- Other local authorities.