

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE



Tuesday, 17 May 2022

Democratic and Members' Services

Fiona McMillan
Monitoring Officer

14:00

New Shire Hall
Alconbury Weald
Huntingdon
PE28 4YE

**Multi-Function Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald,
Huntingdon PE28 4YE
[Venue Address]**

AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

1. **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

*Guidance on declaring interests is available at
<http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>*

2. **Minutes - 1 March 2022 and Action Log** **1 - 26**
3. **Petitions and Public Questions**

KEY DECISION

4. **Education Transport Contracts** **27 - 38**

DECISIONS

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| 5. | Home to School Transport to After School Clubs - SEND | 39 - 72 |
| 6. | CUSPE Research Project - Improving Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care | 73 - 246 |
| 7. | Response to the Government's SEND Review Green Paper and Update on SEND Provision and Placements | 247 - 370 |
| 8. | Education White Paper - Opportunity for All | 371 - 380 |
| 9. | Children and Young People Committee Agenda Plan, Training Plan and Appointments | 381 - 408 |

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The Children and Young People Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Bryony Goodliffe (Chair) Councillor Maria King (Vice-Chair) Councillor David Ambrose Smith Councillor Michael Atkins Councillor Alex Bulat Councillor Claire Daunton Councillor Anne Hay Councillor Samantha Hoy Councillor Jonas King Councillor Mac McGuire Councillor Keith Prentice Councillor Alan Sharp Councillor Philippa Slatter Councillor Simone Taylor and Councillor Firouz Thompson Canon Andrew Read (Appointee) Flavio Vettese (Appointee)

Clerk Name:	Richenda Greenhill
Clerk Telephone:	01223 699171
Clerk Email:	Richenda.Greenhill@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Children and Young People Committee Minutes

Date: 1 March 2022

Time: 2.00pm – 5.15pm

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon PE28 8YE

Present: Councillors D Ambrose Smith, M Atkins (to 4.27pm), A Bradnam, A Bulat, C Daunton, B Goodliffe (Chair), A Hay (to 5.00pm), S Hoy (to 5.00pm), J King, M King (Vice Chair), M McGuire, K Prentice, A Sharp, P Slatter and S Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Canon A Read, Church of England Diocese of Ely

F Vettese, Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

Apologies: Councillor F Thompson (substituted by Councillor A Bradnam)

54. Announcements

Committee members expressed their sympathy and support for all the children and families caught up in the violence in Ukraine, and for the children and young people who found themselves on the front line on both sides of the conflict.

The Chair expressed her thanks to Hazel Belchamber, the Assistant Director for Education Capital and Place Planning, for 34 years' service to the Council and wished her well for her retirement. She also congratulated Nicola Curley on her recent appointment as Director of Children's Services.

55. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were reported as recorded above. There were no declarations of interest.

56. Minutes – 18 January 2022 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 18 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair. Councillor Bradnam abstained from the vote.

The action log was noted.

57. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee received four public questions relating to Item 6: Delivery of Early Years Provision to serve Abbey Division, Cambridge. A copy of the questions can be viewed on the [Council's website](#) and minute 59 below refers.

There were no petitions.

58. Tender Framework for Early Years and Childcare Provision

The impact of the Covid pandemic on early years settings had led to a rise in the number of tenders being required. Appendix 2 to the report set out the proposed tender policy. This included criteria for exceptions to the requirement to tender, but it was emphasised that the preferred approach would be to go out to tender. The Committee was invited to note the existing delegation to officers to enter into agreements to dispose of interests in property at less than best consideration up to an annual rental limit of £20,000.

In response to Members' comments, officers stated that:

- Work was in hand on producing a framework which would allow the tender process to be carried out more quickly. The Service Director for Education stated that officers would look to Spokes for advice on this and offered a note on how the process would work in practice. **Action**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the tender policy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report for immediate adoption and implementation.
- b) Note the existing delegation to officers to enter into agreements to dispose of interests in property at less than best consideration up to an annual rental limit of £20,000.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

59. Tendering for Early Years Places in Loves Farm, St Neots

There was a need to secure new childcare providers to deliver services for Loves Farm and Wintringham Park in order to meet the Council's statutory sufficiency duty. There were sufficient places available at present, but the leases for the settings at The Round House Primary Academy and the Community Centre were coming to an end, so there was a need to act now to ensure the continuation of provision.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Commented that the local Members for St Neots East and Gransden and St Neots Eynesbury had spoken to officers about the proposals and raised a number of queries received from a local resident. They welcomed the discussion of the proposals.
- Asked whether the award of tenders would be brought back to the committee for decision. The Service Director for Education stated that the Committee was recommended to delegate this decision to him in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, but that details of the proposed award could be shared with Spokes and committee members.

It was unanimously resolved to:

Approve the initiation of a tender process and delegate the subsequent decision relating to the award of a tender to the Service Director for Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, in order to secure new childcare providers to deliver provision from:

- a) The Round House Primary Academy in Loves Farm, St Neots; and
- b) The Community Centre, Kester Way, Loves Farm, St Neots.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

60. Delivery of Early Years Provision to serve Abbey Division, Cambridge

The Committee was advised that the figure for Council investment to date on the mobile classroom currently being used by SeeSaw Preschool was £15,000, and not £20,000 as stated at paragraph 4.1 of the report.

There was strong community support for the proposal to include accommodation for the delivery of early years and childcare provision in the planned re-development of the East Barnwell Community Hub. The Council would be able to continue to meet its statutory sufficiency duty if the Seesaw Preschool relocated from its current temporary accommodation on the site of The Galfrid Primary School back to East Barnwell. The Fields Nursery School would continue to deliver early years and childcare provision from The Galfrid Primary School site, and the geographical separation of the two providers would offer parents a better balance of provision in the most disadvantaged ward in the City and could support The Fields' future sustainability.

Four public questions were heard from Nicky Massey, local resident and former Cambridge City councillor for Abbey Ward; Councillor Haf Davies, Cambridge City councillor for Abbey Ward; Reverend Stuart Wood, a trustee of Seesaw Preschool; and Nicky Shepard, CEO of Abbey People.

Nicky Massey commented that she had spoken at the meeting on 9 March 2021 when the Committee had decided that SeeSaw Preschool should remain on The

Galfrid Primary School site and not move back to East Barnwell. She was glad to see the decision being re-visited and the recommendation that Seesaw Preschool should now be allowed to return to its previous location at East Barnwell. Early years provision was vital to the development of children's skills, and she expressed the hope that the wishes of the local community would be heard.

Councillor Davies commented that the co-location of services at the East Barnwell Community Hub, including early years provision, was the clear wish and expectation of local Abbey residents. She stated that Abbey was home to some of the most disadvantaged groups in the city and her belief that returning Seesaw Preschool to East Barnwell would be of great benefit both to local families and to The Fields Nursey School and would meet a real community need.

Reverend Wood commented that Seesaw Preschool had been located in East Barnwell for over 20 years. At every stage in the process the County Council had committed to early years provision being retained on the East Barnwell site, so it had been a shock last March when this position was not supported. He expressed concerns about how the report to the March 2021 meeting had been written and presented and his view that the community's voice had not been heard. He acknowledged Seesaw Preschool's continued success on The Galfrid Primary School site, but felt that the report did not make clear that this was due to the hard work of staff and trustees, or recognise that some families had left the preschool due to the change in location.

Nicky Shepard commented that for over nine years the local community had taken part in multiple consultations with the vision of achieving a community hub with co-located services. That vision was dependent on more people accessing the site. She highlighted the wide range of needs across the Abbey community and that all of their research showed a preference for early years provision being available at different locations and not from the same site. There had been a big increase in the number of benefit claimants in Abbey during the pandemic and access to early years provision had an important role to play in breaking the cycle of inequality.

There were no questions of clarification to any of the public speakers.

Speaking as the local Member for Abbey, Councillor Bulat commented that the public speakers and the written representations included at Appendix 2 of the report clearly set out the views and wishes of the local community. The local community and stakeholders had been very disappointed by the Committee's decision in 2021 that Seesaw Preschool should remain on The Galfrid Primary School site and their wish to see it return to East Barnwell was unchanged. Abbey remained the most disadvantaged area within Cambridge City, and the East Barnwell Community Hub would place a range of services close to those who would be using them. Councillor Bulat paid tribute to her predecessor, Councillor Joan Whitehead, for her work on this issue and expressed the hope that committee members would feel able to endorse the proposed inclusion of early years provision delivered by Seesaw Preschool in the East Barnwell Community Hub.

Individual Members offered the following comments:

- Congratulated the staff and volunteers at Seesaw Preschool on maintaining the provision and welcomed the proposed co-location of services in East Barnwell.
- Asked that officers should include more information about the range of costs contained in the report and the basis for these in the report going to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 March. Action
- Stated that they would not vote against the proposals as they considered it important to listen to the views of local Members and the local community, but hoped the same consideration would be shown to projects for Fenland. However, they expected to see an escalation in the estimated capital costs over time and considered this to be a political decision as the current Galfrid Primary School site was adequate.

In response to questions from Members, officers stated that:

- There was a need to consider both The Fields Nursey School and Seesaw Preschool. One of the positive aspects of the proposed relocation of Seesaw Preschool was that this might also help sustain The Fields Nursey School.
- It was estimated that it would cost around £1,000 to move Seesaw Preschool's furniture and equipment to the East Barnwell site. The Council would support these costs if the relocation was approved. The capital cost of including early years accommodation in the East Barnwell Community Hub would be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 March 2022.
- Space would be available within the East Barnwell Community Hub for the 48 places currently offered by Seesaw Preschool. Its relocation would also free up the mobile accommodation on The Galfrid Primary School site and so offer The Fields Nursery School scope to increase provision in future, should there be demand for more places.
- There had been a clear expectation when Seesaw Preschool moved from its original location in East Barnwell to The Galfrid Primary School site that this would be temporary re-location and that Seesaw Preschool would return to East Barnwell.
- The £625k estimated capital cost of the relocation to East Barwell represented the best estimate of costs currently available from the finance team. However, as the proposed early years accommodation would form part of the larger East Barnwell Community Hub project and increases in inflation it was difficult to be more specific about how realistic this figure would be.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Support the proposal that the Strategy and Resources Committee be asked to approve the inclusion of accommodation for delivery of early years and childcare in the design and build specification for the re-

development of the East Barnwell Community Hub, and the associated capital funding for this.

- b) Approve the proposal that the Council would not be required to undertake a tender process for the early years and childcare provision on the basis that the Seesaw Pre-School previously operated from the East Barnwell Community Hub and had no option other than to relocate to temporary accommodation on the site of The Galfrid Primary School to facilitate the re-development project.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

61. The Award of Design and Construction Contracts for Education Projects Included in the Council's Approved Business Plan

The first section of the report set out a recommendation to approve the award of the pre-construction contracts and the design and construction contracts set out in Table 1 of the report. This reflected the Monitoring Officer's advice that the approval of the Council's business plan was not in itself sufficient authority for officers to enter into contracts and that separate committee approval was required. The projects set out in Table 1 represented those projects where contracts would be required during the next 12 months. In future, it was proposed that this committee approval would be sought annually alongside its consideration of the draft capital programme each autumn. If a project was controversial or was going over time or budget it would be taken to Spokes for consideration and brought back before the committee if required.

The second part of the report sought approval for the direct award of the design and construction contract for Phase 2 of the Northstowe education campus to Kier construction and the supporting consultant team. Kier had successfully delivered Phase 1 of the project and had submitted the lowest rates on this value lot. The tender framework allowed for the direct award of contracts and the procurement team's advice was that a waiver was required in this case, although the practice of running competitive mini-tenders would remain the normal practice. However, due to the cost inflation currently being seen across the construction industry it would be beneficial to move quickly. The cost would be in excess of £500k which made this a key decision requiring committee approval.

The local Member for Longstanton, Northstowe and Over had submitted written comments on the proposal which she had asked should be shared with Committee. Councillor Thompson was pleased to see the design and construction contract for Phase 2 of the Northstowe education campus being considered as it was essential that Northstowe Secondary College's post 16 building was ready for September 2024 opening to ensure that current Year 9s could continue their education seamlessly. She understood from officers that a review of the overall demand for post 16 places had been undertaken across the Cambridge Partnership area of Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire and that additional capacity was required across this area by 2024. This would be provided by the opening of post 16 provision at both Northstowe and Cambourne. In the new era of rising inflation - forecast to peak near 9% in the current year for the construction industry – there was a stronger case for direct contract award as the Local Authority

might accrue a greater benefit accrue to the authority from being able to conclude design packages, secure a supplier and fix prices at the earliest opportunity. Northstowe Secondary School advised that teaching space was already becoming tight, so the 2024 completion date was essential to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils. Councillor Thompson asked for the Committee's support of the proposal.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report/commented that:

- Asked why Phases 1 and 2 of the Northstowe education campus project had not originally been tendered together given the risks now described if a different contractor was chosen to deliver Phase 2. Officers stated that, on reflection, this was something which should have been identified earlier. Current practice was being reviewed and this was something which would be considered with similar projects in the future.
- Asked whether officers were confident that the contract costs described in the report, including Phase 2 of the Northstowe education campus, were still reasonable and deliverable given the current increase in costs being experienced in relation to construction projects. Officers stated that the rates had been set in December 2021 under market conditions. The Council business plan had also included scope for a 4% increase on costs to mitigate at least part of the inflationary impact.
- The Vice Chair stated that whilst there were reasons for the proposed direct award to Kier for Phase 2 of the Northstowe education campus the competitive tender procedure did remain the preferred option and that the Committee would want to see the framework used to ensure competition and value for money.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the award of the pre-construction contracts and the design and construction contracts with a value over £500,000 for those schemes set out in Table 1 of the report.
- b) Approve the direct award of the design and construction contract for Phase 2 of the Northstowe education campus to Kier construction and the supporting consultant team.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

62. Request for a One Year Exemption to Re-Procure an Expiring School Transport Contract

The Committee was advised that a single operator provided all of the school transport for Swavesey Village College. The existing contract had been awarded in 2019 and so pre-dated the introduction of a dynamic purchasing system in 2020. The bus market had been significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic, so officers

were seeking a one-year exemption waiver to allow time to re-test the market and to allow bus operators to recover to a more sustainable position. The existing arrangements were working well and allowed for negotiation between the school and the operator to meet changes in local need.

In response to Members' questions:

- Officers stated that the existing contract was for three years. Going forward a three to five year contract was anticipated.
- The Service Director for Education offered a briefing note when he proposed to exercise the delegated authority approved by the Committee. He further offered a briefing note at the start of the next academic year providing information on changes in demand and trends. Action

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Agree to an exemption waiver for the Swavesey Village College whole school transport contract for a period of one year;
- b) Approve the subsequent procurement exercise to be run as detailed in the report below; and
- c) Delegate authority to the Service Director for Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to award a contract following the compliant procurement exercise.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

63. Meeting Demand for Children with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disability (SEND)

During the previous two years there had been an unprecedented increase in the number of children with special educational needs and/ disabilities (SEND) requiring a specialist placement. This reflected a national trend, with Department for Education (DfE) data showing that Cambridgeshire was broadly in line with its statistical neighbours in terms the numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and the type of provision being made for them. The greatest demand was for placements in area special school provision and places specialising in social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). The highest demand for additional places was currently in Fenland, with demand also forecast to increase in Huntingdonshire. The situation remained dynamic, with the number of children awaiting a specialist placement having decreased from 211 to 194 in the fortnight since the report was completed as 17 children had been placed during this period.

The report sought the Committee's approval for the proposed approach to increasing the number of specialist places in the next 6 to 18 months by:

- The creation of additional special school places.
- The creation of dedicated provision for autism, in line with existing Enhance Resource Base (ERB)/Units attached to mainstream schools which created opportunities for inclusion.
- More efficient use of independent providers through negotiation of block contracts.

Initial investment of £2.5m had been approved by the Capital Programme Board for inclusion in the Council's 2022/23 capital business plan and the Schools Forum had approved a 0.5% / £2.1m revenue block transfer from the Schools Block to support the wider SEND Transformation programme, of which around £1m had been identified to support the creation of new provision.

The Service Director for Education stated that Cambridgeshire was an inclusive education authority which sought to keep children in their local schools and communities, with additional support where this was needed. He had received confirmation the previous week that Cambridgeshire had been accepted onto the DfE's safety valve scheme which could see the write-off of the Council's high needs block deficit. A Green Paper on SEND was also expected in the next few weeks which could represent a significant change. The Chair stated that Members were very mindful of this deficit, and thanked officers for their work to address this.

In accordance with the Constitution, Councillor Hoy had given notice of her wish to move an amendment to the officer recommendation. Seconded by Councillor Hay, she moved an additional resolution:

To commit to build a new special school in Fenland to meet the clear need, whether that be at Meadowgate or another location. Opening date to be as soon as reasonably possible after site searches, planning and other associated factors.

Speaking to the amendment, Councillor Hoy stated her belief that the case for building a new special school in Fenland had been clearly made both at the last committee meeting and in the report under consideration. There was only one specialist school in the north of the county and, whilst a very good school, it could only do so much. Schools in Fenland continued to see pupils unable to access the support they needed, and the report seemed to imply that these children would need to attend specialist provision outside of Fenland. This would have implications both in relation to the cost of providing transport to access that provision and the time the children would need to spend travelling. The report referenced the expansion of Meadowgate Academy, but she was not confident that this would happen and felt a contingency plan was needed. Building a new special school in Fenland would involve significant cost, but the amendment recognised that a new school might not be required if the expansion of Meadowgate Academy was approved. Councillor Hoy felt that there were many children in mainstream schools who were in need of specialist placements and that the failure to provide these would have a real impact on their life outcomes. She had tried not to be prescriptive about how additional provision would be delivered, but would like to see a commitment to the principle.

The Service Director for Education stated that the estimated capital cost of building a new school would be around £12-15m, depending on its size and location, with an estimated revenue cost of between £3-4m per year for between 120-150 pupils. Options for expanding the capacity at Meadowgate Academy were currently being considered and a collegiate approach was being taken to the challenge by the Special School Heads Group. Consideration might also be given to the block purchase of places to meet local need and the DfE would be opening a new round of free school special school applications.

Debating the amendment, Members:

- Voiced their appreciation of Councillor Hoy bringing this issue to the committee's attention as a local Member for Wisbech, commenting that all geographical areas would be considered equally and that it was a matter of concern to see the number of children and young people awaiting specialist placements.
- Commented that the costs of establishing a new school should not be considered in isolation as savings would also be made, for example to the cost of transporting students to other schools.
- Objected to any suggestion of geographical favouritism for projects, noting that the capital expenditure projects considered under the report on the award of design and construction contracts for education projects included in the Council's approved Business Plan included projects across the county (minute 61 refers).

In response to questions from Members, officers stated that:

- Area special schools usually offered a minimum of 100 places.
- The planning application for a new SEMH School in Wisbech had been approved the previous week.
- The timing of the next special school application round had not yet been confirmed, but could potentially be during summer 2022. The process for establishing new special schools was slightly different to the mainstream free school process and the Council could specify a preferred location based on data. Whilst a number of sites might be considered it was likely that the north of the county would be the focus for this. It was also proposed to link Enhanced Resource Bases to mainstream schools to ensure support. The Service Director for Education offered an update report at the next meeting in relation to the current position and timescale of the proposed expansion of provision at Meadowgate Academy, Enhanced Resource Bases and the SEND Transformation programme. **Action**
- There were a small number of children accessing specialist settings with journey times in excess of those set out in the guidelines (45 minutes

maximum for primary school aged children and 90 minutes maximum for secondary school students). Sometimes the capacity to meet needs closer to home did not exist, so longer travel times were required.

- The Service Director for Education stated that timescale for increasing capacity at Meadowgate Academy was subject to negotiation as Meadowgate was an academy school and could not be directed by the Local Authority. He offered an update at the next meeting on the current position. **Action**

The Chair stated that she would want to ensure that Fenland was an area of focus and that if the Meadowgate Academy expansion proposals did not progress this issue should be brought back to the committee for consideration.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was defeated.

Co-opted members were not eligible to vote on the amendment.

Debating the substantive recommendation, individual Members:

- Suggested the need for caution in relation to the DfE writing off the high needs block deficit as this could contain caveats and asked what was being done to address the structural deficit as well as the legacy deficit. The Service Director for Education stated that his last Service Director's report had set out the proposed transformation programme, which had been endorsed by the Schools Forum. He offered an update on the transformation programme at the next meeting. **Action**
- Commented that they felt that lengthy journeys to school for children with additional needs could impact on their mental health and the time available for them to socialise and that this was not acceptable. The Service Director for Education stated that journey times were closely monitored and were taken into account in discussions around suitable placements.
- Expressed the hope that schools were not being discouraged from seeking EHCPs where they felt these were needed. The Service Director for Education stated that the Council's focus was on meeting need. He welcomed the increase in the number of EHCPs issued to early years children as these enabled those with high needs to receive early support. There was also a category of special educational needs support available to those with additional needs but without an EHCP to provide early intervention.

In response to questions from committee members officers stated:

- That they would always try to place children as close to home as possible. There were a number of area special schools within Cambridgeshire and on occasion children would be placed at special schools in Peterborough.
- Stated that the proposed block purchases of places at a SEMH special school in Huntingdonshire related to an independent school located in St Ives.

- The plans for the expansion of Samuel Pepys Area Special School in St Neots were taking longer than hoped, but that this remained within the Council's plans.

A Member sought clarification about why co-opted members were eligible to vote on the substantive recommendation, but had not been eligible to vote on the amendment. They further commented that co-opted members had previously been eligible to vote on all education matters and expressed concern that recent changes to the Constitution relating to co-opted members voting rights could materially impact the decisions being made. The Democratic Services Officer stated that the amendment would have required capital expenditure and co-opted members were not eligible to vote on the determination of capital expenditure. The changes which had been made to the Constitution were to better reflect the existing guidance contained in the Direction from the Department of Education and mirrored the wording contained within that guidance. The Department for Education's advice was currently being sought in relation to co-opted members' voting rights, and officers were working to the best advice currently available. A co-opted member commented that the Chair and Democratic Services team were establishing the facts around voting rights as co-opted members did not feel that this was sufficiently clear.

It was resolved by a majority to:

Approve the approach set out in the report for increasing the number of places offering special education provision for children and young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) who are currently awaiting placement.

Co-opted members were eligible to vote on this recommendation.

The meeting was adjourned from 4.05pm to 4.16pm for a comfort break.

64. Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme

The Committee was invited to agree the scope and operation of the Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme (CHVS) to utilise up to £3.6m earmarked for this purpose by Council during 2022/23. It was proposed to use broadly the same process as for previous allocations, but recognising that Cambridgeshire was now funding this scheme independently rather than through a national scheme. The percentage of vouchers which had remained unclaimed had been reduced from 6% to 3% in the previous allocation round and work was in hand to look at how best to reach groups with lower take-up rates, like the digitally disadvantaged and those with English as an additional language.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Asked whether it was necessary to give delegated authority to officers for the award of contract for the scheme. The Service Director for Education stated that it was necessary to follow the appropriate process for the contract award.

- Asked whether Child and Family Centres were being used to promote the voucher scheme. Officers confirmed that this was the case. In addition, families were contacted directly by email the day before vouchers were issued and their availability was publicised through schools and social media.
- Asked whether the voucher scheme was being promoted to members of the Traveller community. The Service Director for Education stated that details were shared with district councils and could be shared with the Council's Traveller Liaison Officer. He also invited Members to let him know of any other organisations which they felt could usefully receive details of the scheme.

Action

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Agree the scope and operation of the Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme (CHVS).
- b) Agree to utilise up to £3.6m earmarked for this purpose by Full Council in order to fund the CHVS during 2022/23.
- c) Agree that the Service Director for Education may, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Young People Committee and the Head of Procurement, award a contract for the voucher scheme using the RM6255 for the Household Support Grant.

Co-opted members were eligible to vote on this item.

Councillor Atkins left the meeting at 4.27pm.

65. Finance Monitoring Report – January 2022

The Committee was advised that as of the end of January 2022 the budgets within the remit of the Children and Young People Committee were showing a forecast underspend of £464k (excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant). This compared to a forecast overspend of £485k reported at the previous meeting. The difference was mainly due to vacancy savings on social worker posts. The home to school transport budget for special schools was forecasting an overspend of £1,200k which reflected the significant increase in the numbers of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). Home to school transport for mainstream schools was forecasting an underspend of £500k due to more efficient route planning and updated contracts. The increase in numbers of EHCPs had also contributed to a net forecast overspend of £14.734m on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Work was continuing with the Department for Education to manage this deficit and evidence plans to reduce spend.

In response to questions from Members, officers stated:

- That an assumption on staff turnover was built into the budget, but that the current vacancy levels were unprecedented. The Director of Children's Services

stated that there was particular difficulty recruiting qualified social workers at present due to a national shortage. Some posts were also being held vacant prior to consultation on a planned restructure. The situation was being monitored carefully and a new recruitment campaign was planned. Caseloads were higher than would be wished, but the flow of work was being carefully managed and managers were offering support.

It was resolved to review and comment on the report.

66. Establishment of a New Primary School at Sawtry

The need for a new primary school at Sawtry was driven by planning approval being granted for three large developments in the village totalling over 700 new homes. The Council had launched a competition under the free school presumption process in September 2021 to seek an academy sponsor to establish and run a new school. Five multi-academy trusts had applied, with three shortlisted Trusts being interviewed on 13 January 2022 by an assessment panel comprising Members and officers. Paragraph 2.7 of the report set out in detail the panel's reasoning for recommending Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) as the preferred sponsor, but the key identified strengths included:

- CMAT's appropriate experience and expertise to run the new primary school. This had been further enhanced by its recent merger with Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET), a successful primary specialist Trust with a track record of excellence, and its Teaching School Hub (the only one in Cambridgeshire).
- CMAT was well-established in the community and fully understood the education landscape in the village as the Trust was already responsible for the local junior and secondary schools.
- CMAT had a strong track record of improving achievement and attainment across schools in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area and provided strong and credible evidence that the new free school would add high quality places into the local area.

The Committee's preferred sponsor would be notified to the Regional Schools Commissioner's Advisory Board which would decide which potential sponsor should be recommended to the Secretary of State for Education to run the new school. This meeting had originally been expected to take place on 24 March 2022, but would now be held on 28 April 2022.

Written representations had been received from Councillor Simon Bywater, the local Member for Sawtry and Stilton. Councillor Bywater expressed his thanks to the Council for involving him in the selection process to find a sponsor for the new primary school in Sawtry. He had found the process to be well run and expressed his thanks to officers whom he considered to have carried out the task with the upmost professionalism. He also expressed his thanks to Councillors Goodliffe and Taylor for taking the time to take part in the selection interview panel. Some very

strong Trusts had taken part and it had proved to be a thorough interview process. Councillor Bywater expressed his support for the recommendation to endorse Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) as the Council's preferred sponsor for the new primary school in Sawtry and expressed the hope that the Committee would take the same view.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Described the process which had been undertaken as a great example of local authority decision-making.
- Sought reassurance that other schools in the local area had been consulted on the proposals to ensure that there was not an over-provision of places which could undermine Reception numbers during the initial years following opening of the new primary school. The Service Director for Education stated that the assessment panel had considered the impact on other schools and that CMAT had given explicit agreement to take into account the potential impact on Sawtry Primary School and other rural primary schools.
- Asked whether sufficient secondary school capacity existed in the local area. Officers confirmed that this was the case.

It was resolved unanimously:

To endorse Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) as the Council's preferred sponsor for the new primary school in Sawtry.

Co-opted members of the committee were not eligible to vote on this item.

67. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020-2021

Councillor Bradnam introduced the report as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. The report covered a difficult period for families and for officers and she was pleased with the work which the Sub-Committee had done. She was glad to see an improvement in the timeliness of initial health assessments for children in care and also an increase in the number of in-house foster carers. She advised that a Chair's foreword would be added to final version of the document.

The Director of Children's Services stated that the Sub-Committee had continued to meet remotely during the pandemic. The work programme consisted of themed meetings focusing on health, education and placement. Three public meetings per year were interspersed with three informal, private meetings with representatives of the Children in Care Council. More recently, the Chair of the Sub-Committee had written to NHS England to voice concerns around initial health assessments and dental provision.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Noted that the figures in the table on page 208 of the agenda document pack did not add up. Officers undertook to correct this. **Action**
- Asked whether any ethnic groups were over-represented within the county's children in care population. Officers stated that there was a slight over-representation of children from a mixed heritage background and from a Black British background, but that the position had improved over time.
- Asked for more information about the increase in incidents of missing children in March 2021. The Director of Children's Services stated that this could relate to lockdown. The weather could also be a factor, with higher numbers of incidents occurring during better weather. Whilst every incident was significant it was important to recognise that the overall numbers remained small and that a number of incidents might relate to a single child. She judged that the process for responding to incidents of a missing child had improved.
- Asked how the figures relating to child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation compared to previous years. The Director of Children's Services stated that the number of cases was small, although each one was significant. There was still a gender bias which found more young women subject to child sexual exploitation, although there were also cases relating to young men. In general terms the numbers relating to criminal exploitation had gone up, due to higher identification rates. She offered a briefing note on trends over time in relation to criminal exploitation cases. **Action**
- Emphasised the importance and positive impacts of the links which existed between the Virtual School Management Board, the Children and Young People Committee and the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

The Chair expressed her thanks to both previous and current members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for their work.

It was resolved to note the content of the report and raise questions with the lead officer.

68. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2020-21

The Committee was advised that it was a statutory requirement for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board's annual report to be presented to the Committee each year. Its content was set out in legislation and the report before the Committee covered the period from April 2020 to March 2021. Members' attention was drawn to partnership work during this period to address child exploitation, which had included consulting both the public and practitioners. The Safeguarding Children Partnership Board also worked in partnership with Community Safety Partnerships across the county. One case review had been published during the period covered and the action plan had been completed and signed off. It was a requirement for the County Council's Lead Member for Children's Services to sit on the Board.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Welcomed the successful partnership working described in the report.
- Asked about the practicalities of work with the community safety partnerships. Officers acknowledged that this could be a challenge due to the differences between the various partnerships, but stated that they worked particularly closely in relation to child sexual exploitation. This included though a joint strategic exploitation board and delivery group, of which the community safety partnerships were members. It had taken time to establish this model of working, but it was now being used to look at other areas.
- Described a short film about county lines which they had found informative and suggested other Members might find useful. A link would be circulated outside of the meeting. Action
- Asked about the extent to which priorities were driven by agencies compared to local people. Officers stated that discussions about priorities took place at Safeguarding Board level and were informed by surveys of stakeholders, practitioners and the public as well as the outcomes of case reviews and national and local initiatives.

It was resolved to:

Receive and note the content of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report annual report 2020-21.

69. Committee Agenda Plan and Committee Appointments

The agenda plan was reviewed, and the Committee was invited to consider whether to appoint a representative to the Advisory Group for Anglia Ruskin University's 'Nature for Everyone' project.

A Member highlighted the remaining vacancy for a committee representative to be appointed to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the Committee agenda plan.
- b) Appoint Councillor A Bulat to the Anglia Ruskin University and Learning Through Landscapes' Advisory Group on Nature for Everyone.

(Chair)

Children and Young People Committee Action Log

Purpose:
This log captures the actions arising from Children and Young People Committee meetings and updates Members on progress.

Minutes of the meeting on 14 September 2021

19.	Home to School Transport	Jonathan Lewis/ Stephanie Miller	Officers undertook to provide details of the cost per mile for taxi provision outside of the meeting.	<p>06.05.22: We have just retendered a number of routes for September and an update will be sent to members in December.</p> <p>The method of recording home to school transport routes does not include the number of miles per route. Unfortunately, this does mean that there is currently no feasible way of calculating an average cost per mile for individual taxi routes. However, as an example, we are able to provide an average cost per pupil for the transport provided by the Authority to the five Special School After School Clubs as shown below:</p> <p>Castle School (Wed/Thu): 13 students Granta School (Mon/Tue/Thu): 18 students Highfield Ely Academy (Mon-Fri): 8 students Samuel Pepys School (Tue-Thu): 8 students Spring Common Academy (Mon-Fri): 7 students</p> <table><tr><td>Total Children</td><td>54</td></tr><tr><td>Total Transport Costs (per week)</td><td>£2,465.43</td></tr><tr><td>Average cost per child (per week)</td><td>£45.66</td></tr></table>	Total Children	54	Total Transport Costs (per week)	£2,465.43	Average cost per child (per week)	£45.66	Completed
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				<table><tr><td>Total Transport Costs (per year, based on 38 weeks)</td><td>£93,686.34</td></tr><tr><td>Average cost per child (per year, based on 38 weeks)</td><td>£1,734.93</td></tr></table>	Total Transport Costs (per year, based on 38 weeks)	£93,686.34	Average cost per child (per year, based on 38 weeks)	£1,734.93	
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Average cost per child (per year, based on 38 weeks)	£1,734.93								

Minutes of the Meeting on 30 November 2021

37.	Review of the Draft Revenue and Capital Business Planning Proposals 2022-27	Jonathan Lewis/ Martin Wade	A Member asked for a short note setting out the range of options considered to narrow the deficit on the dedicated schools grant (DSG).	<p>The options for reducing spend are all of the workstreams within the SEND Transformation programme, as summarised below:</p> <p>The SEND Transformation Programme consists of a series of workstreams to shift system behaviours, to manage demand, and to improve local provision and processes with an agenda to drive delivery of better outcomes for Children and Young People in Cambridgeshire. This includes sufficiency of the right services, delivered at the right time, in the right place and at the right cost.</p> <p>The workstreams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Support/Ordinarily Available Provision – Developing the SEND support system with a shared understanding about what can be provided in mainstream settings, supported by a web-based toolkit for schools and settings. • Meeting Demand – Developing a strategic approach to meeting the demand for specialist provision now and in the future. 	Completed
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of School Tuition – A review of existing arrangements to ensure that tuition and alternative provision is used appropriately and consistently. • Outreach Model - To facilitate supporting children and young people with SEND in mainstream provision through Special Schools outreach. • Enhanced Resource Bases - Confirming the commissioning arrangements for ERBs, develop a Cambridgeshire offer for ERBs with SLAs in place. • Social Emotional and Mental Health – Progressing the recommendations from the SEMH review to improve outcomes for children experiencing SEMH needs while remaining in mainstream education alongside developing specialist provision for pupils with SEMH needs. • Preparing for Adulthood – Ensuring a focus across the SEND system on preparing every child with SEND to successfully transition into adulthood. Key areas of work will improve internships and employment opportunities, community involvement and independent living. • System Navigation - To redesign and simplify the SEND system to improve navigation for parents and carers and improve consistency in access and provision. • Banding & Descriptors – To transform our EHCP funding system to include descriptors of need, with aligned 	
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				<p>provision and allocated bands thus improving decision making, transparency and clarity for schools, settings and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the Conversation - Embedding a strengths-based, person-centred approach to conversations across the education, health and care system to enable positive, sustainable change. • Panel Redesign - redesigning our panel structure, developing consistent, transparent and strengths-based multi-agency decision making from assessment through to the issuing of plans. • Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and Annual Review improvement Plan - Improving our EHCP and Annual Review process to ensure timely, outcome-focused and high-quality plans, while improving confidence in the system and providing increased transparency in decision-making. • Tribunal Review - Enabling better use of resources and more effective joint working with professionals by involving the right professionals at the right time to reduce escalation of cases to legal proceedings. • SEND case management system - Procurement and implementation of a SEND case management system to improve the Statutory Assessment Team's ability to process cases and increase efficiencies in the system alongside professional and parent portals to ensure clear sharing of information. 	
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41.	Free School Proposal – Wisbech Secondary School	Jonathan Lewis	The Chair endorsed the suggestion that an invitation should be extended to the new Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to meet committee members.	The new RSC, Jonathan Duff, commenced in post on 1 April 2022 so would suggest a meeting in Autumn 2022. Service Director for Education has approached the RSC's office to agree a date.	In progress
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Minutes of the meeting on 18 January 2022

52.	People and Communities Risk Register	Jonathan Lewis	The Service Director for Education undertook to confirm that a recommendation had been made to the Strategy and Resources Committee that a risk be identified in the corporate risk register around the non-delivery of free schools.	Cambridgeshire County Council have a corporate risk around failure to deliver (which we monitor in CLT) and as part of this we have a "Placement Sufficiency" trigger which we monitor – in a number of areas, including Education. The Service Director: Education has reviewed whether the situation in Wisbech changes the impact and likelihood of the overall risk against placements across the county and determined that it does not. This escalation has therefore been considered appropriately and the Council has an existing mechanism for monitoring placement sufficiency, including free schools.	Completed
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Minutes of the meeting on 1 March 2022

58.	Tender Framework for Early Years Provision	Jonathan Lewis/ Penny Price	The Service Director for Education offered a note on how the process would work in practice.	Briefing note has been prepared and will be sent to members for their consideration.	Completed
60.	Delivery of Early Years provision to serve Abbey	Hazel Belchamber	Officers were asked to include more information around the range of costs contained in the report	02.03.22: Request relayed by email to Tom Kelly (Director of Finance) and those colleagues in Strategic Assets who will be preparing the report	Completed

	Division, Cambridge		and the basis of these in the report going forward to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 March.	for the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting following the CYP Committee meeting on 1 March.	
62.	Request for a one-year exemption to re-procure an expiring school transport contract	Jonathan Lewis/ Martin Kemp	The Service Director for Education offered a briefing note when he proposed to exercise the delegated authority approved by the Committee.	A briefing note was presented to Spokes on 3 May 2022.	Completed
62.	Request for a one-year exemption to re-procure an expiring school transport contract	Jonathan Lewis/ Martin Kemp	The Service Director for Education offered a briefing note at the start of the next academic year providing information on changes in demand and trends.	Requested to be added to the forward plan for November 2022.	Completed
63.	Meeting demand for children with SEND National SEND Green paper and Cambs provision placements	Jonathan Lewis	The Service Director for Education offered an update report at the next meeting in relation to the current position and timescale of the proposed expansion of provision at Meadowgate Academy, Enhanced Resource Bases and the SEND Transformation programme.	02.03.22: Added to the committee agenda plan. Report to be presented to CYP Committee on 17 May 2022.	Completed
64.	Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme	Jonathan Lewis	The Service Director for Education undertook to share details of the holiday voucher scheme with the Traveller Liaison Officer.	Annette Brooker, Head of Early Years will ensure information on the summer HAF programme is sent to all District Councils to promote including with traveller liaison officers	Completed

67.	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020/21	Nicola Curley/ Myra O'Farrell	To correct the table containing the figures for numbers of children in care as the figures don't add up.	06.05.22: The figures have been corrected.	Completed
67.	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020/21	Nicola Curley/ Myra O'Farrell	The Director of Children's Services offered a briefing note on trends over time in relation to criminal exploitation cases.		
68.	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2020/21.	Jo Procter	To circulate a link to a short film about county lines.	02.03.22: A link sent to committee members by email.	Completed

Education Transport Contracts

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Charlotte Black - Executive Director: People & Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: KD2022/065

Outcome: Approval to let education transport contracts for the current procurement round of special and mainstream routes to enable transport arrangements to be put in place to be implemented in September 2022.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the letting of special and mainstream school and child social care transport contracts current procurement round.
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to finalise the subsequent award of those contracts.
- c) Endorse the proposal for officers, in future, to bring an annual key decision report to the Committee setting out the transport contracts to be renewed in the coming year for committee approval.

Voting: Co-opted members of the Committee are eligible to vote on this item.

Officer contact:

Name: Clare Buckingham

Post: Strategic Education Place Planning Manager

Email: clare.buckingham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 699779

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Bryony Goodliffe and Maria King

Post: Chair/Vice-Chair

Email: bryony.goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk maria.king@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

- 1.1 Annually the Social & Education Transport Team (SETT) undertakes a procurement round of approximately one third of all the 1200 home to school transport routes. This equates, each year, to approximately 180 mainstream and 225 contracts for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The values mentioned in the report cover year 1 only but all contracts have an automatic potential 2-year extension. The procurement process for most of the routes mentioned in the report has started.
- 1.2 During 2020, Officers from SETT, Peterborough City Council's (PCC) Passenger Transport Operations Team (PTOT), the Council's Transformation Team and Procurement Team, started a project to align transport procurement, terms, and conditions into a joint Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). The aim is to ensure maximum utilisation of transport providers and efficiencies in a single process. This was launched to operators in October 2021 and initial competitions began in January 2022.
- 1.3 The routes to be procured for September 2022 are listed in **Appendix 1**. The cumulative value of those contracts will exceed £500k. The estimated annual cost of the mainstream element of the competition package is £4.26m (contractual cost £19.59m excluding extension opportunity). The estimated annual cost of the SEND element is £7.4m (contractual cost £28.26m). The actual individual contract costs will vary depending on whether they are tendered to last for 2,3,4 or 5 years.
- 1.4 In addition to the mainstream and special routes listed in Appendix 1 a large volume of 'ad hoc' competitions will follow in the coming months which will include social access routes, late applications and sixth form centres, resolving any issues or hand backs from operators and new in-year applications. **Appendix 2** lists the 'ad hoc' tender figures by month for the financial year 2012/22 by way of illustration. Those totalled 1,566.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Because of the number of contracts involved (at least 400 new/ renewed contracts each year) it is not practical for officers to seek individual authorisation from Committee for each one. Officers are, therefore, proposing a process that is practical to implement from an officer perspective but is also fully open and transparent, seeking:
 - the Committee's approval to let those contracts listed in **Appendix 1** procured through the Council's DPS and
 - delegated authority to the Director of Education to finalise the subsequent award of those contracts in consultation with the chair and vice chair of CYP .
- 2.2 Once the contracts have been authorised, the Director would complete an 'Openness Form' to confirm the process has been completed which would then be forwarded to Democratic Services with a request that this is published on the Council's website.
- 2.3 In future years officers will bring an annual key decision report to the Committee, ideally in January, and certainly no later than March, setting out the transport contracts to be renewed in the coming year for committee approval. In the event of any material increases in costs or politically sensitive contracts, officers would raise these with Spokes

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

At the time of setting up the DPS exclusive provision of low carbon vehicles was not an option that market was able to deliver, as such the vehicles used remain fossil fuel based for the time being. However, through providing the transport services the council is able reduce environmental impacts by shifting travel out of individual vehicles and into mass-transit options, which can improve carbon and air quality outcomes.

3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Children and Young People

Provision of reliable school transport services will help safeguard children and young people on their journey between home and their place of education.

3.5 Transport

Reliable school transport services enable children and young people to easily access their education entitlement.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The report sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 1.3 above and also in **Appendix 1**.

The transport sector generally has been in turmoil post pandemic which poses risks for the Council in fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to education transport. Particular challenges relate to a nationwide shortage of drivers and rising fuel costs which have resulted in operators handing back contracts to the Council which they are no longer able to fulfil. When these have been re-tendered they have resulted in increased prices.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications. The routes listed will be procured through the Council's DPS

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The legal parameters relating to home to school/college transport for children and young people of statutory school age are set out in Sections 508, 509 and schedule 35B of the 1996 Education Act as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 509(1) and (2) place a duty upon local authorities to provide free transport where necessary to facilitate the attendance of children and students at schools and institutions both within and outside of the further and higher education sectors.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Prevention of rural isolation from education provision.
- Education transport is provided to all who are entitled under the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Neutral Status: there are no significant implications within this category

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive Status: Section 3.1 and the following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

Explanation:

- Home to school transport reduces the use of private vehicles in delivery of transport to large numbers of students on single transport provisions
- Where school transport is in place there is the opportunity for students to purchase spare seats.
- Where there is public transport provision in place students who meet the eligibility criteria can receive transport assistance in the form of a pass to use on a commercial route

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Reduced use of private vehicles through provision of alternatives, particularly mass transit options

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? No

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Karen Newton

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green (Team Manager Health in all Policies)

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 None

6. Accessibility

- 6.1 Accessible versions of the tables contained within the appendices can be obtained on request from the report author.

List of routes to be procured for implementation in September 2022.

Mainstream:

(1) 139 routes in competition 1 for various schools (see table below) – estimated annual cost £4,265,809. Contractual cost £19,589,986 excluding extension opportunity

(2) Maximum award of 11 routes in competition 2 for Witchford Village College only– estimated annual cost £152,000, contractual cost £760,000 excluding extension opportunity

Note: there is an automatic contract extension of 2 years under the DPS. Therefore, what starts as a seemingly low value procurement, for example 5 routes at £35,000, actually has a potential value of £525,000 and is therefore over the key decision threshold.

Competition 1

Row Labels	Count of CONTRACT NO	Sum of DAILY COST (£)	Sum of Contractual (£)
Abbey College	1	59.88	45508.8
Abbotts Ripton Primary	1	208	197600
Alconbury Church of England Primary	1	54	51300
Alderman Payne Primary	1	45	42750
Baranbas Oley Primary	1	171	162450
Bassingbourn Primary	1	92	17480
Borrowmoor Primary	1	105	99750
Bottisham Village College	1	298	113240
Bourn Primary	2	363.52	345344
Brampton Primary	1	54	20520
Brington Primary	2	394.49	374765.5
Buckden Primary	1	163	154850
Coates Primary	1	78	74100
College of West Anglia, Kings Lynn Campus	1	425	403750
College of West Anglia, Wisbech Campus	1	360	342000
Comberton Village College	9	2262.5	2149375
Comberton Village College	1	280	266000
Comberton Village College and Barton primary	1	263	249850
Comberton Village College and Caldecote Primary	1	69	65550
Comberton Village College and Haslingfield Primary	1	203	192850
Comberton Village College and Meridan Primary	1	279	265050
Cottenham Village College	1	50	19000
Cromwell Community College	4	397	197790
Duke of Bedford Primary	1	35	6650
Elsworth Primary	1	190	180500
Elton Primary	1	229	217550
Ely College	3	483.06	458907

Row Labels	Count of CONTRACT NO	Sum of DAILY COST (£)	Sum of Contractual (£)
Ely College and Downham Foeffes Primary	1	318	302100
Ely College and Pymoor	1	160	152000
Farcet Primary	1	28	10640
Friday Bridge Primary	1	44.7	42465
Gamlingay Villagae College	1	79	45030
Great Abington Primary	1	45	17100
Great Gidding Primary	1	254.9	242155
Great Staughton Primary	1	165	156750
Great Wilbraham Primary	1	130	74100
Guyhirn Primary	1	177.5	168625
Hemingford Grey Primary	1	100	95000
Hinchingbrooke Academy	6	1602.22	1522109
Histon and Impington Park and Histon and Impington Brook Primary	1	114.8	65436
Holme Primary	2	94	26220
Holywell Primary	1	79	75050
Huntingdon Primary	1	44	25080
Isleham Primary	1	195	185250
Kinderley Primary	1	67.5	38475
Leverington Primary	1	50	47500
Linton Village College, Linton Heights Juniors and Linton Infants	1	90	34200
Littleport and East Cambs Academy	4	478.75	454812.5
Littleport Primary and Millfield Primary	2	306.16	290852
Longsands Academy	5	1032	980400
Longsands Academy and Ernulf Academy	1	173	164350
Manea Primary	1	130	123500
Mayfield Primary	1	68.9	65455
Melbourn Village College	1	95	36100
Milton Primary	1	89	33820
Nassington Primary	1	49.5	9405
Neale-Wade Academy	7	1200.37	981701.5
New Road Primary	1	66	62700
Newton Primary	1	229	217550
Northstowe Academy	1	94	53580
Ramsey Junior and Spinning Infants	1	92	69920
Robert Arkenstall Primary	1	102	96900
Sawtry Village Academy	7	1593.2	1513540
Sir Harry Smith	1	57.08	54226
Soham Village College	8	1422.45	1351327.5
Spaldwick Primary	1	228.49	217065.5
Spring Meadow Infants and Ely St Marys Junior	1	208	197600
St Andrews Primary	1	190	180500
St Ivo Academy	5	989	939550
St Peters School	3	502	476900
Stanground Academy	2	171	134520

Row Labels	Count of CONTRACT NO	Sum of DAILY COST (£)	Sum of Contractual (£)
Stilton Church of England Primary	1	50	47500
Stretham Primary	1	121.49	115415.5
Swavesey Primary	1	59	33630
Swavesey Village College	1	178.07	33833.3
Teversham Primary	1	45	25650
The Weatheralls Primary	2	172	163400
Thomas Clarkson Academy	2	439	182020
Townley Primary	1	110	104500
Trumpington Park Primary	1	127.1	72447
University Academy, Long Sutton	1	80	15200
Wilburton Primary	1	53	50350
Grand Total	139	22,451.63	19,589,986.1

SEND – 303 potential routes to be tendered – annual cost: £7,391,079.80

Estimated Contractual cost £28,264,736.30 based on full time frequency (5 days per week) and 5-year contract.

Row Labels	Count of CONTRACT NO	Sum of Annual (£)	Sum of Contractual (£)
Cherry Hinton P S	1	24320	121600
Gretton School	29	557923.6	1757900.9
Grove P S	1	16910	84550
Heathlands/Knightsfield	1	29450	58900
Mayfield Hearing Unit	2	49215.7	246078.5
North Cambridge Academy	1	7410	37050
Park House School	5	87780	363280
Red Balloon Cambridge	5	86735	156655
St Albans R C	1	14833.3	74166.5
Ashbeach P S	1	18810	94050
Bassingbourn V C	1	16910	84550
Brandles & Hitchin Girls School	1	33991	101973
Bridge House School	1	39710	198550
Cambian Wisbech	2	64220	321100
Cambourne V C	1	22800	114000
Cambourne VC	1	19570	97850
Cambridge to Melbourn The Cabin	2	33440	167200
Castle School	29	792803.5	3942927.5
Coates Primary	1	20520	102600
Coleridge CC	1	11210	56050
Colville SLU	1	18620	93100
Colville Sp and Language	2	46721	233605
Cottenham Hearing Centre	3	86843.3	270789.9
Equine	1	30210	151050
Equine/Woodventures	1	14060	14060

Row Labels	Count of CONTRACT NO	Sum of Annual (£)	Sum of Contractual (£)
Esland Isaac School	1	37810	151240
Farm Club	2	52801	52801
Gamlingay The Cabin	2	56981	284905
Granta School	22	701234.9	3506174.5
Guilden Morden P	1	23750	118750
Haslingfield P S	1	33630	168150
Heltwate School	1	15200	76000
Highfield Ely Academy	23	627917.7	3139588.5
Highfield Ely LINC 19-25	1	24700	123500
Highfield Littleport Academy	7	224865	557460
Hinchingbrooke School	1	12540	62700
Holme Court School	5	82283.3	174256.6
Huntingdon to St Neots	1	22800	22800
Impington Village College	2	51915.6	259578
Isaac Newton	1	31920	63840
Isle of Ely P	1	28500	142500
Landmark International	1	7410	37050
Martin Bacon Academy	13	359195	718390
Mashfields School	3	74765	134995
Meadowgate School	15	405600.6	2028003
Medeshamstede Academy	5	107920	489630
Olive AP Academy	1	11590	23180
On Track, Mildenhall	1	22990	45980
Ramsey J	1	18050	90250
Riverside Meadows - Fenland	8	171682.1	171682.1
Riverside Meadows - St Neots	12	300502.1	856523.8
Samuel Pepys	2	53390	266950
Spring Common	10	339936.6	1699683
Spring Meadow I A U	1	18620	93100
St Bedes	1	12350	61750
St Ivo School	1	17022.1	85110.5
St Peter's School	4	72200	361000
The Centre School	28	547931.5	1552537.5
The Harbour School	16	389431.6	778863.2
The Place	1	31933.3	31933.3
The Shires	1	22800	45600
Thomas Clarkson	1	13585	67925
Townley P S	1	19000	95000
White Trees School	1	22610	67830
Wilds Lodge	4	106210	443650
Witchford VC	4	70490	170240
Grand Total	303	7,391,079.8	28,264,736.3

Tendering figures for 'ad hoc' routes in 2021/22

88 routes tendered in May

89 in June

104 in July

382 in August

332 in September

168 in October

136 in November

141 in December

126 in January

Home to School Transport to After School Clubs - SEND

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Executive Director: People and Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: The Committee is asked to consider the responses received during the consultation on Transport to After School Clubs and to approve a continuation of the existing arrangements, with a further review in 12 months' time.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the recommendation to continue with the existing discretionary after school club transport arrangements, with a further review in 12 months' time.
- b) Recommend that the Strategy and Resources Committee approves additional funding for the extension of the existing transport provision to some special school after school clubs to all Cambridgeshire special schools offering similar after school club provision.
- c) Note the feedback received as a part of the consultation on the proposed options for future arrangements.
- d) Request officers further explore the option of a means tested approach to continuing the After School Club Transport arrangements.

Voting: Co-opted members of the committee are eligible to vote on recommendations a) and d).

Officer contact:

Name: Stephanie Miller

Post: Policy and Operations Manager, Transport, Appeals and EWB

Email: stephanie.miller@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 699791

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Goodliffe and King

Post: Chair/Vice-Chair

Email: Bryony.Goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk / Maria.King@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

Transport to After School Clubs

- 1.1 Since 2011, the Council has funded the cost of transport to enable children and young people attending some of the County's area special schools to stay on beyond the end of the school day and participate in after school activities. The Council also provides funding from its High Needs Block towards the cost of running this after school provision in the order of £20,000 per school per year.
- 1.2 The current spend for 2021/2022 for providing transport to the After School clubs run by five of Cambridgeshire's Area Special Schools is £93,686.34. Those schools are:
 - Castle School (Wed/Thu): 13 students
 - Granta School (Mon/Tue/Thu): 18 students
 - Highfield Ely Academy (Mon-Fri): 8 students
 - Samuel Pepys School (Tue-Thu): 8 students
 - Spring Common Academy (Mon-Fri): 7 students
- 1.3 For the 54 students for whom free transport is being provided, this breaks down to an annual average cost per student of £1,734.93
- 1.4 This discretionary spend sits within the home to school transport budget for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). In 2021/22 the SEND transport budget was £14.86m and ended the financial year with an overspend of £1.32m due to the continuing demand for places at Special Schools and High Needs Units combined, with an increase in complexity of transport need. The budget has been increased to £17.92m in 2022/23 to reflect the expected increase in demand as the pupil population continues to rise, along with a predicted increase in the number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 1.5 The Council does not currently provide or fund similar arrangements for children and young people attending other special schools or those who attend enhanced resource bases at mainstream schools. It is, however, recognised that the current arrangements provide more than after school club opportunities for these pupils, by also providing parents with both respite and childcare.
- 1.6 In January 2020 it was agreed by the CYP Committee to consult on a proposal to cease the After School Club transport provision. This launched on 3 February and ran for six weeks to 27 March 2020.
- 1.7 In February 2020, the then Councillor Dr Nik Johnson submitted a petition together with a joint proposer relating to this transport provision. The intention had been for this to be considered by the Committee at its meeting in April 2020. However, in recognition of the significant impact the COVID pandemic was having on children's education and lives, it was agreed with the then Chair of the Committee that it would not be appropriate to proceed with the proposals, but for it to be put on hold and revisited at a later date.

- 1.8 In September 2021 the CYP Committee were asked to consider a proposal to proceed with a fresh consultation on withdrawing the After School Club transport from September 2022. At this time, in line with the previous commitment made, the joint petitioners were also given the opportunity to present their petition to members.
- 1.9 On 14th September 2021 the CYP Committee agreed to proceed with a new, wider ranging consultation, with an emphasis on reviewing the discretionary support, rather than a proposal to withdraw the existing travel arrangements.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The Legal parameters relating to home to school/college transport for children and young people of statutory school age are set out in Sections 508, 509 and schedule 35B of the 1996 Education Act as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 509(1) and (2) place a duty upon local authorities to provide free transport where necessary to facilitate the attendance of children and students at schools and institutions both within and outside of the further and higher education sectors.

Section 509(3) allows local authorities to pay the whole or any part of reasonable travelling expenses when not making provision under 509(2) above.

Section 509(4) requires local authorities to take certain factors into account including the child's age, the nature of possible routes and parental wishes for the provision of education at a school or institution in which the religious education is that of the religion or denomination to which his/her parent adheres.

- 2.2 The Council's statutory responsibility is limited, therefore, to supporting children and young people, including those with SEND to get to and from school at the start and end of the school day. Schools determine those start and end times to ensure that each child and young person receives the number of hours of education each week to which they are entitled.

Consultation

- 2.3 On 31 January 2022 a consultation was launched for six weeks until 11 March 2022. As intended the consultation was shared with a much broader audience. In addition to the list of direct consultees set out on pages 6 and 7 of **Appendix A**, promotion of the consultation also took place in the form of a press release, publication on the Council's website and through social media.

Current and Proposed Future Options

The consultation set out to seek views on a range of proposed options outlined in the table below.

Option 1(a)	Continue to provide free transport to children and young people who attend Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Academy Ely, Samuel Pepys School
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	and Spring Common Academy to enable them to access the After School Provision run by those schools.
Option 1(b)	Continue to provide free transport to the children and young people currently on roll at the schools named in Option 1, but not to any children and young people who are placed at those schools after the start of the 2022/23 academic year.
Option 2	Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.
Option 3	Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost, with the subsidy phased out over 3 years at the end of which parents/carers would meet the full cost
Option 4	Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 to providing free transport only to those families who qualify for financial support on grounds of low income* and offer subsidised transport for other children with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.
Option 5	Cease providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 with effect from the start of term in September 2022. This would mean that parents/carers would need to meet the full cost of transport themselves, should they wish their children to continue to attend one of those clubs.

Views were sought on the suitability of the proposed options, along with a number of questions around the accessibility of the after school club provision, should it not continue in the same form in the future. A copy of the Consultation responses is also included in Appendix B.

Feedback

- 2.4 At the time the consultation closed on 11 March 2022 Officers received a total of 37 responses. This was a disappointing number, given the breadth of audience. The Majority, 19 were received from parents/carers of pupils attending an after school clubs at one of the 5 area special schools. 4 responses were received from parents/carers of children attending an after school club at another Cambridgeshire school. 7 responses were received from members of staff at the 5 area special schools, whose pupils currently receive transport assistance. A further 2 responses were received from Governors/Trust members. A final 5 responses were received from either another partner organisation or other interested parties.
- 2.5 Whilst the feedback received was varied, the majority of responses, 23, supported the continuation of the existing arrangements set out in Option 1(a). There were 7 responses supporting potential subsidised options set out in Options 2 and 4. 1 response received supported the discontinuation of the current transport arrangements, with 6 further responses having no clear preference for any option.
- 2.6 When parents/carers were asked whether their child would be able to continue accessing their existing after school club provision, should the current arrangements cease, 65% (13) responded that they would not.

- 2.7 A number of responses highlighted that there is a lack of after school activities and wrap around care options for children with SEND. Those which are available often come at a considerable cost, in comparison with opportunities available for children who access mainstream education.
- 2.8 Concerns were raised by working families who believe that any change to the existing arrangements would place an unfair burden and financial pressure on them, at a time where there is already a significant pressure created by the recent and ongoing cost of living increases. Any changes made to the existing transport arrangements would inhibit their ability to work and provide for their families.
- 2.9 For the vast majority of families who responded to the consultation, the after school clubs provides more than childcare activities for their children, it creates opportunity for socialisation, development of life skills and increasing independence and confidence. The clubs also support their mental and emotional wellbeing and offering families important respite. Many expressed their concern about the continued viability of the clubs, should the current transport arrangements cease.
- 2.10 A number of responses from both families and members of school staff favoured a change to a means tested approach going forward, with the level of subsidy being based on individual circumstances. However, some families expressed that any level of charging would prevent their child from accessing the After School Club provision.
- 2.11 One school representation highlighted the need for any proposed change to be fair and transparent. It was felt that restricting assistance to existing pupils only, and not new children joining the school, as set out in Option 1(b), would be neither fair nor transparent.
- 2.12 The comments received clearly show the strength of feeling and level of concern with regard to the adverse impact a decision to cease funding transport to the After School Clubs would have on the children and young people concerned and their families. There is no doubt that this is a Council service which is highly valued and valuable, more than in just financial terms, to those families who currently use it.

Equality of Opportunity

- 2.13 Whilst transport assistance is currently available for those children and young people with EHCPs attending the five area special schools outlined in section 1.2, there are not similar opportunities afforded to those attending alternative specialist provision in the County. There is clearly, therefore, a question of equality of opportunity with regard to the current arrangements, and the differential treatment of children and young people with EHCPs, depending upon which school they attend.
- 2.14 Since the implementation of the transport to After School Clubs in 2011, two new area special schools have been opened in Cambridgeshire, Martin Bacon Academy in Northstowe and Highfield Littleport Academy. Pupils attending these new schools do not currently receive any transport support to enable them to participate in After school club provision.

- 2.15 Children and young people with EHCPs attending enhanced resource bases at mainstream schools and those who attend specialist provision for their Social Emotional or Behavioural Difficulties (SEMH), do not currently receive any support to enable them to participate in After School provision.
- 2.16 In March 2022 a survey of After School Club provision was undertaken for all Cambridgeshire special schools. This survey found that, with the exception of the 5 area special schools named in section 1.2, only one additional special school currently operates after school club provision for its pupils. This school is Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech.
- 2.17 Officers have noted that the Council previously funded and provided transport to the After School Club run by Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech until the 2018/19 Academic Year, when the Council was informed that the Club would no longer be operating. The club has since been reinstated 3 days a week, however, the school has not sought to claim for any associated transport costs. The school currently has the following pupils attending it's After School Club provision;
- Monday - 10 pupils, of which 7 live in Cambridgeshire and receive statutory home to school transport.
 - Wednesday -11 pupils, of which 6 live in Cambridgeshire and receive statutory home to school transport.
 - Thursday - 10 pupils, of which 8 live in Cambridgeshire and receive statutory home to school transport.
- 2.18 Subject to the Committee's views on this discretionary transport arrangement and the issues identified with regard to equality of opportunity and the current economic pressures faced by families, officers judge that it would be appropriate to continue with the existing transport arrangements, as set out in Option 1(a) and undertake a further review of this provision in 12 months' time.
- 2.19 Officers also recommend that it would be both fair and equitable to reinstate the discretionary transport arrangements to those pupils accessing the After School Club provision at Meadowgate Academy.
- 2.20 It should be noted that whilst Meadowgate Academy is currently the only additional special school offering After School Club provision, other special schools could opt to run such provision in the future. The cost of providing this additional transport assistance would need to be carefully monitored as part of the ongoing budgetary pressures.
- 2.21 Officers seek Committee's approval to further explore the option of a means tested approach to delivering this discretionary transport arrangement in the future.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Due to needs of the pupils accessing this particular school provision, and the individualised nature of the transport, there is limited opportunity for shared arrangements or the use of public services.

3.2 New Health and Care

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- It has been widely recognised that the after school club provision provides important respite opportunities for families of children with SEND/ disabilities. The removal of such provision, or a family's ability to access this provision, has the potential to impact the health and wellbeing of those families and potentially place a further burden on other health and care services.

3.3 Places and Community

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- It is recognised that many children who attend specialist provision as a result of their Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) can be isolated from their local community, as their needs require them to attend provision some distance from their homes. The current discretionary transport arrangements provide the children with the additional opportunities for socialisation, independence and confidence development. If they were no longer able to attend After School provision, this would segregate them further and could be considered to be a form of discrimination.

3.4 Children and Young People

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- It is recognised that there are fewer after school opportunities for children with SEND than for those children attending mainstream provision. Due to the specific nature of needs that SEND placements cater for and both the availability and pressure on those placements, some children attend at specialist schools well outside of their local community. This often means that families depend upon the discretionary after school club transport, to enable their child to access these opportunities.

3.5 Transport

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Due to the specific nature and requirements of this transport provision the opportunity for the promotion of active and sustainable travel options is limited.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

As noted in 1.4 above there remains a significant pressure on the SEND transport budget, from which the discretionary transport to After School Clubs is funded. The final budget over-spend for 2021/22 was £1.32m, although this was partially offset by an underspend on Mainstream transport of £0.58m.

In addition, demographic changes continue to exert significant pressure on both the mainstream and SEND budgets as evidenced below:

Year	Pupils in Cambridgeshire Schools	% increase in pupil numbers	Anticipated Expenditure (£)
2020/2021	81,909		Actual expenditure on contracts and PTBs £12,359,952
2021/2022	82,393	0.59%	Actual expenditure on contracts and PTBs £15,970,516
			Budgeted spend on contracts and PTBs £17,543,436. (£10,370,000 relating specifically to special school transport)
2022/2023	82,902	0.62%	

Current and Planned Programmes

In response to the continuing budgetary pressures there are a number of programmes which are planned or already underway to help reduce the rising costs of home to school transport,

Independent travel training (ITT)

Independent travel is key to independent living, accessing employment and preparation for adulthood. The reliance upon social care services in the future by those who are travel trained, will be reduced and in some cases removed altogether. The Council is currently operating a pilot programme which began in September 2021. Depending on the age/stage of the trainee officers leading this pilot programme will work closely with representatives from Adult Social Care, to maximise the pilot's potential for positive impact on wider Council service budgets.

The 2-year pilot began successfully with a total of 44 referrals received to date, 20 of which having progressed through the assessment stage and resulting in 10 learners enrolled.

This initial trial has led to 4 learners travelling independently with one learner undertaking an accredited Edexcel qualification, although all learners receive a certificate to say they have successfully completed ITT.

To assess demand and suitability of ITT for both rural and city-based schools, the pilot started with special schools Highfield Ely and Highfield Littleport and Cambridge Regional College (both Huntingdon and Cambridge campuses). However, to ensure the maximum number of students had opportunity to

undertake training, the scheme was extended to include Castle Special School and Long Road Sixth Form College.

Based on the 4 learners moving from council transport provision to travelling independently officers can demonstrate a reduction in demand for Council funded transport. As yet this has not resulted in a difference in taxi provision as capacity levels are agreed at the beginning of taxi contracts. What this does mean is that there are 4 taxi places released that can be utilised to cover changes or additions in the numbers of students eligible for council transport. Travel training has the potential to reduce costs above investment once the programme is running into its second year.

Although interest in the scheme is steady it has been low. The pandemic particularly impacted on the way students' study and travel to school as well as the impact on training routes of driver availability due to Covid sickness. Families not supporting ITT, routes not viable for the scheme and entry criteria to the scheme not being met are also impacting on enrolment numbers. As a result, there is a relaunch of the pilot planned to target SEND schools in Cambridgeshire to promote the scheme and generate more interest and increase learners accessing the programme.

In September 2022 the outcomes of the first year of the pilot will be analysed and future options considered including initial contract extension or in-sourcing ITT.

Enhanced Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs)

The use of Personal Transport Budgets is promoted where a family is able to take on responsibility for transporting their child to and from school, and this would be a more cost effective option than the procurement of dedicated contractual transport.

Payments are calculated using a flat rate fee of £0.40 per mile for four journeys (home to school and return x 2) per school day. If there is a more cost-effective option (such as a shared transport arrangement), a PTB will not normally be agreed.

Subject to meeting the approved criteria, some families are eligible to receive an enhanced PTB payment in order to reduce the number of high cost, single occupancy taxi arrangements which the Council is currently required to put in place. This would also recognise the benefits to the child of being transported by an adult or adults with whom they are familiar and who understand and can respond to their particular needs.

SEND Specific Projects

A number of workstreams across a 3-year programme, have been established focusing on realising efficiencies and associated savings with regard to SEND transport:

- Review and re-tendering of routes serving the County's special schools over the next 3 years to include particular focus on reviewing and reducing single

occupancy taxis (currently more than 100 such routes). Three schools to be reviewed in year 1, and five each in years 2 and 3.

- Operational review and demand management to reduce transport costs to out-county specialist provision.

These will begin in earnest once recruitment to the fixed term posts identified to lead and support them has been completed.

Safer routes to schools

The Council has operated a long-standing invest to save programme, where existing routes, previously assessed as unavailable are reviewed, and funding is allocated for improvements to create an “available” walking route to school. This investment enables the withdrawal of Council-funded transport, generating future budgetary savings. There are currently 5 routes identified for review.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- All education transport is contracted through procurement frameworks established in accordance with the Council’s approved processes

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- S149 Equality Act 2010 ('The Act') places a duty on LAs to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and to eliminate discrimination. As such the Council has a duty to ensure that its policies, practices, procedures and services do not discriminate against disabled people.
- Section 6 of the Act defines disability and section 20 defines the duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people are not discriminated against.
- The Council is under a legal duty to publish a policy that reflects these provisions and to comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The current discretionary After School Club transport arrangements, as set out within this report, are not equitable as they only provided to children and young people attending five of the area special schools in Cambridgeshire. Children and young people attending one of the three Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) schools and those with EHCPs attending enhance resource bases at mainstream schools do not receive such support

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The withdrawal or change to existing school transport provision is an emotive and challenging process, which is highly resource intensive and often met with a counter campaign by the communities involved.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

It is likely that the majority of members will have a family living in their ward, currently accessing this After School Club provision, who would be affected by any changes made to the existing travel arrangements.

4.7 Public Health Implications

Parents and the families of those children and young people who attend and participate in this After School provision are likely to benefit in terms of respite. The children and young people themselves also benefit in terms of their own health and well-being.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Neutral status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Negative Status:

Due to the specific nature and requirements of this transport provision the opportunity for the promotion of active and sustainable travel options is limited.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Negative Status:

Explanation: There is a risk that any change to the Council's existing policies, which reduces the level of support currently offered, could lead to a greater number of parents transporting their children in individual cars.

4.8.7 **Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.**

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? **Yes**

Name of Financial Officer: **Martin Wade**

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the CCC Head of Procurement? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Clare Ellis**

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? **Yes**

Name of Legal Officer: **Fiona McMillan**

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Jonathan Lewis**

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Simon Cobby**

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Fran Cox and Jonathan Lewis**

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Kate Parker**

If a key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? **Yes**

Name of Officer: **Emily Bolton**

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Cambridgeshire Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

Department for Education - Home to school travel and transport guidance - statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014

6. Accessibility

6.1 Accessible versions of information contained in the appendices to this report are available on request from the report author.

**REVIEW OF
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT TO AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS
CONSULTATION**

31 January to 11 March 2022

Introduction

The Council currently provides funding to cover the cost of transport to enable children and young people attending one of five Area Special schools to stay on beyond the end of the school day and participate in after school activities. The Council also provides funding from its High Needs Block towards the cost of running that provision. This arrangement has been in place since 2011.

The Council's Children and Young People's Committee has taken the decision to launch this consultation to seek views and feedback on the current arrangements and possible changes to these.

This document has been produced with the purpose of explaining:

- Why the Council has taken the decision to undertake a review at this time.
- What alternative options to the current arrangements might be considered.
- What any changes to the current arrangements could mean for the families who use the After School provision.
- What any changes to the current arrangements could mean for the schools that run the After School provision.
- How you can let us know what you think about the current arrangements and the possible ways in which these might change.
- When decisions will be taken and by whom.

Consultation

The consultation period runs from 31 January 2022 to 11 March 2022.

We are conducting this consultation in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). Our aim is to:

- Consult widely with all interested parties
- To be clear about any proposed changes, who could be affected and our timescales
- To ensure our consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible

Any information provided by you in response to this consultation will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by public institutions. This does not necessarily mean that any response you choose to make can be made available on public request because there are exemptions to information provided in confidence and to which the UK General Data Protection Regulations apply.

If you are responding on a personal basis, you do not need to give your name and address unless you wish to do so. However, this would be useful in case we need to contact you for any clarification. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, it would be helpful for you to provide details of that organisation and the capacity in which you represent them. Please tell us if you want your response to remain confidential but do note that making such a request does not automatically exclude a right of public access.

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

Following a pilot project undertaken in 2010 involving Granta Special School in Linton, South Cambridgeshire, the Council took the decision to fund the cost of transport to enable children and young people attending both this school and the five other Area Special schools in Cambridgeshire open at that time to stay on beyond the end of the school day and participate in after school activities.

Currently, free transport is provided to the following schools:

- Castle School in Cambridge
- Granta School in Linton
- Highfields Academy in Ely
- Samuel Pepys School in St Neots
- Spring Common Academy in Huntingdon

The Council previously funded and provided transport to the After School club run by Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech. Whilst the school continues to run an After School club it has not made a claim for the transport cost associated with this since the start of September 2018.

The funding provided by the Council is a discretionary arrangement. The Council is under no legal or statutory duty to fund or make arrangements for children and young people to attend either Before or After School clubs run by schools or other providers. Its legal duty is limited to supporting children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to get them to school for the start of the school teaching day and to get them home at the end of the school teaching day. Schools determine those start and end times to ensure that every child and young person receives the number of hours of education each week to which they are entitled.

The Council does not provide or fund similar arrangements for children and young people attending other special schools or those attending mainstream schools who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

SECTION 2 – WHY IS THERE A NEED TO REVIEW THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS?

In the time since the Council took the decision to provide free transport to the After School Clubs run by Cambridgeshire's Area Special Schools, two new Area Special schools have opened in Cambridgeshire. These are Highfield Academy in Littleport and the Martin Bacon Academy in Northstowe, South Cambridgeshire. A third new Area Special School, Prestley Wood is planned to open in September 2023 in Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon.

The current arrangements do not reflect these changes, nor do they take account of the three special schools in the County which provide education for children and young people with Social

Emotional & Mental Health Needs (SEMH). These are The Harbour School in Wilburton (East Cambridgeshire), The Centre School in Cottenham (South Cambridgeshire) and the Riverside Meadows Academy which has sites in St Neots and Wisbech.

Nor do they take account of the fact that there are a number of Enhanced Resource Units based at schools around the County which provide for children and young people with autism.

There are also many children and young people with SEND who have EHCPs who are being educated in mainstream schools.

Since 2011, the Council has had to make a number of changes to its home to school/college transport arrangements in response to significant financial pressures. It continues to face those pressures and needs to consider ways in which it can reduce these.

In the last three years in particular, the Council has seen the cost of home to school/college transport increase. This year, the Council forecast is that it will spend around £600,000 more on home to school/college transport for children and young people with SEND than it has in its budget. This is the result mainly of a greater number of children and young people with complex SEND requiring specialist provision, including transport.

Included within this overspend figure is the £93,686.34 it costs to provide transport to 54 children and young people who use one of the After School clubs run by the five Area Special schools named above. This breaks down to an average of £1,734.93 per child per annum.

SECTION 3 – WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS?

Option 1(a)

Continue to provide free transport to children and young people who attend Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Academy Ely, Samuel Pepys School and Spring Common Academy to enable them to access the After School Provision run by those schools.

Option 1(b)

Continue to provide free transport to the children and young people currently on roll at the schools named in Option 1, but not to any children and young people who are placed at those schools after the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

Option 2

Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.

Option 3

Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost, with the subsidy phased out over 3 years at the end of which parents/carers would meet the full cost.

Option 4

Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 to providing free transport only to those families who qualify for financial support on grounds of low income* and offer subsidised transport for other children with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.

Option 5

Cease providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 with effect from the start of term in September 2022. This would mean that parents/carers would need to meet the full cost of transport themselves, should they wish their children to continue to attend one of those clubs from the start of September 2022.

** be entitled to [Free school meals](#) or be from a family receiving the maximum level of Working Families Tax Credit (with no reduction due to income).*

Due to the significant on-going financial pressures which the Council continues to face it is not able to consider options for extending the current arrangements to provide support to those children and young people with SEND attending other schools.

SECTION 4 – POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

The Council is very appreciative of the fact that the current arrangements provide the parents/carers and families of those children and young people who attend an After School Club run by one of the five Area Special Schools named above, with both short break respite and greater flexibility around childcare arrangements. We are also aware of the benefits that the children and young people themselves gain from participating in After School provision. We know, therefore, that any changes to the current arrangements will directly affect those children, young people and their families. We also know that many families have their own financial challenges and that these could have increased as a result of the Covid pandemic.

Any changes to the current arrangements could also have a direct impact on school staff. If there are fewer children and young people attending the After School Clubs, fewer staff would need to be employed to support or supervise them.

The purpose of this consultation is to better understand how children, young people, their families and the schools would be affected should any of the alternative options identified above be approved by the Council's Children and Young People's Committee for implementation.

Therefore, we would very much like to receive your views and feedback both on the current arrangements and the alternative options we have outlined. We would also like to hear any alternative suggestions you might have. There are a number of ways you can respond. These are detailed on the last page of this document.

The closing date for receipt of comments is **11 March 2022**.

SECTION 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN THE PROCESS?

Once all the responses have been collated and analysed, this information will be presented to the Council's Children's and Young People's Committee at their meeting on 17 May 2022 together with a recommendation on which option should be taken forward and implemented. The earliest any changes would come into effect would be for the start of the academic year 2022/23.

Parents affected by the proposed changes are welcome to address the Committee by prior arrangement.

The parents/carers, families, children and young people and the schools affected will be informed of the outcome of the Committee meeting as soon as practically possible. There is no right of appeal against the Committee's decision.

Consultees

Parents/carers of children using the After School clubs run by one of the following schools: Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely, Samuel Pepys and Spring Common.

Staff employed by one of the five schools named above.
Governors of one of the above five schools named above.

Union representatives

Local County Councillors

Local MPs

PinPoint

SENDIASS (Cambridgeshire)

Head teachers, staff, governors and parents/carers of children and young people of the following Cambridgeshire special schools;

- Meadowgate Academy, Wisbech.
- Martin Bacon Academy, Northstowe.
- Highfield Littleport Academy.
- The Harbour School, Wilburton.
- The Centre School, Cottenham.
- The Riverside Meadows Academy, St Neots and Wisbech.

Head teachers, staff, governors and parents/carers of children and young people attending the Enhanced Resource Bases at the following Cambridgeshire mainstream schools;

- Comberton Village College, The Cabin.
- Gamlingay Village Primary School, The Cabin.
- Melbourn Village College, The Cabin.
- St Peter's School, Huntingdon, The Cabin.
- Colville Speech & Language Centre, Cambridge.
- Cottenham Village College, Hearing Support Centre.
- Ernulf Academy, St Neots, The Cabin.
- Impington Village College, Specialist Post-16 Provision.
- Impington Village College, The Pavilion.
- Mayfield Primary School, Hearing Impaired Unit, Cambridge
- Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey Enhanced Provision Centre.
- Spring Meadow Infant Assessment Unit, Ely
- Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech, The Cooper Centre.
- Trumpington Community College, Cambridge, The Cabin.
- Witchford Village College, The Cabin.

Home to School Transport for After School Clubs Proposal

Consultation Response Form

1. Please provide your first name and surname name below (you may also remain anonymous):

2. Please provide your email address (optional):

3. Please provide your home address and post code (optional):

4. Please select the appropriate box to indicate if you are:

- ☐ A parent/carer of a child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy
- ☐ A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school
- ☐ A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who attends an Enhanced Recourse Base at a Cambridgeshire mainstream school.
- ☐ A child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy
- ☐ A child or young person who has an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school
- ☐ A member of staff at Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy
- ☐ A member of staff at one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base.
- ☐ A governor or Trust member of Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy

- ☐ A governor or Trust member of one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base.
- ☐ A Professional Association / Trade Union representative
- ☐ A representative of another Partner Organisation / Education Provider

5. Please select which After School Club your child uses:

- ☐ Castle School
- ☐ Granta School
- ☐ Highfield Ely Academy
- ☐ Samuel Pepys School
- ☐ Spring Common Academy
- ☐ Do not currently attend a Club
- ☐ Other, please name in the box below

6. If you have selected “other” please provide details below:

7. If your child does not attend an After School Club, what are reasons for this?

- ☐ No club available
- ☐ No transport available
- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Other

8. If you have answered “Other” please provide details.

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9. Current Arrangements and Alternative Options

Please tick a box if you have a clear preference for one of the options listed:

- ☐ **Option 1 (a)** – *“Continue to provide free transport to children and young people who attend Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Academy Ely, Samuel Pepys School and Spring Common Academy to enable them to access the After School Provision run by those schools”.*
- ☐ **Option 1 (b)** - *“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost”.*
- ☐ **Option 2** – *“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost”.*
- ☐ **Option 3** – *“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost, with the subsidy phased out over 3 years at the end of which parents/carers would meet the full cost”.*
- ☐ **Option 4** – *“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 to providing free transport only to those families who qualify for financial support on grounds of low income* and offer subsidised transport for other children with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.”*
- ☐ **Option 5** - *“Cease providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 with effect from the start of term in September 2022. This would mean that parents/carers would need to meet the full cost of transport themselves, should they wish their children to continue to attend one of those clubs from the start of September 2022”.*

10. If you have ticked Option 2, please use the boxes below to indicate the level of subsidy you think the Council should provide:

- ☐ 75% of the cost
- ☐ 50% of the cost

- ☐ 25% of the cost
- ☐ Other

11. If you have selected “Other” please specify the amount below.

12. If you have selected Option 3, please use the box below to let us know how you think the Council should phase out the subsidy over a three year period.

13. Please tick the box below if you do not have a clear preference or a strong view on any of the above options.

☐

14. If you have any alternative suggestions, please use the box below to let us know what they are.

15. If your child currently attends one of the After School Clubs run by one of the 5 Area Special schools, would they continue to be able to access their existing After School Club if the decision was taken to implement Option 5 (cease providing free transport).

Yes ☐

No ☐

16. If you have selected “Yes”, how would they travel to the club?

17. If you would like to make an additional comment, please use the box below and continue onto a separate sheet if necessary.

Ways to respond:

The deadline for receipt of comments is **11 March 2022** and you can respond in a number of ways;

Online - The quickest and easiest way to contact us is to complete the Smart Survey online to give your comments. This can be found using the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/8mdZaDrBZi>



In person- You can hand in your completed questionnaire to any of the schools, who will then send them on to us.

By email - You can email the questionnaire directly to:

transportconsultation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

By Post - You can post your questionnaire to:

Transport to After School Clubs Consultation
Cambridgeshire County Council
BOX ALC2606
New Shire Hall
Alconbury Weald
PE28 4YE

Home to School Transport for After School Clubs

Consultation - Responses

Breakdown of respondents

A parent/carer of a child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	19
A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school	3
A parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND and an EHCP who attends an Enhanced Recourse Base at a Cambridgeshire mainstream school.	1
A child or young person who uses an After School Club run by Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	0
A child or young person who has an EHCP who uses an After School Club run by another school	0
A member of staff at Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	7
A member of staff at one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base	0
A governor or Trust member of Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Ely Academy, Samuel Pepys School or Spring Common Academy	1
A governor or Trust member of one of the other Cambridgeshire special schools or a mainstream Enhanced Resource Base	1
A Professional Association / Trade Union representative	0
A representative of another Partner Organisation / Education Provider	2
Other	3
Total	37

Please select which After School Club your child uses:

Castle School	6
Granta School	4
Highfield Ely Academy	2
Samuel Pepys School	2
Spring Common Academy	3
Do not currently attend a Club	1
Other	3 (Witchford Village College, Ridgefield Primary School, Meadowgate Academy)
Not Applicable	16

If your child does not attend an After School Club, what are reasons for this?

No club available	1
No transport available	1
Cost	1
N/A	3

Current Arrangements and Alternative Options

Please tick a box if you have a clear preference for one of the options listed:

Option 1 (a) <i>“Continue to provide free transport to children and young people who attend Castle School, Granta School, Highfield Academy Ely, Samuel Pepys School and Spring Common Academy to enable them to access the After School Provision run by those schools”.</i>	23
Option 1 (b) <i>“Continue to provide free transport to the children and young people currently on roll at the schools named in Option 1, but not to any children and young people who are placed at those schools after the start of the 2022/23 academic year”.</i>	0
Option 2 <i>Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost”.</i>	2
Option 3 <i>“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1, to providing subsidised transport with parents/carers meeting part of the cost, with the subsidy phased out over 3 years at the end of which parents/carers would meet the full cost”.</i>	0
Option 4 – <i>“Change from providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 to providing free transport only to those families who qualify for financial support on grounds of low income* and offer subsidised transport for other children with parents/carers meeting part of the cost.”</i>	5
Option 5 - <i>“Cease providing free transport to those children and young people who attend the schools named in Option 1 with effect from the start of term in September 2022. This would mean that parents/carers would need to meet the full cost of transport themselves, should they wish their children to continue to attend one of those clubs from the start of September 2022”.</i>	1
No Preference	6

If you have ticked Option 2, please use the boxes below to indicate the level of subsidy you think the Council should provide:

75% of the cost	1
50% if the cost	2
25% of the cost	0
Other	0
Not Applicable	34

If you have any alternative suggestions, please use the box below to let us know what they are.

1 Response

"Why do you not fund other schools? My daughter used to get transport provided and it was stopped. I am willing to pay towards it, having to get transport to get my daughter home makes it hardly worth her going as I have to rely on other people to help. It was just suddenly stopped"

If your child currently attends one of the After School Clubs run by one of the 5 Area Special schools, would they continue to be able to access their existing After School Club if the decision was taken to implement Option 5 (cease providing free transport).

Yes	7
No	13
Not Applicable	17

If you have selected "Yes", how would they travel to the club?

"Assuming that the free provision would be replaced by transport which we would need to pay for, my son could not travel in a private taxi without a chaperone"

"They would have to be collected by parent"

"We may need to cut down after-school club attendance from 5 to maybe 2-3 times a week in order to accommodate our jobs. We both work full time jobs."

"I would have to drive out to school and collect him after work"

"Drive"

If you would like to make an additional comment, please use the box below and continue onto a separate sheet if necessary.

"We rely on transport currently and xxx really enjoys it".

"On some occasions I am able to collect our daughter from after school club, but this is a short-term thing and if transport stops then in the future after school would be a closed option for her".

"It is essential that free transport continues to be provided in order for her to access after school club. This provides inclusion and equality for my child."

"I think the after school transport provision is crucial for two reasons: i) it offers an opportunity for children with SEN to socialise with their peers outside of school hours in a familiar, safe space ii) it allows parents to work. Having a child with SEN plunges most families into poverty and this adversely affects women (as they usually are impacted in families due to maternity leave initially) and this is unfair and discriminatory. Working not only helps avoid poverty and the stresses that that causes but provides self-esteem and a respite for carers also."

"I am extremely grateful to you for providing free transport. xxx loves After-School Club and it is the only club available to him. His special needs make it impossible for him to access any mainstream activities even with a carer present. After-school club for children with SEND is available for one afternoon per week only. This is woefully inadequate compared to the provision for children in mainstream schools who have access to such clubs for five afternoons per week. Please can you continue to fund their transport so that they can have at least this one day per week at a club? It was decided long ago to close all the smaller local special schools and for the local authorities to fund transport to larger schools. Surely you cannot now turn round and say that it's too expensive and deprive these children of this one activity per week? The consequences are far reaching for many families. While xxx is at after-school club his twin sister is able to have play-dates at home without being afraid that xxx will hurt someone. This is a lifeline for her and for xxx older brother (who also has autism). We do not (as is the case for many other families) have family nearby to help. Nor did we choose to have a child with special needs. We need help and support to give them and their siblings the care they need."

"We don't claim any benefit for our son even though we are entitled to help because we want to work full-time to provide for him and to also ensure that those who are truly unable to work full time can then claim those benefits for their children. This provision for transport from after-school club allows me and my husband to work full time without one of having to find part-time work or not working at all."

It's vitally important for students to access after school clubs for their mental and emotional needs. Also important for parents, enabling them to work or for respite

"There are insufficient opportunities for these children to socialise and partake in leisure activities. Parents and carers are already struggling. Making it more difficult for parents or carers to support children will deprive children of a scarce resource or/and put more pressure onto parents. Save money elsewhere."

"Without transport provided, many after-school clubs wouldn't be viable, so even those families who could afford/arrange transport would be missing out because the provision would no longer be there. After-school provision is so, so important for children with SEND who attend Special Schools, so providing the transport enables that to happen. So many of the children at special needs schools travel long distances to go to school because the area schools are not local to the child's home. It is therefore harder for them to access other after-school activities, such as a child going to their local school may be able to do, who does not have such a long school commute. Children at Special Schools have such pronounced needs that they generally need specialised after-school provision, such as their schools are equipped to provide, but other activity groups may not be able to provide. This provision makes a hugely positive difference to children and young people whose access of other life experiences is so limited, so it is really worth investing in the infrastructure which enables this provision to take place."

"We already feel penalised as working parents of a disabled child, with limited wrap around care available at significant cost. We were fortunate that until covid hit, a mainstream afterschool club provided a place for our son. The ran 7.45am- 9am and 3.15 -6pm in term time, and offered school holiday. This is no longer feasible and we now have no care before school, until

5pm after school and 1 week per year holiday club if it runs at a cost of £10 per hour, as opposed to £9 per term time day and £25 per day in the holidays. This feels inequitable and discriminatory. I have previously raised this, with no response. Removing free after school transport means reducing the working day if we needed to collect, which is not possible, or if funding is required making cost of childcare unrealistic. Ultimately it results in one of us having to give up work. Whilst we appreciate there are cost cutting exercises across all public sector organisations, we feel, as highlighted this is making life even tougher for parents of children that are complex and challenging. We both feel that work allows us an element of respite and supports our sanity. Is there any consideration given to the impact this will have on our family and health? I currently do not claim benefits, however if I were to give up work would be entitled to carers allowance etc - have you factored in that you are simply shifting costs elsewhere? This is in addition to any impact it may have on mental health and wellbeing, again at a potential cost to the NHS. I look forward to the update and response in relation to this."

"The children get so much from the After school club. They enjoy the interaction on a play level with their friends or different students. It also helps the parents that work and need a safe place for their children".

"The leadership team at Samuel Pepys School wish to offer the following response to the consultation regarding transport home from after school club provision and request that these reflections are considered as part of the consultation. We would wish any review or changes made to ASC transport arrangements to be fair, transparent and not create any disparity between users and their families. If changes are made then they should be equitable, for example, by maintaining some 'historic' transport funding or subsidies for existing users and no transport funding for new users will be perceived as inequitable. It is recognised that children and young people with SEND have less opportunities to socialise with their peers. The ASC provision is valued by some and removing or reducing the free transport home may reduce this access if the families cannot meet the costs of transport (either if subsidised or if a charge applies.) Please may we enquire if funding is ceased, how will the funding be reallocated? Will that funding then support the education transport budget? The importance of being able to access an appropriate specialist school place is recognised and home to school transport is valued by many families. Could an important overarching priority be ensuring that those families who need transport to and from school have it? This supports keeping pupils in their school placements and indeed their home or community environment. We trust that the consultation will enable a wide range of views to be considered and a best interests decision made."

"The Governors of Samuel Pepys School have reviewed the consultation document and although we cannot confirm an appropriate option (as listed) we do wish to offer the following response. Governors are mindful of the value of the After School Club at Samuel Pepys School but have also discussed the need to use public funding in an equitable and effective manner. In discussion with the school's leadership team and in consideration of our current offer to families, we would make the following points. We recognise that the opportunity for our young people to socialise with their peers outside of the usual school day is of significant value and the ASC provides this facility to a number of our families. Removing or reducing the free transport home may reduce this access if the families cannot meet the costs of transport (either if subsidised or if a charge applies.) As confirmed in our Leadership team's response we would wish any review or changes made to ASC transport arrangements to be fair, transparent and not create any disparity between users and their families. If changes are made then they should be equitable, for example - by maintaining some 'historic' transport funding or subsidies for existing users and no transport funding for new users - will be perceived as inequitable. Most importantly however, is our concern that if funding is ceased, how will the funding be reallocated? Will that funding then support the education transport budget? The importance of being able to access an appropriate specialist school place is significant and home to school transport is highly valued by many families, indeed our high attendance figures reflect the value

of ensuring that our young people are able to come to school every day. Could an important overarching priority be ensuring that those families who need transport to and from school have it? This supports keeping pupils in their nearest and most appropriate school placements and indeed their home or community environment.”

“I am writing to oppose in the strongest possible terms, the possibility that Cambridgeshire County Council should cease funding school transportation that enables children at the Area Special Schools to attend after school activities. This will have a devastating effect on friends of ours who have a wheelchair bound child with very complex special needs at one of these schools. The overall financial impact for the county and the country as a whole will be significantly greater than any short term savings that may be achieved. This will include higher home respite care costs, overnight stays etc.

For parents already struggling to combine working and caring for a child with very complex special needs it may mean one of them having to give up work. This will lead to additional costs for Carers Allowance and Jobseeker’s Allowance. It will also impact their mental and physical wellbeing with associated costs for the additional care provision required. The pressure on parents is already immense.

Can I ask how you have calculated the savings of this proposal and whether you have taken into account any of these wider costs?

Can I also ask how this decision can possibly fit with the following statements for Cambridgeshire County Council:

We are becoming an increasingly outcomes-focused Council, making budget, investment and performance decisions based on the contribution of each activity to our priority outcomes:

- A good quality of life for everyone*
- Thriving places for people to live*
- The best start for Cambridgeshire’s children*

One of the Council’s principles is (Strategic Framework): Meeting need in a way that improves the quality of life and reduces inequalities.

In addition, the Business Plan 2019-24 Medium Term Financial Strategy states: The Council will continue to seek to shape proposals so that the most vulnerable are the least affected.”

Please note that any feedback containing personal information which could not be sufficiently redacted has not been included.

CUSPE Research Project: Improving Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Director of Children's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: The Committee is asked to consider the findings of research into supporting good outcomes for young people in care carried out through the partnership between the County Council and Cambridge University.

This provides an opportunity to review the support provided to young people leaving care by the Council in light of the findings of the research.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the CUSPE report and thank those involved for their extensive research.
- b) Note and comment on the officer assessment of the research recommendations.
- c) Consider whether the chair of the Committee should advocate at a national level for increased mental health support for young people leaving care.

Voting: Co-opted members of the Committee are not eligible to vote on this report.

Officer contact:

Name: Nicola Curley
Post: Director of Children's Services
Email: nicola.curley@peterborough.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 703286

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Bryony Goodliffe and Maria King
Post: Chair/Vice-Chair

Email: bryony.goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk & maria.king@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

- 1.1. Postgraduate research students undertake pieces of research in particular areas of interest to Cambridgeshire County Council through the CUSPE programme.
- 1.2. This committee report accompanies the publishing of their research report which focuses on promoting the best outcomes for young people leaving care.
- 1.3. The research report was first made available in July 2021. Bringing the report to committee was delayed by the continuing impact of the pandemic, and the need for some discussion with the researchers about the evidence base for some of the findings.
- 1.4. The report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The authors have spent a considerable amount of time investigating the subject matter and they are to be thanked and commended for their work.
- 1.5. While there have been some delays in bringing the report to Committee, the report has already contributed to our on-going review of our offer to young people leaving care.
- 1.6. The remainder of this report provides some contextual information relevant to the research report, before moving on to a summary of officer views as to the extent to which the recommendation would deliver improved outcomes, is practical and/or sustainable.

2. Main Issues

Contextual Information

- 2.1. This is a lengthy piece of research, and a large number of recommendations are made. Some of the findings of the research are based quite extensively on the findings from a survey of young people who had left care undertaken by the researchers. The majority of the respondents made a number of largely negative comments about their experiences. It is clearly important that their voices are heard, but it is also important to recognise that only 10 anonymous responses were received, out of the over 300 young people who have left care and who are aged 18-21 at any one time. The researchers have accepted this and worked closely with the Department to address this in the report, whilst continuing to consider the views of those that did respond.
- 2.2. Such a low response rate means that there can be only limited confidence that views expressed – whether positive or negative – are representative of the views of young people leaving care generally. Young people leaving care have access to advocacy and complaint processes, and ultimately to the Local Government Ombudsman. We monitor all complaints so that we can make improvements to our services where necessary. We have not seen a level of complaints from our young people leaving care that would suggest widespread concerns.
- 2.3. It is also the case, however, that the time that the research was being carried out coincided with some quite wide-ranging changes in the organisation of services supporting children in care and young people leaving care. These changes included the development of specialist teams of personal advisers to support young people in care, alongside the development of specialist teams for children and young people in care. These changes were implemented

because it was clear that we needed to do more to support our young people leaving care than had historically been the case.

Consideration of Recommendations

- 2.4. As noted above, the report makes a large number of recommendations, which are set out in bold below and considered in turn.

Have a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team

- 2.5. Accommodation is a common source of worry for young people leaving care and the background to this recommendation is clearly a well-intentioned wish to address these concerns. It is also the case that, especially in some parts of the County, access to permanent affordable housing is challenging.
- 2.6. That said, housing responsibilities rest with District Councils and it is not immediately clear how creating an accommodation team would add value, given the resource implications. Report authors argue that personal advisers do not always have the time to address the accommodation needs of young people leaving care. Officers would argue that this is a fundamental part of the personal adviser role. Officers would also argue that employing a separate team to look after an aspect of the needs of young people leaving care would result in those young people having to make relationships with officers in order to access support, and that it is usually better for a single officer who knows them well to take the lead.
- 2.7. We do need to ensure that the caseloads of personal advisers are at a level that they have the capacity to deliver the support needed by young people, however, and have increased the number of personal advisers in recent years. We continue to keep caseloads under review.
- 2.8. It is worth noting that the proportion of young people leaving care aged 19-21 who are in suitable accommodation in Cambridgeshire is around 90%, which is higher than either the England or statistical neighbour averages.

The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on improving the current accommodation process by:

- a. Extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25;
 - b. Removing the reduction of allowances for carers when YOUNG PEOPLE join the Staying Put scheme;
 - c. Ensuring more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments for foster placements;
 - d. Allowing priority social housing applications any time before age 25;
 - e. Granting access to all housing options and increasing housing allowance costs for YOUNG PEOPLE waiting for asylum.
- 2.9. Staying Put is the name given to the arrangement where former foster carers continue to provide accommodation and support to young people previously in their care. The scheme is covered by statutory guidance and applies to young people up to the age of 21. The former carer and young person must both want to participate in the arrangement.
- 2.10. It is the case that many young adults remain at home for longer than they have ever previously done, although sometimes this is more to do with the lack of accommodation than a particular

wish to continue living at home. The researchers make the point that this trend is not reflected in the rules around Staying Put.

- 2.11. The issue with extending the scheme to 25, however, is that most young people who remain in these arrangements are taking up a bedroom in a foster home that can no longer be used for a child who needs to come into care. Agreeing to this as a blanket position for all young people leaving care is therefore problematic. What we can and do consider is extending the staying put arrangement beyond the age of 21 on a case by case basis.
- 2.12. Former foster carers receive a reduced allowance for staying put compared with fostering allowances because they are no longer foster carers. They are providing accommodation for an adult, albeit an adult who is leaving care and remains in need of some support. The rate payable is based on supported lodgings rates, which is the closest equivalent to staying put arrangements.
- 2.13. Visits to foster carers and assessments of new foster carers are covered by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering and associated statutory guidance, with which we are fully compliant. Increased frequency of visiting takes place when placements come under pressure, but it would not be appropriate to develop a different approach to that laid out in legislation and associated guidance. A blanket approach to increasing visits would also require an increase in the number of social work staff, which would have financial implications as well as result in a likely increase in vacancies, since there are insufficient social workers for posts available even at the current establishment.
- 2.14. Allowing priority housing applications for young people leaving care at any age up to 25 is something we can explore with district Councils; the county council is not a housing provider and so cannot do this unilaterally.
- 2.15. Young people who have left care and were previously unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not have recourse to public funds. There are limits to the levels of financial and other support as a result that we work within, while ensuring that this group of young people are fully supported, but these have increased more recently. We have asked the service to explore this area further.

Act as a rent guarantor for young people with care experience, with a particular focus on helping those engaged with low-income employment and apprenticeships

- 2.16. We act as rent guarantor in certain circumstances, and provide particular consideration in the areas identified. We are currently exploring a wider scheme.
- 2.17. **Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for young people with care experience**
- 2.18. Intentionality is enshrined in housing law and is not something that can be removed as such. That said, this aspect of housing law can have serious implications for young people leaving care. As with many of the areas covered by these recommendations, how we support young people in practice is dependent on individual circumstances; adopting a blanket approach would be problematic since intentionality usually arises from things like not paying the rent or causing significant levels of anti-social or criminal behaviour in the local community.
- 2.19. It would not be right to simply say to young people leaving care that they do not need to worry about causing a nuisance or not paying the rent. What we do is to work with young people who are potentially placing themselves at risk of eviction in order to prevent that eviction.

Where an eviction takes place, we will identify other housing and we will seek to support the young person concerned to demonstrate that they can be a responsible tenant. We then go back to district councils and advocate for them to provide a social tenancy once more.

Secure emergency accommodation for young people who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown

- 2.20. The county council does not have accommodation of its own to provide to young people leaving care who are faced with homelessness or a tenancy breakdown, but we always support young people in these situations to identify housing, working in partnership with district councils and housing providers. This can be challenging in some situations; housing providers are not always willing to take on a young adult as a tenant when they are aware that previous non-payment of rent or antisocial behaviour has resulted in evictions. This can mean that we must rely on hostel and other forms of emergency accommodation in some situations.
- 2.21. Understandably, some young people are unhappy with accommodation of this kind. Where this is the only form of accommodation available, we continue to work with the young person on supporting them to demonstrate that they have now developed the skills needed to hold a tenancy, and support them to move into more permanent accommodation once this is available.

Provide Council Tax relief to young people with care experience until age 25:

- a. Council Tax relief should extend to Cambridgeshire County Council's young people with care experience living in Cambridgeshire and out-of-county;
 - b. Cambridgeshire County Council should determine the possibility of extending this policy to external young people with care experience living in Cambridgeshire, if they do not already receive this support from their associated LA;
 - c. Council Tax relief should be offered as an exemption not a refund and it should not be subject to means testing;
 - d. In the long-term, Cambridgeshire County Council should apply automatic relief for its local young people with care experience. If an application process is necessary in the short-term, it should be clear, accessible, and include multiple formats e.g. online and via telephone;
 - e. The Council Tax relief rate should be 100% when young people with care experience lives alone or with other care-experienced individuals. The rate should be applied proportionally if the young people with care experience is living with non-eligible individuals.
- 2.22. Cambridgeshire County Council has agreed to establish a council tax relief scheme for all eligible young people leaving care aged between 19 and 21. This will be available to young people living within and outside the county council area.
- 2.23. The council cannot offer this as an exemption as such; county councils are not the council tax raising authority and while it will doubtless be possible to develop protocols with district councils within the county boundary where the county council pays council tax to the district council rather than refunding the young person, district councils cannot simply exempt Cambridgeshire County Council young people leaving care from council tax.

- 2.24. This is because any district council who excluded other young people who had left care living in their areas but who had originally been placed by other local authorities would potentially be acting unfairly and be open to legal challenge. Legal advice has been obtained on this point, and confirms that this is the case.
- 2.25. The research report makes the case for council tax relief to be payable to age 25. The decision of the Council is to offer relief to young people aged up to 21, while establishing a ring-fenced additional fund of £100K for young adults who have left care aged between 21 and 25 who are in financial difficulty. This fund can be accessed to support young people facing a range of difficulties and not only those connected to non-payment of council tax.
- 2.26. The decision not to make automatic relief payments of council tax to young people aged between 21 and 25 is based on the fact that after the age of 21, life pathways for young adults tend to vary significantly. Some young adults who have left care will have graduated from university and have the opportunity to earn reasonable salaries, while others will continue to be struggling with a range of challenges and be in real need of on-going support. In this context, the decision has been taken to target support towards those in this age range that are most vulnerable. This approach will however be reviewed in order to assess uptake of the fund and operation of the council tax relief approach more generally.
- 2.27. The scheme will ensure that council tax relief will apply to the actual amount of council tax payable by the young person, and take into account those living in shared accommodation.

Increase provision of internal work opportunities and work experience at CCC for young people leaving care by:

- a. Guaranteeing interviews for those who meet the minimum criteria for a council vacancy;
 - b. Ring-fencing specific opportunities.
- 2.28. These are all helpful suggestions and are areas of work that are currently being taken forward by the service. There is a need to ensure that any measures that we put in place are in line with other fair access and equal opportunity requirements, and we will seek advice from colleagues within our Human Resources service.

Create a designated money and budgeting page in Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Offer which guides young people in/leaving care to financial services and courses as well as charity/private support.

- a. Cambridgeshire County Council's website should be updated to include available services and courses designated for money management and debt information;
 - b. A PDF or mobile application should be created which provides information on all the financial benefits available to young people leaving care.
- 2.29. The website and local offer has been updated to include available services and courses around money management and information about debt (from end of April 22).
- 2.30. Information on all financial benefits and sources of support is now included within the information pack provided to young people leaving care and is available on-line from the end of April 22.
- 2.31. Developing a mobile application is something that the service has considered. Work is underway on more targeted social media activity in consultation with our young people

leaving care. At present, young people have not expressed an interest in a specific app, although it would make sense to include a broader range of information onto any application, rather than restricting it to financial information. We will continue to seek views from young people on this issue.

PAs and care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance on how to provide financial education.

- a. Training should be focused on how to effectively provide advice on money management, budgeting, saving and spending to young people leaving care;
- b. Clear guidance should be given to these workers to follow when providing financial education to young people leaving care.

2.32. We are in the process of updating our training programme for those working with and caring for our young people, including our foster carers. We agree that young people in care and leaving care need a whole range of support and learning opportunities to help them to prepare for adulthood and increasing independence.

2.33. We do not have children's homes of our own; those care homes that we commission are required to deliver a range of outcomes for those young people in placement, preparation for independence being a key requirement. Our commissioning service works continuously with the homes that provide placements for our children in care, to ensure that those providers are delivering a good quality service in line with their contractual agreements.

Pathway Plans for young people in care should have a specific section dedicated to the development of knowledge and skills required for independent living.

2.34. Pathway plans already include specific sections addressing these areas.

Create a clear and well-advertised guide to accessing available mental health services including charity-based support.

- a. Update the Council website to improve access to relevant information;
- b. Create a downloadable app or a PDF file that can be sent to all YOUNG PEOPLE in/leaving care with all the relevant details from the Local Offer and clickable links to support services/other initiatives (as a minimum a leaflet should be provided with signposting for local and national mental health services);
- c. Create a defined pathway through which YOUNG PEOPLE can access mental health support depending on their age and stage within care. This should include clarity around the transition from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to adult mental health services.

2.35. We do acknowledge the central concerns that young people have about their own mental health and the extent to which some have difficulty accessing services.

2.36. Since the research undertaken by the team took place, there has been a wholesale review of mental health services for children and young people aged up to 18 and in some cases, to 21 or 25.

2.37. Specialist mental health services provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust [often known as Tier 3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services]

provide specialist care to young people up to the age of 18, at which point they transition to adult mental health services.

- 2.38. YOUnited is a new early intervention service which launched on 1st July 2021. It is a jointly commissioned service between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. It has replaced the previously commissioned service delivered by CHUMS, which was the main provider at the time of the research.
- 2.39. YOUnited is a partnership between Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation NHS Trust, Cambridgeshire Community Services, Centre 33, and Ormiston Families. The service has a central referral hub through which Children and young people aged up to 25 years can access range of mental health concerns. Referrals to the service are assessed and allocated to the most relevant level of support. This support could be advice, guidance, one to one interventions, group support, a range of digital solutions which are supported by a practitioner, or specialist child and adolescent mental health support.
- 2.40. As this new service is becoming established, it is exploring how to improve access to support outside of usual hours, and improving the availability of information that is available on-line.
- 2.41. There are a number of voluntary sector organisations that also provide support to young people. These include the 'Someone To Talk To' service, delivered by Centre 33, which provides free and confidential counselling for young people aged 13-25 years at their regional hubs. The service is an outreach support approach to engaging young people who do not traditionally access Mental Health Support.
- 2.42. Advice about the available services can be found through both the Kooth and Keep Your Head websites, and support can also be accessed through the First Response Service, which is available on a 24/7 basis through NHS 111.
- 2.43. Updating information to young people leaving care and who have left care on the changed offer in respect of mental health support is continuing. In order to ensure that there is no duplication of information or any risk of information becoming out of date, the information hosted on the Cambridgeshire County Council website and within the local offer for young people leaving care will largely consist of links to the providers of services including YOUnited.

Develop a comprehensive training programme covering mental health first aid and up-to-date research on childhood adversity and mental health for the Leaving Care Team, PAs, and foster/residential carers.

- a. Develop a programme in collaboration with MHFA England and local NHS clinicians and/or university researchers;
 - b. Ensure members of the leaving care team complete mental health first aid training as a requirement of their role;
 - c. Offer refresher training sessions;
 - d. Intensify mental health training for foster and residential carers (current training is too basic).
- 2.44. We will consider the above recommendations as part of our on-going review of training and development programmes for our staff and our carers. We now have a refreshed clinical offer through our refreshed clinical service, which offers general training as well as bespoke

individual support to our foster carers, with the express aim of supporting carers to meet the mental and emotional health needs of the children and young people for whom they provide care.

- 2.45. The point about some training being too basic is accepted, but there does need to be a range of training at different levels available to our carers and staff, in order to support their continued development. As noted elsewhere, we do not have our own children's homes, save for some short break provision for children and young people with disabilities.

Employ a senior, designated mental health professional with expertise in the diagnosis/treatment of mental health conditions and awareness of broader risk factors common in young people in/leaving care.

- a. Embed mental health workers within the Leaving Care Team to deliver range of emotional wellbeing and self-development interventions.
- 2.46. At the time that the research for the original research took place, the clinical service was in a period of transition away from supporting the previous model of social work that operated in Cambridgeshire to developing into the service as now exists, which is focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in care and young people leaving care.
- 2.47. This revised and refreshed clinical offer supports all our social work and leaving care teams. This service is managed by a highly experienced and qualified clinician.
- 2.48. The clinical service provides training to our staff and carers, as well as providing interventions to support individual children and young people. The service can also help to ensure that young people with more significant needs are able to access the specialist mental health services available.

Adult Social Care should assess young people in care before they leave to identify the support the young people will need once they are living independently. Adult Social Care can then make recommendations and put support in place or refer them for more advanced support before the young people leaves care.

- 2.49. Adult services do become involved in supporting the transition for young people leaving care in the way described here when young people will meet the threshold for support by that services. The vast majority of young people leaving care do not, however, have care and support needs such that they meet that threshold.
- 2.50. This is why services to support young people leaving care are in place; to provide the support that young people need in making the transition to adulthood and on to independence for the vast majority who do not need adult services support to reach independence.

Change the language that is used to describe these young people. "Care leaver" is somewhat dehumanising and should be replaced with more person-centred language such as "young people with care experience" or "young people leaving care".

- 2.51. We agree with this recommendation. 'Young person leaving care' is a more straightforward term, but we will consult with young people themselves about how they wish to be referred. Language is important; it is why the highly impersonal term 'LAC', shortened from looked after child, should never be used. The term 'looked after child' came into use initially because

some thought it was less stigmatising than 'child in care', but when asked, children and young people said they preferred 'child in care' because it made better sense to them.

Encourage communication between Councils regarding mental health support for young people in out-of-county placements.

- a. Relevant councils along with young people should create a plan for how to provide mental health provisions to young people in an out-of-county placements;
- b. Discussions or developments outlined by the eastern region leaving care network should be included in the guide issued to young people in care so if they look to move out-of-county they know what to expect and how to access services.

2.52. These are helpful suggestions and will continue to be considered as we review and revise the local offer for young people leaving care. The young person's pathway plan is the principal mechanism for identifying additional needs and vulnerabilities and ensuring that resources are in place to meet these. For young people living outside of the county council area, access to health services will usually be to those within their area. Our clinical service is able to support this process when needed.

Where it is safe to do so, regulated visits with family members may be beneficial for the mental health of young people in/leaving care

- a. For example, set up Family Group Conferencing with the local charity Break.

2.53. Contact between children and young people in care and their parents and family members is covered by the Children Act 1989. The legislation is clear that there is always a presumption in favour of contact and contact can only be prevented by court order where there is evidence of significant harm or, in the case of older children and young people, where they choose not to see family members.

2.54. It is the case that many children and young people, and particularly those who come into care as older children and young people, very much want to maintain relationships with their families. Although the family may not have been able to provide the stability and security that they needed as children, they are often key forms of support and continuing relationships as young people move into adulthood.

2.55. Family Group Conferences can be a useful tool when seeking to restore contact with family members as well as when supporting a return home for a child or young person where the care plan is for them to return to family. The council has our own Family Group Conferencing service and so it is not necessary to approach another organisation to offer these.

Establish feedback sessions with young people to give them space to express their concerns and for the council to learn how to improve from their experiences of the care system.

- a. For example, bring Councillors from the Corporate Parenting Committee to young people Participation Forums.

- 2.56. There are a number of forums for young people leaving care already in existence, although it is also fair to say that our participation offer to children and young people in care and young people leaving care has been an area where we have sought to make improvements since the research for the report was completed.
- 2.57. The Corporate Parenting Committee has reviewed its terms of reference and model of operation, and now has alternating informal sessions where the children in care council attends and talks directly to Members about their care experience. Direct engagement between Members and young people who have left care is also an important aspect of our participation strategy.
- 2.58. Ensuring that children in care and young people leaving care have direct access to Members [and senior managers] is important, and is an area that we continue to prioritise.

Lobby at the national level to increase mental health of young people leaving care as a priority.

- a. Development of young people leaving care-specific services aimed at those who slip through the gap of CAMHS and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies mental health services;
 - b. Ability to allow young people to remain in care past age 18 if this is the most appropriate solution for the individual in an effort to accommodate personal readiness to leave care.
- 2.59. While the sentiment behind the two sub-recommendations, is understood and acknowledged, as currently worded, both are problematic.
- 2.60. There is no doubt that mental health services are under considerable pressure, and that young people – not just those leaving care – can fall between gaps in provision. In relative terms, however, the number of young people leaving care is small and seeking to set up a separate service for them is not likely to be viable.
- 2.61. Lobbying Government to continue investing in mental health services more generally, and at the point of transition from young people's to adult services, might be a better suggestion. Included in such lobbying could be that access to such services should be prioritised for young people leaving care.
- 2.62. Young people leave care at age 18 because that is when they reach the age of adulthood and all legislation in this area is framed around that age. It is unlikely that seeking to lobby on this issue would have merit.
- 2.63. Locally, we do have the flexibility to enable some young people to remain in their care placements beyond the age of 18 and many do so. This can be either through the Staying Put scheme with foster carers, or young people remaining in supported accommodation post 18.

Concluding remarks

- 2.64. The researchers have invested an enormous amount of time in completing their report. Many of their recommendations are very helpful and have been incorporated into our local offer or are under active consideration.

- 2.65. Part of the task set for researchers through the CUSPE programme is to challenge the local authority to think differently about the way it works and to question established practices so that these can be reconsidered. An example of this is the proposal to extend Staying Put arrangements to young people aged up to 25. In many ways, the value of such a change is easily recognisable for the individual young people within the Staying Put population. Unfortunately, however, such a proposal would ultimately result in there being fewer and fewer foster placements available for younger children at a time when there is both a local and national shortage of foster placements.
- 2.66. We have therefore had to assess the recommendations and to balance these with potential impacts in other areas. This means that while this particular recommendation may not be one that officers are able to support, it has made us consider our practice in this area and continues to reinforce the need for us to ensure that decisions about individual young people are made on a case by case basis, balancing individual needs with the overall availability of resources.
- 2.67. At the time that the researchers undertook their work, our services for young people in care and leaving care were going through a number of changes. These changes were made because we were aware that we needed to improve the quality of our support. As part of these changes, we established dedicated teams for both our children in care and our young people leaving care. We also increased the number of Personal Adviser posts, so that we could reduce caseloads and enable them to provide more intensive support to young people leaving care than had previously been the case.
- 2.68. As noted at the beginning of this section of the report, the small number of young people who returned surveys to the researchers were mostly unhappy about at least some aspects of the services they had received. Those who returned surveys represented a very small proportion of the overall population of young people leaving care – 10 surveys out of a population of 18-21 year olds of just over 300.
- 2.69. As also noted at the beginning of this section, young people in care and leaving care have access to complaints processes and to independent advocacy services. Children and young people in care also have an Independent Reviewing Officer, who oversees their care and/or pathway plan. Independent Reviewing Officers have very robust escalation routes to senior managers and ultimately the courts if the service provided to the child or young person is not good enough. These officers are passionate about securing the best outcomes for children and young people in care and have a clear statutory role that enables them to take action in the event that they have concerns.
- 2.70. Key aspects of our performance in relation to our support to young people leaving care are monitored through performance indicators that are submitted to the Department for Education, and allow for us to compare our position with England and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.71. This performance information shows that around 90% of young people aged 19-21 are living in accommodation that is suitable – in line with or better than our statistical neighbours. A much higher proportion [29%] of our young people aged 19-21 are living in semi-independent/transitional accommodation than either the England [15%] or statistical neighbour [10%] averages, indicating that we do provide young people leaving care with a longer period of transitional supported accommodation than others.

- 2.72. We are also in touch with 98% of our young people aged 19-21 who have left care – this is also better performance than our statistical neighbours or the England average.
- 2.73. The issues raised by the young people who responded to the survey – worries about accommodation, anxieties about being ready for independent living and concerns about their own mental health – are however all key issues of concern for many young people leaving care. While their views may not be representative of the general experience of Cambridgeshire young people leaving care, it is important that their voices are heard, and that we do all we can as a service to ensure that as many of our young people as possible feel supported and safe through the care system and on into independence.

Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Place and Communities

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Young people leaving care need focused and dedicated support from highly skilled personal advisers and other staff to ensure that they are able to make a positive contribution to their communities as they move into adulthood.

3.2 Children and Young People

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Young people leaving care have additional vulnerabilities that arise from their experiences before coming into care and, for some, the impact of placement moves within the care system. This increases the challenges of moving to independence and highlights the need for an accessible and person-centred range of support services that support them as they make the transition to adulthood.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Enabling young people to make the successful transition to adult life, while remaining in learning and training so that they can also successfully enter the world of employment are key aspirations for our young people leaving care as their corporate parents.

3.4 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.5 Health and Care

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Young people leaving care have additional vulnerabilities when compared to the general population of young people. They therefore deserve to be able to access effective and responsive support services as they transition to independence.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The cost of providing council tax relief for young people aged 19-21, and the additional ring-fenced fund for those aged 21-25 has been factored in to expected pressures within the service in the 2022/23 financial year and will be included in budget building for subsequent financial years.
- The costs of implementing other agreed recommendations should be possible to meet from within existing service budgets. Any pressures that do emerge can also be considered as part of the budget build for the financial years 2023/24 onward.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Enabling young people leaving care to successfully transition into adulthood supports good public health outcomes, particularly in respect to the promotion of physical and mental health and resilience.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? No
Name of Financial Officer:

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? No
Name of Officer:

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Nicola Curley

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes
Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Nicola Curley

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes/No
Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents

None

What does the evidence tell us about the type of support that would have the most impact on ensuring our care leavers can make a successful transition from being a supported young person into an independent adult, including the transition from education to work?

Ellie Blake, Anna Chaplin, Ernestine Hui, Patrick McAlary, Maria-Myrsini Tzioni

July 2021

CUSPE



Executive Summary

Overview

One of the key duties of a Local Authority is to support its young people with care experience until age 25. The transition from care into independence can be a time of great upheaval for young people. Young people must quickly adapt to independent living and greater responsibility at a time when support is reduced. Many YP leaving care struggle to adapt to their new circumstances.

Young people with care experience have worse employment, education, and health outcomes than the general population. This does not need to be the case. Young people with care experience are often victims of circumstance but have the potential to lead successful adult lives.

This report focuses on how Cambridgeshire County Council can aid its young people as they transition from care into independence. The report takes seriously the concerns of Cambridgeshire's young people and outlines a series of targeted policy interventions aimed at supporting the transition.

Recommendations

Accommodation

1. Have a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team.
2. The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on improving the current accommodation process.
3. Act as a rent guarantor for YP with care experience, with a particular focus on helping those engaged with low-income employment and apprenticeships.
4. Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience.
5. Secure emergency accommodation for YP who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown.

Finances

1. Provide Council Tax relief to YP with care experience until age 25.
 - a. See [Section 5 Part 8](#) for updated recommendations.
2. Increase provision of internal work opportunities and work experience at CCC for YP with care experience.
3. Create a designated money and budgeting page in CCC's Local Offer which guides YP in/leaving care to financial services and courses as well as charity/private support.
4. PAs and care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance on how to provide financial education.
5. Pathway Plans for YP in care should have a specific section dedicated to the development of knowledge and skills required for independent living.

Mental Health

1. Create a clear and well-advertised guide to accessing available mental health services including charity-based support.

2. Develop a comprehensive training programme covering mental health first aid and up-to-date research on childhood adversity and mental health for the Leaving Care Team, PAs, and foster/residential carers.
3. Employ a senior, designated mental health professional with expertise in the diagnosis/treatment of mental health conditions and awareness of broader risk factors common in YP in/leaving care.
4. Adult Social Care should assess YP in care before they leave to identify the support the YP will need once they are living independently. Adult Social Care can then make recommendations and put support in place or refer them for more advanced support before the YP leaves care.
5. Change the language that is used to describe these YP. "Care leaver" is somewhat dehumanising and should be replaced with more person-centred language such as "YP with care experience" or "YP leaving care".
6. Encourage communication between Councils regarding mental health support for YP in out-of-county placements.
7. Where it is safe to do so, regulated visits with family members may be beneficial for the mental health of YP in/leaving care.
8. Establish feedback sessions with YP to give them space to express their concerns and for the council to learn how to improve from their experiences of the care system.
9. Lobby at the national level to increase mental health of YP leaving care as a priority.

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Abbreviations

YP	Young people
LA	Local authority
UASC	Unaccompanied children seeking asylum
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
PA	Personal advisors
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
EET	Education, employment or training

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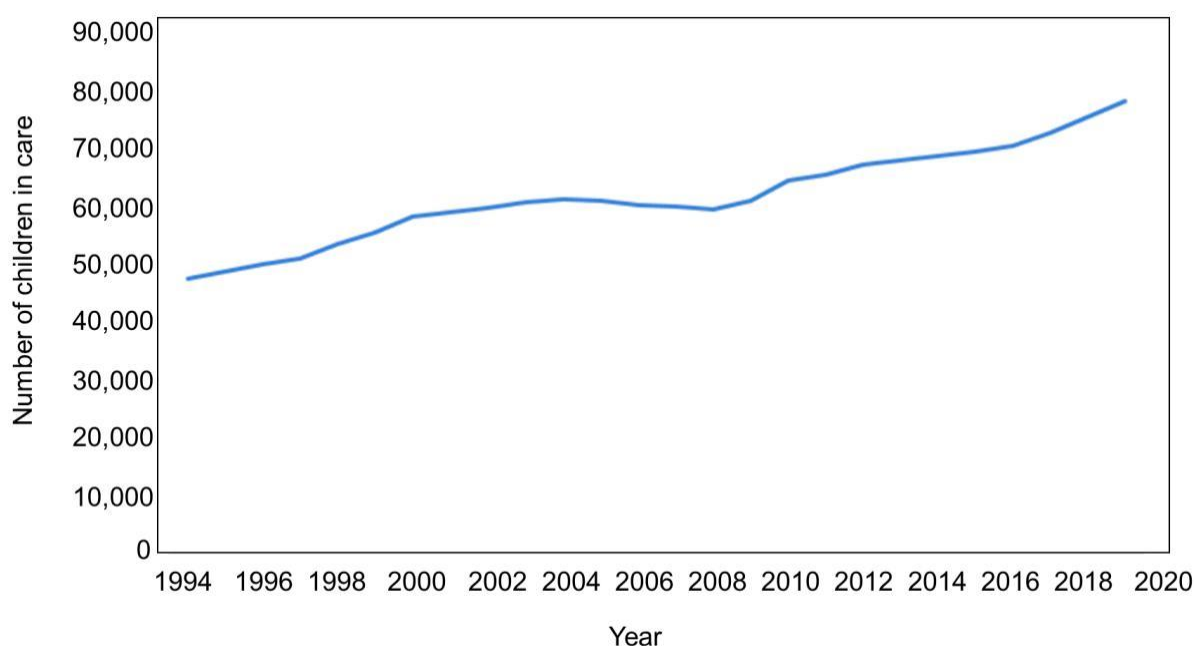
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Section One. Introduction

1. Background

More than 75,000 children and young people (YP) in England are in care. This number has been increasing since 2010 (Figure 1) [1], yet the number of adoptions has decreased [1]. Care experience is associated with higher risk of poor outcomes, including mental health problems, social marginalisation, homelessness, unemployment, custody and early death [2]. For example, 39% of YP leaving care are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared with 12% of YP in the general population [3]. Steps must be taken now to protect these YP and to prevent future costs that will arise as the size of this group grows.

Figure 1. Number of children in care in England from 1994 to 2019.



1.1. Defining YP with Care Experience

Care leavers are adults who have spent time living in care. This report uses “YP with care experience” and “YP leaving care” as person-centred alternatives to “care leavers” ([Section 8](#)). These individuals are typically aged between 16 and 21 when they leave care. If they are in education, they may leave care between age 16 and 25.

As a Corporate Parent, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has a duty of care towards its YP with care experience. This includes CCC’s YP living in Cambridgeshire as well as those living out-of-county. It excludes external YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire.

1.2. Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood

YP leaving care face a difficult transition into adulthood. They often have to overcome a number of hurdles when they leave care. Coleman's focal theory suggests that adolescents can manage their problems successfully by dealing with them one at a time [4]. Dealing with multiple issues at the same time therefore makes it harder for YP to cope with these issues. The challenges and changes facing YP when they leave care often occur in a "compressed and accelerated" period of time compared to their peers [5]. YP leaving care face upheaval of their lives at a time when support is being withdrawn [5-7].



The challenges facing YP when they leave care often occur in a "compressed and accelerated" period of time compared to their peers.

A typical transition from care to independence includes:

1. Transitioning from education to employment, training or not in education, employment or training (NEET) status;
2. Moving into semi-independent or independent housing and having to leave foster care or residential care;
3. Having to transfer from Children's Social Care which involves a Children's Team to the Leaving Care Team, changing from an allocated children's social worker to a PA from the Leaving Care Team;
4. Transition from minimal financial independence to complete financial freedom and control.

YP in the general population now have a more gradual transition into adulthood compared to previous decades [9,10]. Popular media has labelled YP who fluctuate between dependence and independence as the Boomerang Generation [2]. YP are often dependent on their immediate family for longer with many individuals in the UK still living with their parents their 20s and 30s [11]. YP leaving care often do not have this option. In their transition from care to independence, these YP are deprived of the financial and emotional support that family homes can provide [12]. Therefore, it is not surprising that YP leaving care find it harder to adapt to adult life than their peers.

1.3. Corporate Parenting Duty

The Department for Education lists Corporate Parenting duty as one of most important responsibilities of a Local Authority (LA) [15]. Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend to YP with care experience [16]. LAs have the "legal and moral duty to try and provide the kind of loyal support that any good parent would give to their children." The question LAs should ask themselves is: "would this be good enough for my child?" [15]. LAs with a strong Corporate Parenting ethos understand that the care system should not only keep YP safe but also promote their recovery, mental resilience and physical wellbeing.



LAs have the “legal and moral duty to try and provide the kind of loyal support that any good parent would give to their children.”

A positive shift in policy relating to YP with care experience has taken place over the past two decades. The statutory responsibility of a LA to its YP was extended from age 21 to age 25 [7]. The Staying Put scheme was introduced to allow YP to remain with their foster carers until age 21 [17]. These policies are an acknowledgement that YP leaving care are often propelled into “instant adulthood” without sufficient support or experience. The introduction of these policies led to an update of the Corporate Parenting principles (Box 1) [15].

- 1) To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
- 2) To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- 3) To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- 4) To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- 5) To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- 6) For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
- 7) To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Box 1. Corporate Parenting principles.

Nationally and locally, YP with care experience have worse health and socioeconomic outcomes than their peers. This disparity between those with and without experience of the care system indicates that LAs, as Corporate Parents, must do better to support YP in/leaving care.

LAs are expected to recognise their responsibilities as Corporate Parents. LAs should base their care duties on the Corporate Parenting principles to ensure that YP in/leaving care receive the best possible support [15]. These principles are also an important part of Ofsted inspections; they are used in the Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) framework ([Section 1 Part 2](#)) [18].

1.4. Local Offers

LAs should also exemplify the Corporate Parenting principles in their Local Offer. The Children and Social Act (2017) requires LAs to publicise all the services they offer to YP leaving care [1]. The Department for Education provides detailed guidance for LAs on how to present their Local Offers with examples of essential content [19]. Local Offers should be accessible and clear to make it easy for YP leaving care to find out about available support.



The Children and Social Act (2017) requires LAs to publicise all the services they offer to YP leaving care.

1.5. PAs and Pathway Planning

YP with care experience (aged 16 to 25) are entitled to the support of a PA during the transition from care into independence. Supporting YP during this transition is a key responsibility for PAs. PAs should ensure that YP are given both emotional and practical support, such as advice on how to face potential barriers during this transition. PA support may be direct or indirect. Indirect support may include facilitating the development of a positive social network [20]. PAs should be a dependable and constant source of support for YP throughout the transition into independence.

PAs are also involved in all stages of pathway planning. Pathway plans are statutory documents that follow YP through their transition from care to independence. The pathway plan aims to identify areas in which an individual requires improvement or additional support. These areas may include independent living skills, money management, educational achievements or mental wellbeing [24]. An inadequate pathway plan can influence the success of a transition strategy [21-23]. YP leaving care often feel that pathway planning is a bureaucratic and depersonalised “tick box exercise” which is not used to prepare for adulthood [32,22,26]. This opinion is prevalent among YP despite clear guidance on how LAs should create pathway plans.

2. Cambridgeshire Context

Cambridgeshire has a high proportion of YP with care experience compared to many other Local Authorities (LAs). In December 2019, CCC had open cases for 416 YP with care experience below age 25. 223 (53.7%) of these individuals live out-of-county. 193 (46.3%) of YP with care experience live in-county. The number of open cases (416 YP) does not include YP aged 21 to 24 whose cases have been closed. As such, it is difficult to accurately capture the number of YP with care experience below the age of 25. The number of YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire has been rising since 2015. This increase is reflective of CCC’s acquisition of Corporate Parenting responsibilities towards unaccompanied children seeking asylum (UASC) [4], and the nationwide increase of YP in the care system [5].



In 2019 Ofsted noted that CCC “requires improvement.”

Since January 2018, Ofsted has monitored LA services according to the ILACS framework. In the latest inspection of CCC in January 2019, the overall effectiveness of the Council was judged as “requires improvement” [29]. Only 15 of the 102 LAs in England that had been assessed under the ILACS framework scored worse than CCC in their overall effectiveness (Table 1) [29]. This report will support CCC to make changes to improve its support for YP.

Table 1. Ratings of LAs in England according to Ofsted ILACS framework.

Ofsted “Overall Effectiveness” rating	LAs in England
Outstanding	17
Good	36
Requires improvement	34
Inadequate	15
No data	49

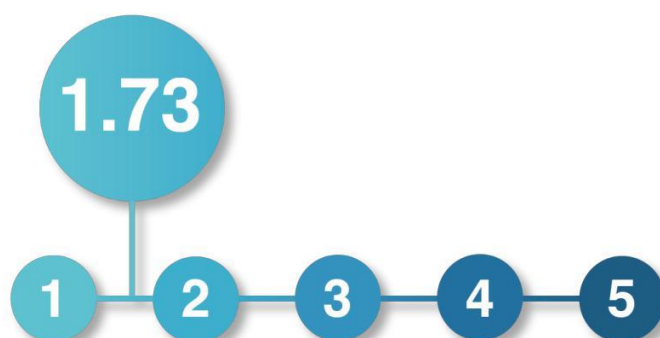
ILACS also evaluates the experience of children in care and YP with care experience. In the 2019 inspection, CCC was rated as “requires improvement” [29]. CCC is in the minority of LAs at the national and regional level that have received a rating less than “good” (Table 2). While Ofsted’s report notes that the quality of services received by YP with care experience was improving, it also stated: “work to prepare children in care and care leavers for independence is not strong” [29]. CCC has already started to address some of the issues raised in the Ofsted report ([Section 1 Part 2.1](#)). This report will support CCC to further improve the support for YP leaving care.

Table 2. Ratings of local and national LAs according to Ofsted ILACS framework.

Ofsted “Experience and Progress of Children in Care and Care Leavers” rating	LAs		
	In England	In East of England	Among Cambridgeshire’s statistical neighbours
Outstanding	13	--	1
Good	45	5	3
Requires improvement	36	3	2
Inadequate	8	--	1
No data	49	3	3

In 2019, CCC issued a survey for its YP which had 11 respondents ([Section 1 Part 3.5](#)). Given that this survey had a relatively small uptake it should not be taken as representative of the views of all of CCC’s YP (see [Section 1 Part 3.5](#)). The 2019 survey asked respondents to rate from one to five how well they felt that CCC had prepared them for their transition to independence, with a lower score indicating a lower level of preparation. The overall score was 1.73 (Figure 2).

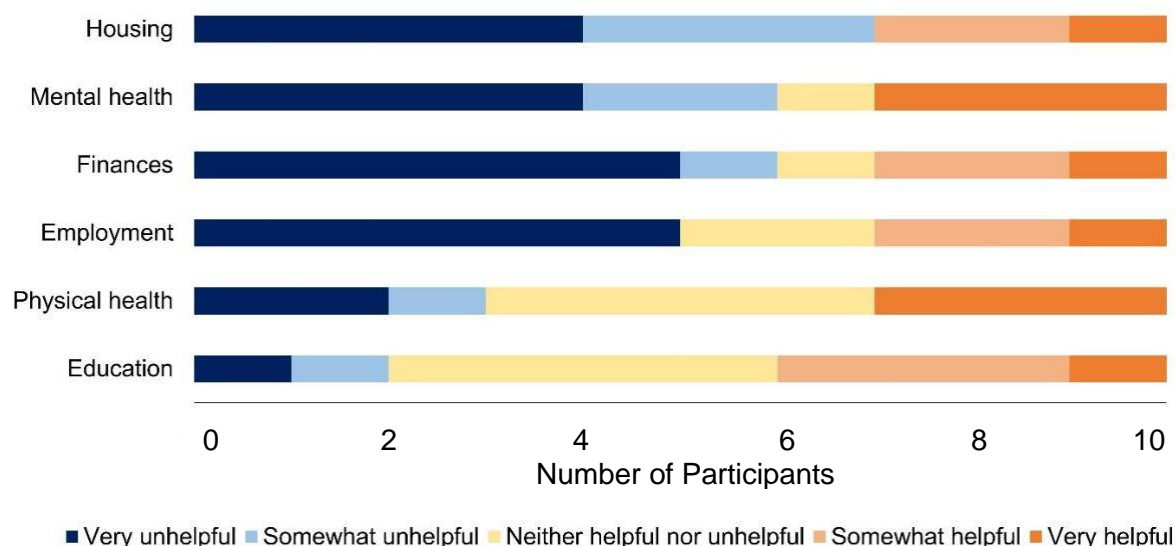
Figure 2. 11 responses to CCC's 2019 survey asking whether they felt prepared to transition from care to independence (1=not at all prepared; 5=very well prepared).



The 2019 survey produced by CCC gave respondents the opportunity to express their own, personal views, in relation to why they scored CCC as they did. Some of the respondent's comments reflected their view that there was a lack of support (in areas related to mental health and employment) and a lack of communication, and there was some confusion as to what kind of financial support they were entitled to. These are individual responses, and cannot be taken as representative of the views of CCC's YP.

For this project, a new survey was created, which had ten usable responses ([Part 1 Section 3.6](#)). Again, this represents a relatively small uptake and the results should not be taken as representative of the views of all of CCC's YP (see [Part 1 Section 3.6](#)). Respondents were asked how helpful was CCC in relation to housing, mental health, finances, employment, physical health, and education. The majority of the ten respondents found CCC to be 'very' or 'somewhat' unhelpful in relation to housing, mental health, and financial concerns, and half found CCC to be unhelpful with employment concerns (Figure 3).

Figure 3. CCC's effectiveness according to ten respondents to the 2020 survey.

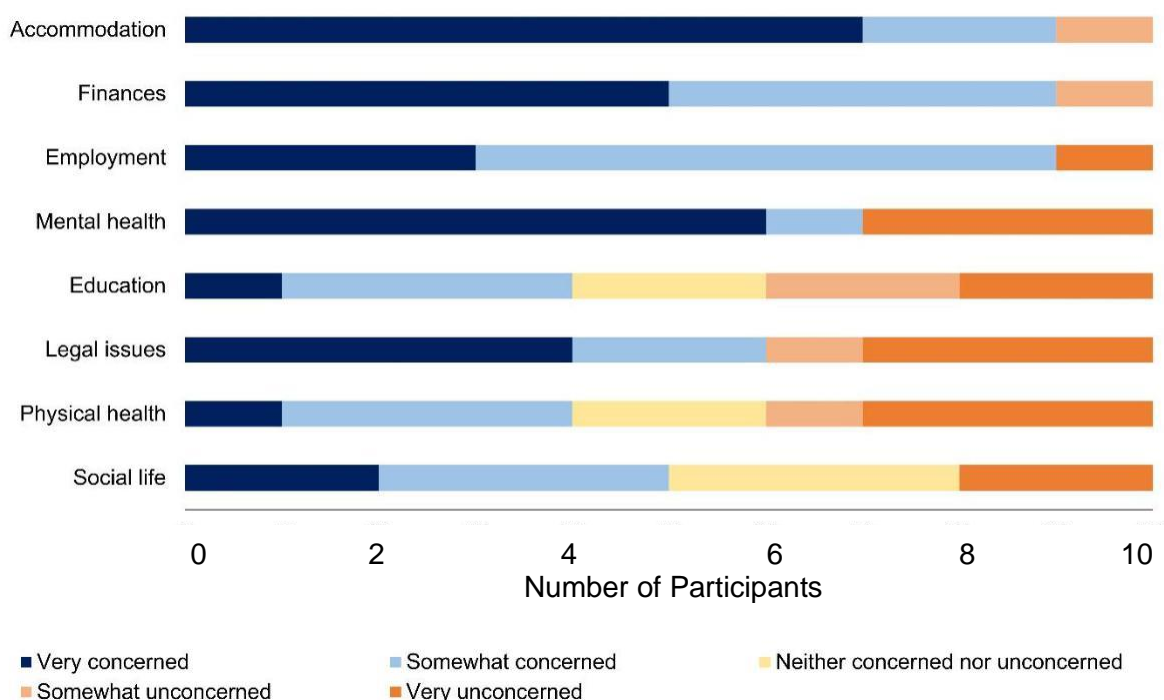


Our 2020 survey also asked about the biggest challenges facing YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire. Accommodation, finances, and mental health were by the biggest concerns raised by the ten respondents (Figure 4). In free text responses, where respondents were given space to express their own, personal, views one YP expressed difficulties affording rent and managing independently, while another noted that they felt that there was a lack of support in terms of finding work or further education. Other respondents highlighted multiple concurrent challenges in the areas of housing, mental health, and lacking a support network. Seven out of the ten respondents felt that CCC did not focus on issues relevant to them. This report thus will focus on the issues raised by survey respondents.



7 out of the 10 survey respondents felt that CCC did not focus on priorities relevant to them.

Figure 4. Concerns among the ten respondents to the 2020 survey.



Some respondents to the 2020 survey felt negatively about their experiences of leaving care. When given the opportunity to express their individual views, which are therefore not representative of all of CCC's YP, in free text sections, some respondents noted that they found the transition into independent living a difficult process, with one YP noting that they "[We] need to have more gradual easing into independent living."

The results of the 2019 and 2020 surveys and the comments of YP suggest that some YP feel unprepared for independent living. As noted, and as will be discussed at much greater length in [Part 1 Section 3.5—7](#), the uptake of the 2019 and 2020 surveys was relatively low and the results and comments of the surveys do not reflect the views of all of CCC's YP. However, that the issues raised by the 2019 and 2022 survey respondents are not isolated concerns is suggested by a recent national survey for Ofsted released in January 2022 (after the main research period represented by this report) which attracted 255 responses from YP on the cusp of leaving care, those classified as 'care leavers' and older individuals who had care experience [35]. It reported that a third of 'care leavers' felt they had left care too early and that they were not ready for independent living; many other respondents to this national survey felt alone or isolated after leaving care, and a third of 'care leavers' did not know where to go for support. Other respondents to Ofsted's report of this national survey had concerns about managing their mental health and wellbeing, accommodation, and finances [35].

CCC has a clear desire to act as a good Corporate Parent. CCC's 2021 to 2025 Strategic Framework outlines its strategic priorities [30]:

1. Communities at the heart of everything we do;
2. A good quality of life for everyone;
3. Helping our children learn, develop, and live life to the full;
4. Cambridgeshire: A well-connected, safe, clean, and green environment;
5. Protecting and caring for those who need us.

Supporting YP in their transition from care to independence aligns with this strategic vision. This research has the potential to advance CCC's priority outcomes ([Section 9 Part 2](#)), and to fulfil its Corporate Parenting responsibilities ([Section 9 Part 3](#)).

2.1. Progress Since Ofsted Report

This report comes at a time when CCC is already making changes across its care services. Since Ofsted's 2019 report, CCC has been working to improve its services for YP leaving care. This is a welcome development indicating CCC's desire to deliver its Corporate Parenting responsibilities in the best possible way. The recommendations in this report will support the improvement of care services in line with Ofsted's report.

CCC has identified various remaining gaps in its approach. One of these is to "improve delivery for preparing care leavers for independence." This report focuses on the transition from care into independence and aims to fill some of the remaining gaps.



Remaining gaps at CCC: "Improve delivery for preparing care leavers for independence."

We received details about the initiatives undertaken by CCC in response to Ofsted's 2019 report at the final stages of preparation of our report. The recommendations are therefore independent assessments of how CCC can help its YP transition into independence. Where relevant, we highlight how our recommendations may complement the changes currently being developed by CCC.

3. Methods

3.1. Rapid Literature Review

Evidence came from a variety of sources including government, non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation reports, peer-reviewed academic papers, and grey literature.

3.2. Comparative Approach

Evaluating CCC against national, regional and local comparators is a key part of this report. LAs apply their Corporate Parenting responsibilities in different ways. The report examines a range of LAs in England, including Cambridgeshire's geographical and statistical neighbours. Geographical neighbours are upper tier LAs in the East of England's Local Government Association. Statistical neighbours are determined by the National Foundation for Educational Research [31].

The report considers relevant Local Offers and relevant policies for benchmarking purposes. Further evidence is incorporated from existing data sets and comparative tools, including the Local Authority Interactive Tool and the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum's Local Offer comparison tool.

3.3. Think Communities Approach

The Think Communities approach, which Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have recently adopted, frames the recommendations in this report. One of the aims of this approach is to build community resilience. This new approach focuses on people, places, and systems (Figure 5) [32]. This report follows a people-centred approach. The voices of YP with care experience must be heard. They are in the best position to comment on the most beneficial types of support. YP with care experience are thus at the heart of our recommendations. The opinions of CCC's YP can be seen throughout the report. These quotes came from stakeholder engagement and survey responses.

Think Communities aims to support community-led solutions to problems. Children and YP are a Think Communities priority group, particularly YP leaving care and/or NEET [33]. Social mobility is a desired outcome of the Think Communities initiative [34]. The recommendations in this report are largely LA-led. For CCC's YP to properly engage with community-led action, more needs to be done to facilitate communication. Various barriers may prevent YP leaving care from engaging with their local community and Cambridgeshire's wider care network. Issues specific to this group include accommodation, finances, and mental health. These must be adequately addressed to promote community engagement.

Figure 5. Think Communities framework for community resilience.



3.4. Stakeholder Engagement

YP with care experience are primary stakeholders in this report and in CCC's Corporate Parenting duties. When opportunities arose, we engaged with YP with care experience in interviews and focus groups. These meetings supplemented the survey responses in delivering these YP's views. We also interviewed care professionals working directly or indirectly with YP in/leaving care. Finally, we interviewed key CCC members to understand how CCC fulfils its Corporate Parenting responsibilities. These perspectives provided insight into the problems facing YP with care experience and potential difficulties with particular recommendations. Engaging in interviews and focus groups as well as promoting the survey was made more difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues relating to the use of survey responses are noted below in [Part 1 Section 3.7](#) (and reiterated throughout the report). Where appropriate, we also drew on other surveys of YP not specifically related to Cambridgeshire (for instance, national surveys).

3.5. 2019 Survey

Before this research was commissioned, a survey was distributed to YP who left care on 13 November 2019. This was carried out by Joe Gilbert (Specialist Personal Advisor (PA)); the research team was not involved. This survey received 11 anonymous responses. We had access to this survey from an early stage of research. Most respondents to the 2019 survey were living in the City of Cambridge, Fenland, or out of county (Table 3). There were no respondents from South Cambridgeshire or the City of Peterborough. All respondents left care between age 16 and 21. Most YP left care between age 18 and 21.

Table 3. District of residence of survey respondents.

Cambridgeshire district	YP living in district – no. (%)
City of Cambridge	3 (27.3)
Fenland	3 (27.3)
Out of county	3 (27.3)
Huntingdonshire	1 (9.1)
East Cambridgeshire	1 (9.1)
South Cambridgeshire	0 (0)
City of Peterborough	0 (0)

3.6. 2020 Survey

We designed a second survey about experiences of care which was distributed to CCC's YP in September 2020. The survey questions were based on: (i) responses to CCC's 2019 survey; (ii) focus group meeting with YP with care experience; and (iii) discussions with stakeholders. Our 2020 survey covered demographic information, accommodation, finances, and mental health. It contained multiple-choice questions, scaling choice questions, and opportunities to give free-text responses.

Our survey included a comprehensive participant information sheet. This sheet included: (i) who can answer the survey; (ii) the personal data collected; (iii) who has access to this data; (iv) the purpose of the project; (v) benefits and risks of participating; (vi) how data is collected and what happens to this data; and (vii) researcher contact information.

Participants were required to confirm that they read the participant information sheet and agreed to take part in the survey. They also had to confirm that they understood: (i) who to contact if necessary; (ii) the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey; (iii) the possibility to withdraw at any time; (iv) their answers would be used in this report. Of the 11 respondents who completed the survey, one individual did not consent to these statements, leaving 10 valid responses.



11 YP responded to the 2019 survey and 10 YP responded to the 2020 survey.

Our survey was anonymous to allow respondents to freely convey their views and experiences. Free-text answers were not included in the report when we felt a respondent could be identified. Individuals who completed the survey were entitled to reimbursement for their time in the form of Time Credits. Time Credits can be used instead of money to access services. To maintain anonymity of participants, a separate Time Credit form was created to collect a name and delivery address. Participants also had to give consent in this survey. A link to the Time Credit form was given at the end of the main survey. This meant that personal information could not be linked between the two surveys. We passed on the names of individuals who responded to the Time Credit form to CCC. Of the 11 individuals who gave survey responses, two completed the Time Credit form.

Our survey was first reviewed by CCC officers. We then sought the advice of a University of Cambridge ethics committee to minimise the risk that our survey would cause relived trauma for participants. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee performed an ethical review of the survey. The ethical protocol of the survey was considered satisfactory. The survey was also approved by senior leadership in the People and Communities directorate at CCC. The survey was then delivered to YP via email.

Five out of the 10 respondents to the new survey were male, four were female and one did not want to give their gender. Four out of 10 respondents were age 21 to 24, another four were age 19 to 20, and the final two respondents were age 16 to 18. The majority of respondents identified as White British (eight out of 10).

The results of the 2020 survey were received at a relatively late stage in the research stage of this report; the responses therefore only formed one part of a wide array of research evidence that influenced the conceptualisation and research focus of this report.

3.7. Survey Limitations

The sample size for both surveys was small. Members of CCC distributed the surveys to YP with care experience via email; email may not be the most effective way of engaging with these YP, but it was the most practical way of delivering the survey. From the relatively large quantity of potential respondents (~200 were emailed), uptake of the 2020 survey was relatively low, with only 10 valid responses, a very small sample of CCC's YP. Engaging YP with care experience can be difficult and the pandemic exacerbated this issue. We therefore only have the views from a specific subset of YP with care experience and we do not know how these views correlate with other YP who did not complete the survey. It is important that the views of those young people who did respond are acknowledged, however, following feedback from members of CCC's Children's Services ([Part 1 Section 3.8](#)) we have

removed most direct quotations from the survey were appropriate and replaced these with paraphrase. The majority of respondents to the surveys expressed a negative view about the support they received from CCC, but the small sample size means that these views cannot be considered as representative of the views of CCC's YP. Where appropriate, we have utilised other surveys not specifically related to Cambridgeshire (for instance, national surveys) that relay the experiences of YP. The responses to the 2019 and 2020 surveys formed one part of a much broader body of evidence, including existing literature, examples of best practice, CCC's people-centred approach, face-to-face interviews, and other surveys.

3.8. Implementation of Feedback

In 2022, after the research for this report was complete, the researchers had the opportunity to engage with and receive feedback about the report from the previous Director of Children's Services, Lou Williams, and the current Director of Children's Services, Nicola Curley. Concerns relating to the utilisation of results from the 2019 and 2020 survey were raised, given the low response rate to both surveys.

Following written feedback, most direct quotations from the surveys were removed from the report as these are not necessarily representative of the views of all of CCC's YP. The views of YP as expressed in free text sections have therefore been relayed in a paraphrase format. The 2019 and 2020 surveys formed but one part of a much wider basis of research and evidence used in the conceptualisation and formation of this report. The limitations of these surveys are outlined in detail in [Part 1 Section 3.7](#) above, however, we have added qualifications throughout the report that reiterate that the survey results are not necessarily representative of the views of all of CCC's YP.

4. Scope and Aims

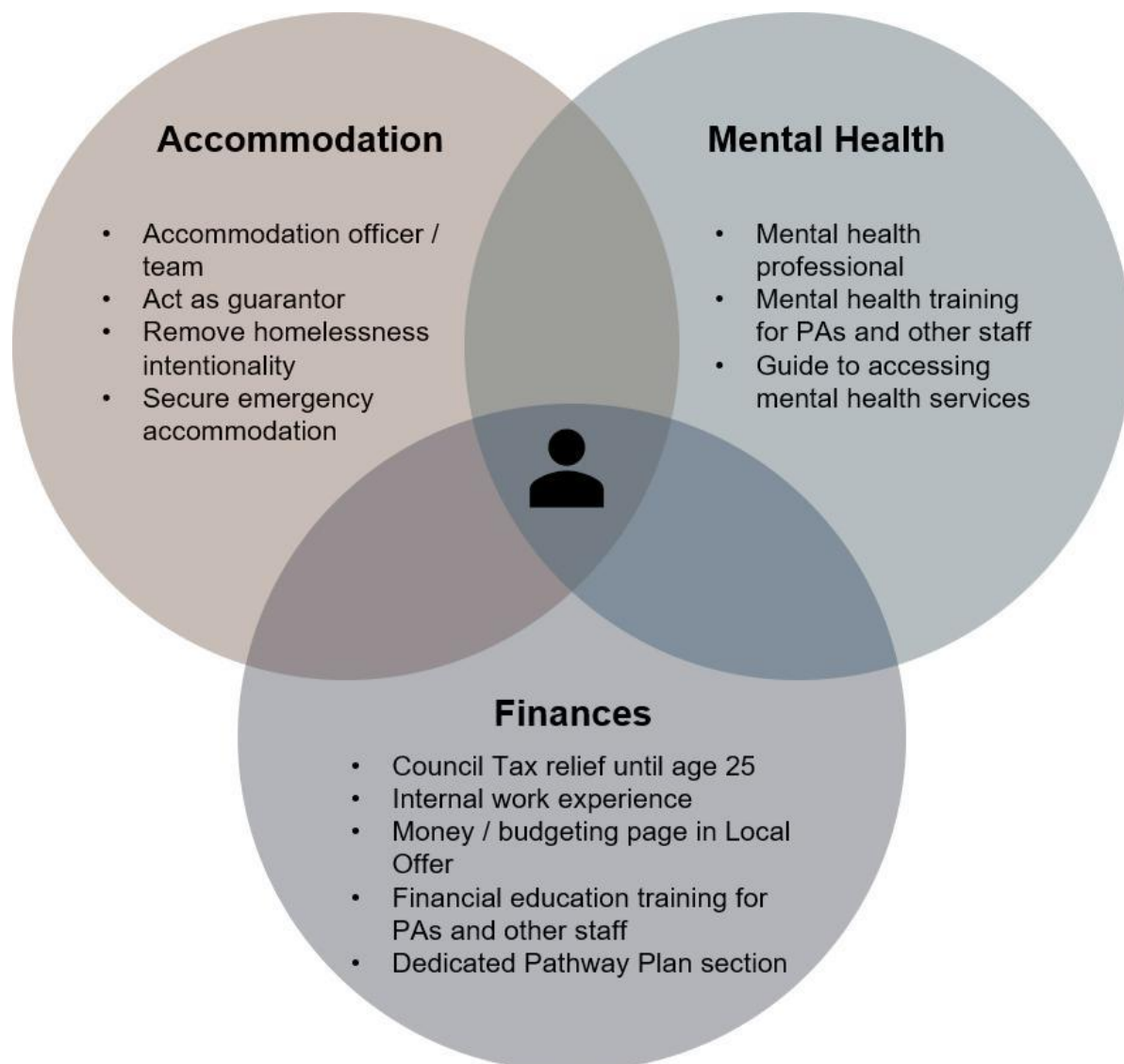
The recommendations in this report provide targeted policy interventions to support YP as they transition from care into independence. The views and experiences of CCC's YP should help frame how CCC supports its YP during this important transition. We identified the following issues as key areas for improvement: accommodation, finances, employment and education, and mental health. These issues directly affect YP once they leave care.

We focused on a specific part of the care journey, namely the point of transition into independent adulthood. Our report does not consider other stages of the care experience, although interventions during earlier periods are clearly important for a successful transition through care and into independence. There is room for further initiatives aimed at YP before they leave care as well as beyond age 25 and we encourage CCC to commission research in these areas.

5. Summary of Recommendations

Our recommendations cover access to suitable accommodation, guarantor provision, homelessness prevention, Council Tax relief, employment opportunities, financial education, and mental health support (Figure 6). These areas are interlinked. Without simultaneous improvement across all areas, the desired outcomes for YP (and CCC) will be difficult to achieve. Implementing the recommendations will improve the lives of YP when they leave care and will show CCC's dedication to its Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Please see [Section 9](#) for a comprehensive list of the recommendations.

Figure 6. Summary of recommendations.



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Section Two. Accommodation

Overview

Accommodation is a basic need but stable and secure housing remains a concern for many YP with care experience. Gaps exist in LA provision of housing which has led to low levels of satisfaction among YP in this area. Some of the gaps in accommodation services have already been addressed based on a recent Ofsted report. This section highlights the need for a dedicated Accommodation Officer/Team. Implementing a permanent Accommodation Officer/Team is key to fulfilling CCC's Corporate Parent responsibilities and improving economic and health outcomes for YP with care experience. This recommendation complements the Joint Housing Protocol which was implemented by CCC following Ofsted inspection.

Key recommendations

- **Have a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team.**
 - **The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on improving the current accommodation process by:**
 - a) **Extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25;**
 - b) **Removing the reduction of allowances for carers when YP join the Staying Put scheme;**
 - c) **Ensuring more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments of foster placements;**
 - d) **Allowing priority social housing applications any time before age 25;**
 - e) **Granting access to all housing options and increasing housing allowance costs for YP waiting for asylum.**
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1. Introduction

1.1. Cambridgeshire's Accommodation Problem

Unaffordable housing is a widespread problem across Cambridgeshire. Fenland has the lowest number of people in affordable accommodation in the county while Cambridge has the highest (Table 1) [1]. Affordable rent is defined as no more than 80% of the local market rent. Affordable housing covers social rented and shared ownership housing [1,2]. LAs own and rent social rented housing. An individual is eligible for affordable housing if they cannot rent or buy housing supplied by the private sector.

Table 1. 2011 Census for the housing market tenure in Cambridgeshire.

LA	Base (households)	% owner occupied	% private rented	% affordable (rented & shared ownership)
Cambridge	46 714	47.5	27.8	24.7
East Cambridgeshire	34 614	68.5	15.7	15.7
Fenland	40 620	70.0	17.0	12.9
Huntingdonshire	69 333	71.2	15.1	13.6
South Cambridgeshire	59 960	70.3	13.4	16.4
Peterborough	74 023	59.3	20.3	20.4
East of England	2 423 035	67.6	16.0	16.4

In the past decade, house prices have not risen in the UK, except for in London, the South East and the East of England. House prices have increased by up to 30% in these regions, making it hard for YP to save enough money for a deposit (more than six months' income is usually required for a 10% deposit on a median-priced property) [1,2]. The Institute for Fiscal Studies concluded that increasing housing prices have exposed intergenerational inequalities where older generations benefit at the expense of younger people [2].

The disparity between income and house prices in Cambridgeshire means that home ownership is often unachievable for individuals on low incomes (Table 2) [1]. Many YP in the general population instead turn to renting or the social housing sector. The majority of YP with care experience will also end up renting or staying with a foster family. However, the availability and production of new social housing has been decreasing since the 1980s. Only 6463 new social renting homes in England were available between 2017 and 2018, leaving over 1.15 million households on a LA waiting list with waiting times of decades. Centrepont found that eight out of 10 housing associations agreed that the lack in social housing has particularly affected YP and their ability to access affordable housing ([Section 2 Part 1.3](#)) [1-3]. YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire need better access to social housing options.

Table 2. Income to house price ratio across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Higher numbers indicate more unaffordable housing (relative to income).

LA	Income to House Price Ratio 2018
Cambridge	13.0
East Cambridgeshire	10.7
Fenland	8.5
Huntingdonshire	9.4
South Cambridgeshire	10.3
Peterborough	6.8

YP with care experience are at higher risk of homelessness than their peers. Prevention of homelessness is already a top priority for CCC but additional safety nets are required to ensure that none of its YP become homeless ([Section 4](#)). In England, LAs have the statutory duty to secure accommodation for YP leaving care before age 21 (and up to age 25 for vulnerable YP). This means that CCC is legally responsible for the accommodation of its YP until they become 25 years old [1,3]. Guaranteeing secure and appropriate accommodation for all YP leaving care is one way CCC might reduce homelessness. A dedicated Accommodation Team would focus efforts to reduce homelessness among YP with care experience.



Young people with care experience are at higher risk of homelessness than their peers.

1.2. Accommodation Responsibilities of Officers

YP's accommodation concerns are dealt with by various members of the Leaving Care Team. The Leaving Care Team includes social workers, PAs, team managers, independent reviewing officers, the director of Children's Services, advocates or children's rights officers, participation officers, independent visitors, virtual school head teacher and a designated teacher, as well as a designated nurse. All of these individuals carry out specific tasks to support YP in/leaving care [4]. On top of their usual responsibilities, these officers have a number of accommodation-related duties. For example, PAs must oversee the matters given in Box 1. Officers also have to keep up-to-date with the changes to housing regulations made by central Government and implement actions within these regulations. If these additional accommodation-related matters are not dealt with by PAs or other officers, YP with care experience are left to sort out these issues by themselves [3,4].

Accommodation is a complex issue which requires specific knowledge of current housing options and frequent training. A dedicated Accommodation Team would provide the attention and expertise this matter deserves. Introducing an Accommodation Team is a

sustainable solution to the overwhelming number of responsibilities that face officers in the Leaving Care Team. High workload among officers may lead to accommodation becoming a secondary priority. The current distribution of accommodation matters within CCC highlights vulnerability in the system which can be addressed by introducing an Accommodation Officer/Team [3,4]. Accommodation affects all YP in/leaving care and deserves a higher level of attention and focus.

- Search for suitable accommodation
- Providing information, advice, and guidance on options
- Practical support with moving into and furnishing their new home
- Support during a housing crisis e.g. being at risk of losing a tenancy
- Attending university and finding accommodation for students during the holidays
- Funding the cost of accommodation and the advice on how to fund accommodation
- Housing options for asylum seekers (who may not have access to all the housing options available)
- Advice and help on setting up the Housing Element of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit
- Obtaining a grant from Cambridgeshire Local Assistance scheme to pay for essential basic household furniture and white goods, and food packs during emergencies and times of hardship
- Staying Put scheme
- Moving back to live with family
- Supported lodgings
- Semi-independence
- Social housing
- Private renting
- Obtaining previously looked after YP discounts and savings (when buying personal or household goods)
- Setting up home allowance (leaving care grant)
- Homelessness

Box 1. List of accommodation responsibilities for PAs regarding YP in their care.

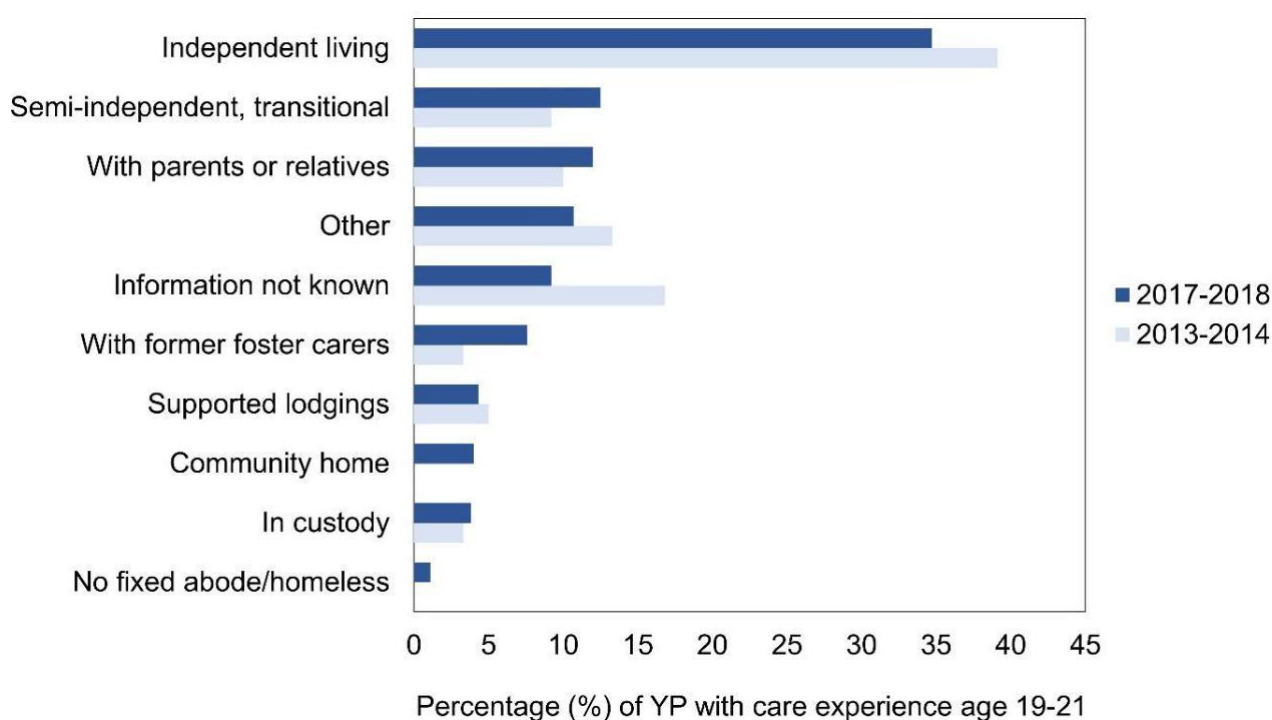
1.3. Lack of Suitable Housing

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness reported that LAs do not always carry out effective assessment of their YP's needs [5]. The report highlighted that assessments to establish the suitability and adequacy of accommodation were unsatisfactory. These assessments are used to determine the "intentionally homeless" ([Section 4](#)). The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) recommended the introduction of personalised plans as a solution to homelessness intentionality [6]. LA assessments must include specialised tasks such as assessing housing needs and the suitability of

accommodation. A dedicated Accommodations Officer is required to develop personalised plans with YP, as it is unrealistic for PAs to assume this responsibility.

Fewer YP with care experience are living in independent accommodation than in previous years. In 2014, CCC had 27221 YP with care experience. By 2018, this number had increased by 4.7% to 28510 individuals. In 2018, 34.7% of YP with care experience lived independently with a further 12.5% in semi-independent, transitional accommodation (Figure 1) [7]. These numbers represent a 12% decrease in YP with care experience living in independent accommodation between 2014 and 2018. By 2018, there were also 3040 YP with care experience living in “other accommodation” (Figure 3) [7]. Other accommodation includes ordinary lodgings, foyers, emergency accommodation, bed and breakfast etc., as well as YP abroad, deported, homeless, or in unknown residence [3,4]. Accommodation affects all YP in/leaving care and an Accommodations Team would be beneficial to support the logistical aspects of transitioning from care into independence.

Figure 3. Living situation for YP with care experience age 19 to 21 in Cambridgeshire.



This decrease in independent living may be a result of the ever-increasing price of renting or buying a house, the availability of social housing, and systematic failures. Greater effort is required to determine why there has been a decrease in YP with care experience living in independent accommodation. As a Corporate Parent, it is the duty of CCC to provide support "good enough for their own children" to help YP with care experience transition into independence and independent living [3,7].

CCC's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 to 2018 states that it will provide safe, appropriate, affordable housing for YP with care experience [8]. CCC has also noted the lack

and quality of supported tenancies/accommodation as a major concern within Cambridgeshire. Available accommodation that may be deemed suitable for YP with care experience is often not sustainable on benefits. More affordable housing is required.

CCC's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 to 2018 also states that it is "imperative that the District Councils, in partnership with other housing providers, are committed to working to increase the number of properties available for YP with care experience post-18 years old" as well as ensuring "there is a joint protocol with Housing" and stating that "it is important that housing providers work with Children's Social Care and partners to ensure there are robust and varied packages of support to enable YP to maintain their accommodation provision" [8]. These somewhat vague statements are long-term solutions which are ineffective in the short-term. YP with care experience that need safe and suitable accommodation now must not be forgotten.

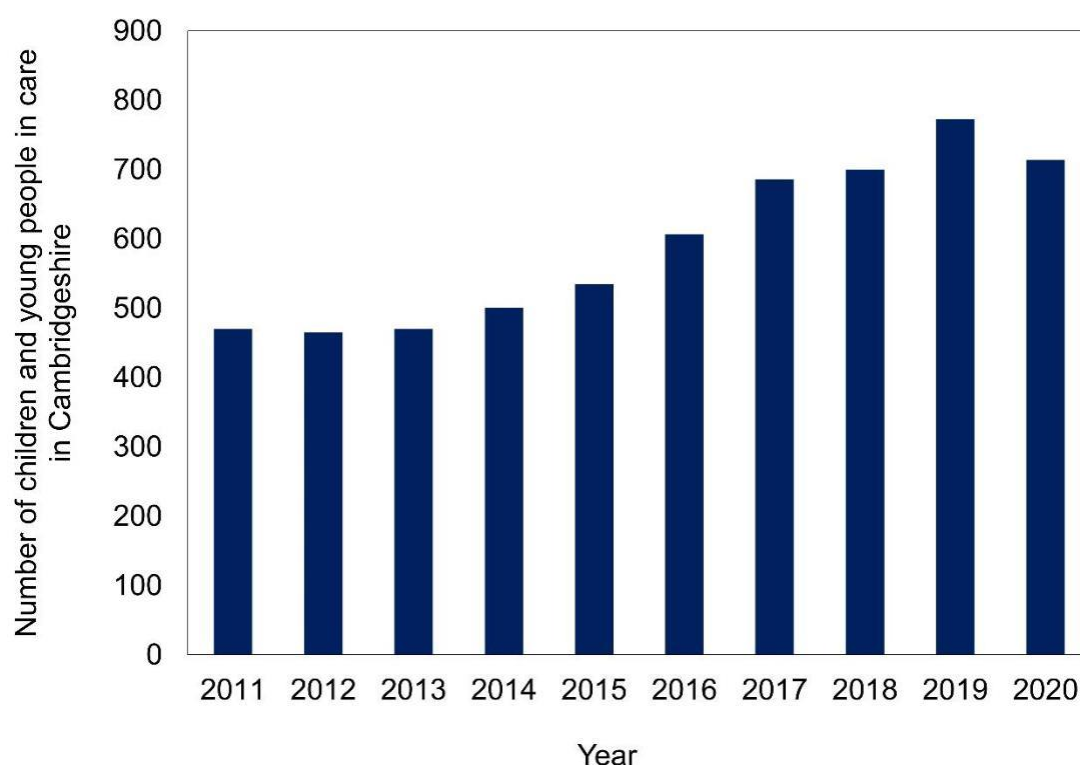
The ideal scenario would be to provide more accommodation options and individualised housing packages. Currently many of Cambridge's YP do not obtain suitable and affordable accommodation. CCC's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 to 2018 suggested collaboration between Housing and Children's Social Care and partners to address this problem [8]. Collaboration is important but could result in the housing needs of YP being lost or overlooked as information is transferred between groups. A dedicated Accommodation Team would streamline the housing process and ensure sufficient attention is given to individual issues.

1.4. Inefficiencies in Accommodation Services

LAs have a duty to ensure that YP with care experience have suitable and safe places to live. This responsibility includes incorporating YP's housing preferences into their pathway plans, advising YP if accommodation issues arise, and promoting the Setting Up Home Allowance of £2000 [9]. Greater demand on accommodation services, due to the increasing number of children and YP entering care (Figure 4) [10], has affected capacity. CCC's People and Communities Sufficiency Statement recognises the issues associated with increased demand for care services, including housing benefit, housing provisions, and fostering providers (Box 2) [11]. The statement indicates that better communication is required to increase the stability and suitability of housing provisions within Cambridgeshire.

PAs are the main point of contact for CCC's YP to find suitable accommodation. PAs minimise logistical hurdles during the accommodation process by working with both YP and the District Council. This means that YP with care experience do not have to explain their requirements to a large number of people. However, PAs may not have in-depth understanding of accommodation issues as they deal with accommodation on a case-by-case basis [11]. Housing requests are currently passed from YP to PA to District Council. The numerous steps in this process introduce room for error, increasing the risk of information being lost, misinterpreted, or ignored. The number of (emergency) referrals to CCC further highlights that the current accommodation system needs improvement (Box 2) [11]. An Accommodation Team would allow YP to voice their housing concerns to a dedicated team, helping to reduce referrals and reducing workload for PAs.

Figure 4. Number of children and YP in care in Cambridgeshire from 2011 to 2020.



LAs must incorporate its YP's accommodation preferences into their pathway plans. Poor relationships with PAs and social workers, inflexibility of pathway plans, and poor timing are barriers to effective pathway planning for accommodation [11-13]. Following a survey of 87 YP, Centrepont suggested that nationally the relevant support during the transition into independence is lacking [14]:

- 43% of YP with care experience felt their PA had been unhelpful when it came to thinking about future housing needs;
- 57% felt that their social worker was not helpful in the process of applying for council housing;
- 86% had slept rough;
- 57% felt unsafe in the area they first lived after leaving care;
- 58% did not feel ready to live independently when they left care;
- 39% felt that housing benefits were not enough to cover their rent; and
- 58% felt that they could not turn to their LAs for help.

Evidently, YP with care experience across England are unsatisfied with current accommodation provisions. The final bullet point is particularly pertinent for CCC as the council has no official housing-related position to help its YP with accommodation. Furthermore, staffing issues may contribute to YP not turning to their LAs for help. Around 65% of practitioners agreed that their LA does not have sufficient staff capacity to fulfil its duties to YP with care experience [14]. This is worrying since accommodation should be a top priority for CCC yet there are no dedicated staff to ensure this need is met.

Point 10.7. In the period April 2016 to March 2017, 158 referrals were made to supported accommodation providers, 68 of which were emergency referrals (required within 24 hours), and 47 of those 68 were for YP new into care. The housing benefit sustainable provisions have very limited capacity to take emergency referrals, so we rely heavily on provisions that are not housing benefit sustainable and not always in county. In addition, typically emergency referrals are for YP where either little is known about them or there has been a significant issue within their placement that has led to immediate notice being given, therefore their referral often presents them as being high risk or high need and therefore harder to place in provisions where support and supervision is minimal. Cambridgeshire have a need for resilient 16+ provisions better able to manage YP with complex and challenging behaviours, to help reduce the number of placements moves for this cohort of YP.

Point 10.8. Similarly, fostering providers, including our in-house service, have been unable to manage demand of placements for this cohort of YP. In the same period 24 referrals were made for fostering placements for 16- and 17-year-olds; only 7 of these placements resulted in a suitable fostering placement, and only 2 of those were with our in-house service. There is a need for Cambridgeshire to review processes which seek to avoid 16- and 17-year-olds from coming into care, and to increase suitable housing provisions within the district to meet the needs of this cohort. Whilst a significant proportion of Cambridgeshire's 16- and 17-year-old population are unaccompanied asylum-seeking YP the Local Authority has a duty to provide sufficient accommodation, and when those YP turn 18 their accommodation is able to be funded either by housing benefit (if the YP has leave to remain) or the Local Authority continues to have a duty to fund (until their status is determined).

Box 2. People and Community's Sufficiency Statement published by CCC.

A dedicated Accommodation Team could also focus on improving the collection and usage of housing data. Maintaining up-to-date records of YP's housing status should be a priority for the Accommodation Team. An Accommodation Team would be best-placed to maintain a housing database since they would deal directly with the housing issues of YP with care experience. Such a database would increase the speed at which YP living in inappropriate or unknown accommodation could be identified. In theory, flagging up YP whose accommodation status is unknown could help prevent hidden homelessness. Creating a separate database showing available accommodation would streamline the search, selection, and allocation process. By integrating artificial intelligence, this process could be automated to enable automatic updates to housing data, automatic removal of unsuitable accommodation from CCC systems, and automatic calculation of when, where, and for how long accommodation might be available [11-14]. Integration of new housing provisions would also be easier to track in an automated system. The changes would improve the efficiency of

the accommodation process, leading to more stable placements and fewer referrals. Both CCC and YP with care experience would benefit from more efficient use of accommodation data.

1.5. Voices of YP with Care Experience

As part of our 2020 survey, YP were asked about their experiences of accommodation. As discussed in [Part 1 Section 3.5—7](#), this survey had relatively small uptake and its results cannot be taken as representative of the views of all of CCC's YP. While survey responses must be considered in line with these limitations (specifically the small sample size), it is still important that the views of YP who completed the survey are given space. Respondents to the 2020 survey noted accommodation as a key issue of concern in Cambridgeshire. Seven respondents were 'very concerned' and two were 'somewhat concerned' about accommodation. Four respondents found CCC to be 'very unhelpful' and three 'somewhat unhelpful' with housing matters ([Section 2](#)).

Some respondents to the 2020 survey commented upon a lack of safe and stable accommodation provisions and communication issues between CCC and its YP. Responses from the survey suggest that the availability of accommodation for YP may be a barrier for YP progressing into independence and that YP with care experience need more consistent support as they enter independence.

Respondents to the 2020 survey raised safety and stability as key concerns about their accommodation. Four of the ten respondents did not feel they live in suitable accommodation and five felt they will not have suitable accommodation in the future. In free text comments, one YP mentioned that the price of rent was a major issue.

The 2020 survey asked whether respondents had 'suitable' and 'safe' accommodation 'right now' and 'for the future'. Respondents who answered that they did not have suitable and/or safe accommodation now and/or for the future were asked why they thought this was the case to better understand what YP considered to be 'suitable' and 'safe' accommodation. Respondents raised support and stability as key components of suitable accommodation. Two respondents did not feel safe in their current accommodation and five felt they will not have safe accommodation in the future.

As has been noted, the ten respondents represent a small proportion of CCC's YP and this should be kept in mind. However, the survey responses indicate that more resources and support are needed to help YP transition from care into appropriate independent accommodation. A permanent Accommodation Officer/Team could meet this need. It is the responsibility of the Corporate Parent to advocate for and support its YP and an accommodation Officer/Team could support this goal.

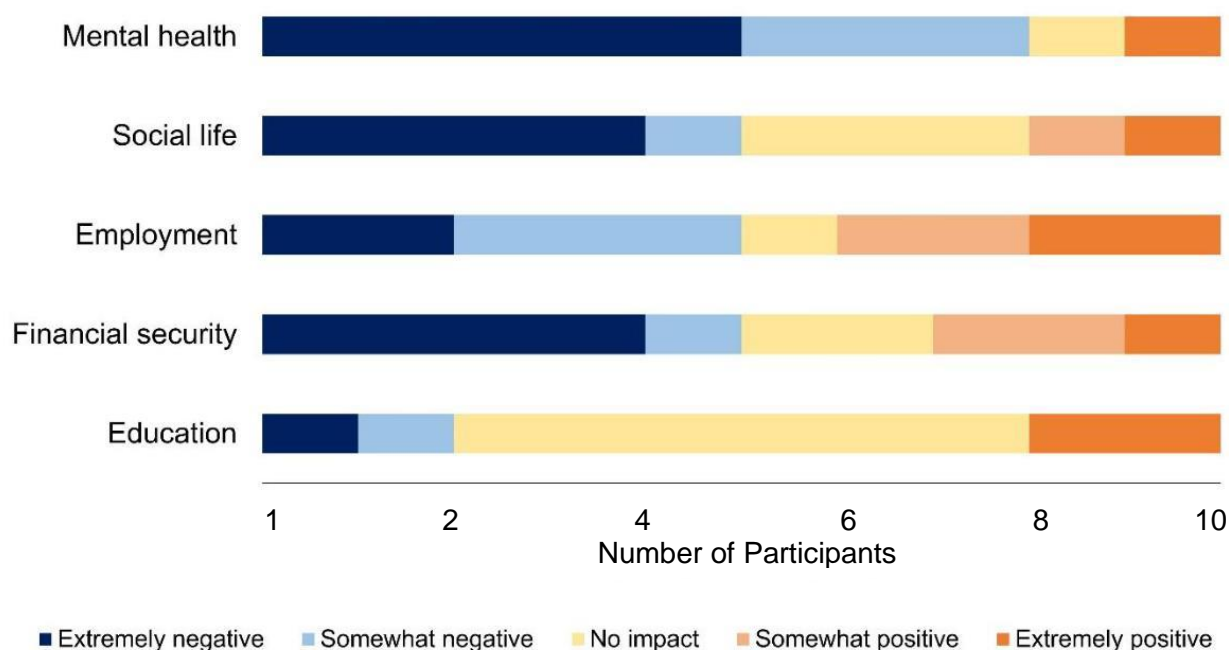


It is the responsibility of the Corporate Parent to advocate for and support its young people with care experience.

The 2020 survey gave respondents the opportunity to express their experience of finding accommodation and how being in care has impacted their lives through free text response boxes. While these are individual responses, and not necessarily representative of the views of all of CCC's YP, some respondents commented on a perceived lack of support and overall feeling of precarity in regard to their accommodation arrangements. Some of the respondents felt that their experience of being in care had created instability in their lives and led to worse outcomes in terms of accommodation and mental health than some of their peers who had not been in care.

Living conditions can also affect other aspects of YP's lives including mental health and financial security (Section 6, 7, 8). As part of our 2020 survey we asked respondents to indicate the extent to which their housing situation had impacted other areas of their lives (Figure 6). Financial barriers included rent, deposits, and a lack of leaving care grants to cover carpeting and furniture. It is important to highlight that the areas of stable accommodation, financial security, and good mental health are closely linked.

Figure 6. How 10 survey respondents rate the extent to which their housing situation has impacted various areas of their lives.



Other LAs, such as Oxfordshire County Council, one of CCC's statistical neighbours, has found ways to incorporate the opinions of their YP into housing decisions ([Section 2 Part 2.1](#)).

The 2020 survey also gave respondents the opportunity to provide free text comments on their personal perception of the housing system in Cambridgeshire and how much input they felt they had in their housing arrangements. Again, these are individual comments and are thus not necessarily representative of the views of all of CCC's YP, however, some respondents shared concerns about the suitability of housing placements, finding accommodation, and the financial strains that come with this. Some also expressed concerns that they felt that their views were not being taken into consideration in terms of organising their housing arrangements.

In a national survey of people with care experience carried out by Ofsted in 2022 (which received 255 responses from people of a range of ages with care experience) similar experiences were reported [39]. In this survey, many respondents expressed that they felt that they were not involved enough in plans about their future and that when they did express their wishes they were not listened to or they did not fully understand their options [39]. Many noted that they did not have control over where they lived upon leaving care; only one third lived in a location that they liked after leaving care (with only one fifth living in a type of accommodation that they liked) [39]. Some respondents to this national survey expressed worry about the area they moved to in relation to their safety, their familiarity with an area, or living on their own [39].

Housing issues could be more effectively addressed by a separate Accommodation Team. An Accommodation Team could address the lack of available appropriate housing and communication issues, as well as stopping YP with care experience feeling overlooked. Implementing an Accommodation Team would ensure that all housing issues are dealt with by a single dedicated body. As such, PAs would not be responsible for accommodation on top of their workload, giving them more time to give YP the support that some of them feel that they lack. A centralised Accommodation Team would improve the housing allocation process, ensuring that YP leaving care have stable accommodation. This will reduce unwanted movements for YP. An Accommodation Team would streamline services and reduce the loss of information and miscommunication.

Respondents to our surveys have highlighted issues with their perception of the current accommodation process. Many of these problems arise from unnecessary complexities in the accommodation process. Accommodation across Cambridgeshire is currently shared by CCC and District Councils, making the distribution of housing complicated. An Accommodation Team could simplify this process by collating District and County level information into one place. The Accommodation Team should also have jurisdiction at the individual, CCC, and District Council level. This team would then be able to advocate and communicate more efficiently with YP with care experience to implement housing requests.

2. Current Interventions

CCC can improve accommodation for YP with care experience by learning from successful LAs. The focus of this section will be on the most successful Housing Officer models, namely Oxfordshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, and Devon County Council [15,16]. Oxfordshire County Council is significant as it is one of CCC's statistical nearest neighbours. Gloucestershire County Council is another example of a successful statistical neighbour.

2.1. Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council invites YP in care to a Housing Options meeting with a Housing Allocations Officer at age 17.5 [17]. This structure and system establishes understanding of housing options before individuals turn age 18, giving them time to think and ask questions to a dedicated housing and accommodation expert. This system ensures that YP in care know what to do when leaving care and transitioning to become an independent adult. It also provides the YP with a permanent accommodation help-point for whenever they need guidance or emergency help with housing. Oxfordshire County Council also benefit as it helps them accurately and precisely track the accommodation status of their YP with care experience.

In this case, PAs can focus on day-to-day accommodation tasks, such as understanding the amount of money required from employment or benefits to pay the rent. Such aspects of accommodation are important and require detailed explanations and guidance. For example, when the YP turns age 22, housing benefit allowances change [17]. The Housing Allocations Officer also gives the YP with care experience some guidance on what to do when the rent inevitably increases due to a change in tenancy [17]. In addition, the housing support worker can give the YP with care experience advice on how to maintain a tenancy including avoiding missed rent or Council Tax payments, as well as important housing skills such as paying bills and managing visitors [17].

There are three broad components that Oxfordshire have proposed to achieve better housing: (i) the right buildings; (ii) appropriate support services; and (iii) clear pathways that enable YP and families to access such housing [17,18]. CCC is currently lacking in these three areas [12]. By having a set Housing Officer to offer housing advice, Oxfordshire County Council demonstrate their dedication to providing suitable housing and to valuing the opinions of YP in/leaving care about their accommodation.



By having a set Housing Officer to offer housing advice, Oxfordshire County Council demonstrate their dedication to providing suitable housing and to valuing the opinions of YP in/leaving care about their own accommodation.

Ofsted rated Children's Social Care in Oxfordshire as "good" [19,20]. In contrast, CCC was rated as "requires improvement" ([Section 2 Part 2.4](#)) [21,22]. The main factors that contributed to Oxfordshire's rating include, but are not limited to, the promptness of processing, the dedicated and specific services, and comprehensive documentation. The main point stated by Ofsted was [19]:

"Effective work takes place to ensure that YP with care experience have the help they need to make successful transitions to independence. Most YP with care experience live in suitable accommodation, including those who Stay Put with their foster carers. Accommodation options are carefully considered, and creative planning and tenacity ensures that YP live in the most appropriate placement. Pathway plans reflect YP with care experience's histories and day-to-day experiences but would be strengthened if actions needed and timescales for delivery were clearer."

Oxfordshire essentially has an Accommodation Officer to uphold rigorous standards for suitability and planning for accommodation of the YP with care experience. As such, PAs have time to carry out other work: "Care leavers benefit from developing meaningful relationships with PAs, who are conscientious and helpful advocates for children. There is a real sense of PAs being that 'one person who believes' in the YP. PAs work hard to keep in touch with the YP they support, with contact tailored to individual need" [19]. The synergy created by Oxfordshire ensures that the housing needs and standards for YP with care experience are met, allowing PAs to focus on their relationship with individuals.

2.2. Gloucestershire County Council

Gloucestershire County Council is another LA which CCC can learn from. The leaving care worker or social worker helps the YP with care experience to complete a personal housing plan [23,24]. This plan is then examined with a housing worker who will explain the different options available to the YP, from social housing and private rented accommodation to supported housing. The YP with care experience is fully involved in the entire decision-making process.

Gloucestershire County Council also reviews living arrangements within 28 days of the YP moving and then again at least 3 months after that [23,24]. The Housing Worker is able to support YP with care experience with finding accommodation out-of-county if they decide to move [23,24]. These personalised and consistent check-ups could also be implemented in CCC, as a feedback loop system, to help improve accommodation services. The existence of a Housing Worker leaves PAs free to focus on visiting and interacting with YP with care experience. PAs visit YP with care experience within a week of moving and then visit every two months after that. This personalised service is something Ofsted particularly valued when monitoring the services in Gloucestershire [23]. Ofsted stated that most YP benefited from the regular, responsive visiting and positive relationships with their PAs. This purposeful and timely intervention for accommodation was highly favoured. This planning and feedback system resulted in the vast majority of YP living in accommodation that reflected their level of independence.

2.3. Devon County Council

Devon County Council provides a local District Council Housing Options Team to help YP with care experience with their housing decisions. The Housing Officer will work an individual to agree on a personal housing plan. The plan informs the YP of their housing options and the steps needed to move into independent/semi-independent accommodation. YP with care experience are classed as having "priority need" for accommodation until their 21st birthday. If the YP is age 21 or above and is considered significantly more vulnerable, for example due to housing history, support needs, time in care, or medical conditions, the YP may also be classed as a priority for accommodation [25,26]. In contrast, CCC only provides a PA for these services [27].

Devon County Council keeps a clear record of the accommodation in which its YP with care experience are living. In 2019, Devon County Council had: 137 YP with care experience in independent living; 68 living with parents or relatives; 44 living with former foster carers; 37 in semi-independent or transitional living situations; 35 with no information about their living situation; 26 in a community home; 25 in supported lodgings; and 11 with no fixed abode or homeless [28]. Accommodation information is easy to obtain from Devon County Council [28], showing consistent tracking of the housing status of its YP with care experience. An Accommodation Officer/Team at CCC could contribute to better data organisation which inform policies and services for YP with care experience.



Accommodation information is easy to obtain from Devon County Council, showing consistent tracking of the housing status of its YP with care experience.

CCC's record-keeping is not as strong as at Devon County Council. CCC's accommodation data does not exist publicly and contains significant gaps. CCC's Corporate Parenting Annual Report (2018) showed that Cambridgeshire had 693 YP with care experience, yet between April and March 2018, the size of the cohort (i.e. YP aged 17 to 21) is recorded as 294 individuals [29]. Around 75% of these 294 individuals had suitable accommodation every month but the suitability of accommodation for 9.7% of individuals was not recorded [29]. Data does not appear to be regularly updated, contains gaps, and is difficult to obtain. Therefore, an Accommodation Officer/Team is key to providing data accountability.

CCC needs more information is needed about the types of available accommodation and the number of YP with care experience in various living arrangements. Devon County Council provides clear data on their main website and CCC should follow suit. Failing to monitor the housing situation of YP with care experience will lead to a lower quality of care and less suitable accommodation for YP in Cambridgeshire.

2.4. Cambridgeshire County Council

2.4.1. Ofsted Report

The overall effectiveness of the accommodation division at CCC requires substantial improvements [21,22]. As pointed out by Ofsted, the most significant challenge to the LA's ability to provide consistently good services to YP with care experience is the size of caseloads. The workload can be distributed with the introduction of an Accommodation Officer, especially since every YP will require thorough assessments and consideration of accommodation.

As Ofsted stated, the size of caseloads in CCC is too high and is unsustainable in some teams. The impact is that the immediate safety of YP becomes the only focus at the expense of follow-up work which ensures YP have a permanent home and a sustainable housing future. Ofsted noted that in CCC "work to ensure that children have permanent homes is not always pursued with sufficient pace or rigour" [21]. Additional investment in staffing and other related measures in CCC has reduced caseloads, allowing staff to tackle drift and delay in their work. The quality of services has also improved but it was noted that this progress must be sustained and built upon before most YP with care experience receive a consistently good service. Distribution of caseload tasks and delivery of consistently good service would be achievable with a permanent Accommodation Team.

Ofsted suggested key improvements that CCC should make to the accommodation process (Box 3) [21]. The improvement targets set by Ofsted can be achieved by introducing a permanent Accommodation Officer/Team. This new team would increase the capacity of other care teams to complete work to a consistently good standard and to ensure that YP with care experience receive the specific accommodation help they need. Accommodation affects all YP in/leaving care and therefore cannot be anything but a top priority.

Leaders have recognised that the former structure, made up of generic ‘life-long’ social work units and 14–25 teams, did not ensure a sufficiently sharp focus on children in care and previously looked after YP, and on the need to progress court work and ensure that they have permanent homes as soon as possible. A stronger strategic focus on children in care and previously looked after YP, an increase in staffing and, in the last few months, the establishment of dedicated teams for these children have started to address weaknesses in practice.

Although inspectors found examples of good practice, they also found that caseload pressures are making it very difficult for some social workers to do much more than focus on completing statutory visits, with insufficient capacity, for activities such as direct work and life-story work. Overdue visits and poor plans and case recording remain problems in a significant minority of children’s cases. For some children, plans are not updated to reflect their current circumstances and needs, for example not clearly stating their wishes about contact with brothers, sisters, parents and others who are important to them.

Box 3. Suggested accommodation improvements in CCC by Ofsted.

2.4.2. Improvements Based on Ofsted Report

It is important to note that CCC has begun to address many of the issues highlighted by Ofsted. For example, CCC and all District Councils have agreed on a Joint Housing Protocol to improve the housing process for YP leaving care. This should ensure that no information is lost between the two tiers as well as improving communication ([Section 2 Part 2.3](#)). The format of the Corporate Parenting subcommittee has also been changed to amplify the voices of YP with care experience and make sure their accommodation concerns are heard. These changes demonstrate CCC’s willingness to become a better Corporate Parent.

Local accommodation providers have been incorporated into CCC’s accommodation process to provide specialised advice/information to YP about their Independence Passports. PAs have also received Cultural Identities training which will be useful when supporting UASC transitioning into life in the UK ([Section 2 Part 3.6](#)). The Pathway Plan has also been changed to include regular monitoring and updates, supplementing the recommendation to provide more frequent visits and individual assessment of foster placements ([Section 2 Part 3.4](#)).

CCC has also made a number of changes to staff. Staffing has been increased in Leaving Care Teams and a specialist PA has been employed to focus on homelessness prevention. These changes are an important step forward and demonstrate incorporation of vital new staff members. Therefore, CCC's existing structure would not require significant changes to implement an Accommodation Team. An Accommodation Team would enhance the improvements that have already made since the Ofsted report. In the long-term, such a team would help to maintain these new structures.

3. Recommendations

"The role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do [...] the critical question that LAs should ask in adopting such an approach is: 'would this be good enough for my child?'"

The statement above from Statutory Guidance for LAs [2] demonstrates CCC's obligation to act as a parent to its YP. Safe and suitable housing is a basic human right and transient lifestyles and inappropriate housing are risk factors that contribute to the pathway to harm [2]. As such, CCC should place greater importance on improving the current accommodation process. CCC needs to view accommodation as a key priority for all aspects of health and quality of life.

The key recommendation is the implementation of a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team. The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on:

- Extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25;
- Removing the reduction of allowances for carers when YP join the Staying Put scheme;
- Ensuring more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments for foster placements;
- Allowing for priority social housing applications any time before age 25;
- Granting access to all housing options and increasing housing allowance costs for YP waiting for asylum.

3.1. Have a Permanent Funded Accommodation Officer/Team

We recommend that a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team is integrated into the core team that supports YP with care experience. The aim of this recommendation is to achieve better planned and tailored outcomes for each individual. PAs currently fill this role but previous research and our survey responses demonstrate that this arrangement is not suitable. YP with care experience have emphasised that accommodation is one of their biggest concerns. To follow the Corporate Parenting principles [2], CCC must introduce a dedicated team to tackle the range of accommodation issues that may occur and to advocate for YP with care experience in this regard.

must address the lack of appropriate support services for YP with care experience by providing an Accommodation Officer/Team. A dedicated team would deal effectively with housing issues due to in-depth knowledge of the accommodation system and relevant processes. This team would also provide effective and timely support, especially for YP with complex needs. It would give YP the knowledge of where/how to obtain help with accommodation issues. Moreover, it would increase the pool of key contacts for YP with care experience. This is particularly pertinent given that 19% of these YP have nobody in their support network [30]. YP with care experience should have access to a variety of dependable and trustworthy adults. In the case of relationship breakdown between PAs and YP, members of the Accommodation Officer/Team could ensure that this miscommunication does not result in homelessness.

A dedicated team is the best option to support the accommodation needs of both CCC's YP and the District and City Councils. The team might advise on building new affordable housing and suggest solutions to key housing issues. They could gather accommodation information from YP with care experience to then clarify housing priorities with District Councils. They may also provide a set of needs to the property services and local planning departments. In this way, an Accommodation Officer/Team would advocate for local housing plans to reflect the housing needs of YP with care experience. These actions ensure a voice for YP with care experience on housing boards, especially when building/buying new homes or remodelling existing stock.

Creating an Accommodation Officer/Team is the optimal use of available funds. They would be best placed to provide ongoing and accurate information about housing. An Accommodation Officer also allows CCC to communicate the accommodation it offers without YP having to access the Local Offer. A dedicated team would improve communication between District Councils, provide specialist support and recognise housing issues at an earlier stage. CCC could then move towards prevention of these issues rather than the current reactive approach.

3.2. Extend the Staying Put Scheme from Age 21 to Age 25

All schemes, care, and support should be extended across the board until age 25. An Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25. As stated by the Homelessness Code of Guidance for LAs [30]:

“There is a duty on children's services authorities to appoint a Personal Adviser to provide support to previously looked after YP until they reach their 25th birthday (except where the YP no longer wants a Personal Adviser) (Children and Social Work Act 2017). The support provided by Personal Advisers should be based on the needs of the YP as set out in their statutory Pathway Plan. This may include support from a housing authority.”

Although some YP are ready to leave care at age 21, flexible support illustrates a higher quality of care. The option to Stay Put would give YP with care experience the security and peace of mind that they can take the next step when they are ready [31]. Affordable and safe housing options should be provided for YP anyway and this is exactly what the Staying Put scheme offers. The Adolescent and Children's Trust stated that "YP questioned about Staying Put frequently asked for it to be extended to age 25" [32]. Clearly, the Staying Put scheme is popular among YP with care experience.

Extending the Staying Put arrangements would help increase placement stability. Remaining in a familiar environment may help individuals to have a smoother transition into independence. YP who Stay Put are more than twice as likely to be in full-time education at 19 years old compared with other YP with care experience [31-33]. An extension of this scheme could therefore reduce the number of YP with care experience classed as NEET.

Providing long-term familiar housing options enhances the security and stability that the YP desperately need, giving them the ability to focus on other things such as their career or higher education.

If YP with care experience do not have to worry about basic needs, such as housing, they have more time to consider ambitions ([Section 6](#)). YP with care experience should be able to remain with their foster families. This would allow them to focus on higher education, finding a job, and eventually moving into their own place when they are ready. The popularity of this scheme has been demonstrated by CCC's YP. In January 2020, there were 27 YP in Cambridgeshire on the Staying Put scheme. A year later, there are 33 YP on the scheme with another 12 individuals expected to join in the next six months [33]. Therefore, there has been a 60% increase in demand for this Staying Put scheme in only one year and despite the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Corporate Parent, CCC should continue to listen to what its YP want and to provide options for individuals to make their own choices.

3.3. Remove the Reduction of Allowances for Carers when YP Leaving Care Join the Staying Put Scheme

Carer allowance is given to people caring for YP and contributes towards the costs of raising a child (e.g. food and rent). The Accommodation Officer/Team should ensure that there is no reduction in current carer allowance when YP with care experience join the Staying Put scheme. This action would demonstrate CCC's commitment to the scheme and would remove ambiguity about rental/support costs. Carer allowance could be maintained by introducing a simpler payment structure, with separate accommodation and support costs. Alternatively, it could follow the model of Lancashire County Council [34], in which a portion of the carer allowance given to Staying Put carers is paid by the LA.

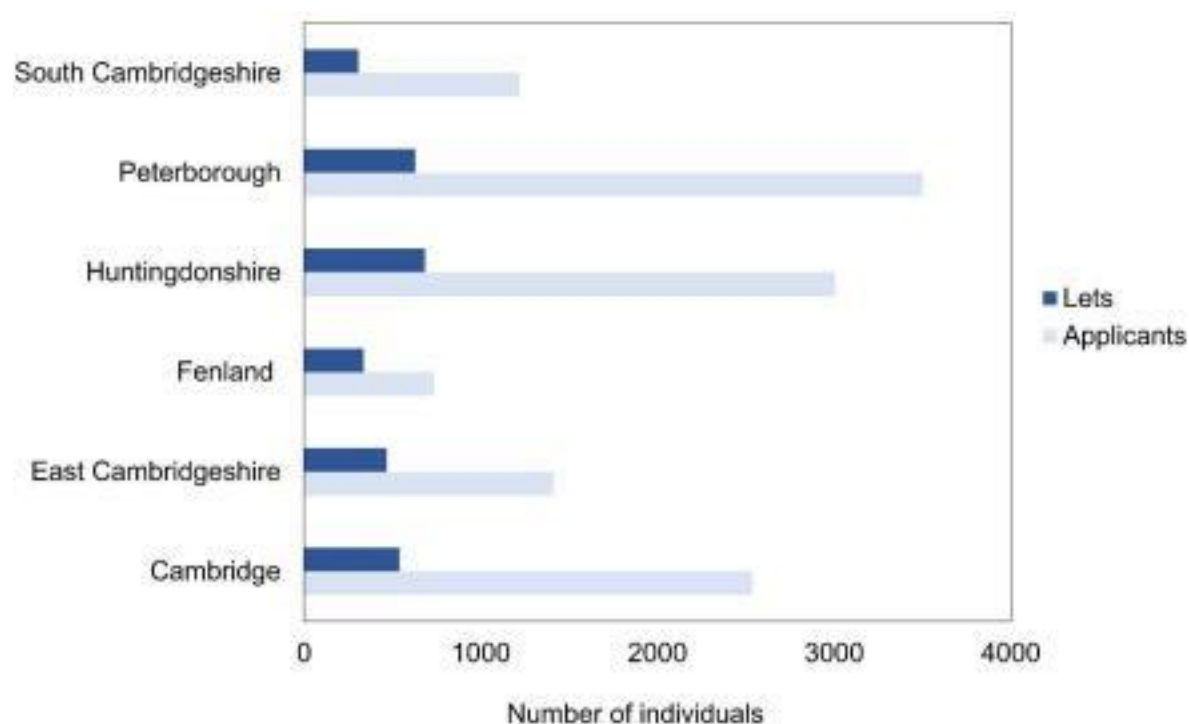
3.4. Ensure More Frequent Visits and Rigorous Individual Assessments of Foster Placements Post-21

The Accommodation Team should ensure more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments of foster placements post-21 when implementing the extended Staying Put scheme. This recommendation would improve communication, support, and assessments of the implemented policies. Improved collaboration, following Think Communities, could be implemented such that the Accommodation Team have regular correspondence with independent foster agencies, so that a better feedback loop and continuously updated list of available accommodation can be provided. This measure is implemented by Oxfordshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, and Devon County Council ([Section 2 Part 2](#)).

3.5. Allow for Priority Social Housing Application Any Time Before Age 25

YP with care experience should be able to apply for priority social housing any time before age 25. There is extremely high demand for social housing and a large discrepancy between the number of applications and lets (Figure 8) [35]. Currently, there is no cap on age but there is also no priority for YP with care experience after age 21, resulting in YP falling through the cracks ([Section 2 Part 1.1](#)).

Figure 8. Comparison between the number of applicants for social housing and the number of social housing lets.



Priority for social housing should be given automatically to YP with care experience. The current priority system does not benefit YP with care experience as waiting times can extend into the decades [35]. Corporate Parents have a statutory duty to ensure that YP have access to housing options. The lack of housing options available to CCC's YP adds to the disadvantages facing this group. A major part of this issue is that YP do not have a guarantor that can help them rent privately ([Section 3](#)). Private rentals do not tend to accept YP with care experience who are on benefits and these YP have to compete with other vulnerable groups for accommodation, such as families with young children [35]. As such, private accommodation is not an option for most YP with care experience. The minimum that CCC should do is to put YP with care experience on a priority social house application list before they turn 25 years old.

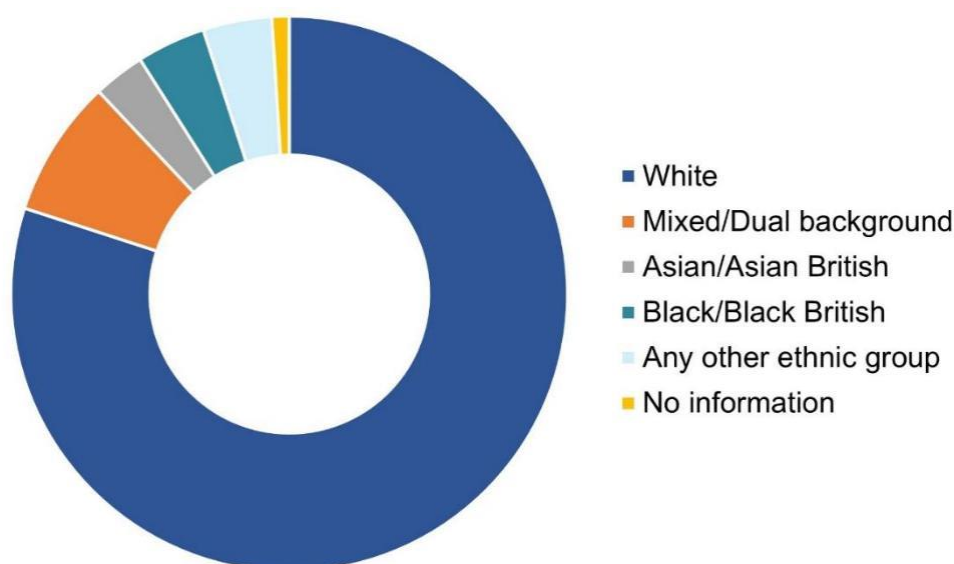
The semi-independent "accommodation trap" is a key barrier to successful transition from care into independence. Semi-independent accommodation is the cheapest housing available to YP classed as NEET since housing benefits and Universal Credit are enough to cover the cost of accommodation and living [35]. If an individual starts working full time (35 hours a week on an Apprenticeship), they then have to contribute towards the cost of housing, on top of the cost of living, travel, items required for work etc. YP often earn much less money than they receive from Universal Credit if they are unemployed [35]. As one 2020 survey respondent said: "it costs me more to work than it does to not work." YP become trapped in semi-independent accommodation because they cannot get onto a social housing priority list due to long wait times or private accommodation is too expensive [12]. A social housing priority list would help YP escape the semi-independent accommodation trap.

Allowing YP with care experience to move into social housing may help to increase their take-home pay. Take-home pay may increase further when priority is obtained in conjunction with a reduced housing benefit, as well as the incentive for the YP to transition into work and stay in work [12]. In the short- and long-term, giving priority to YP with care experience for social housing will reduce costs for CCC and District Councils. For example, councils would have to pay fewer subsidies to semi-independent accommodation providers. Social housing priority may also boost the local economy by giving individuals incentive to stay and work in Cambridgeshire [36].

3.6. Grant Access to All Housing Options and Increase Housing Allowance Costs for YP Waiting for Asylum

UASCs in Cambridgeshire may struggle to integrate due to low ethnic diversity in the county. Although Cambridgeshire has one of the fastest growing populations in the UK and has seen considerable increases in its migrant population, ethnic diversity in Cambridgeshire remains lower than the national average [29]. Around 7.4% of Cambridgeshire's population belong to a Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic group compared with 14.5% nationally [29]. Around 19% of 698 YP with care experience surveyed in Cambridgeshire belong to one of these groups (Figure 9) [29]. This lack of diversity may contribute to the social and cultural isolation of UASC.

Figure 9. Ethnicity of YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire.



The number of UASC in Cambridgeshire has remained fairly stable since 2016, despite significant increases in UASC across England (Table 3) [10]. Compared with CCC, other LAs have seen similar or greater increases in their UASC population. The UASC population in Cambridgeshire only represents about 10% of its care-experienced population [29]. It is important to note that YP from migrant populations can experience social and cultural isolation as a result of a language barrier and being away from their home authority [29]. There is a need to address these issues in the services provided by adapting them so that the voices of UASC are not forgotten. One way of adapting services is through the recommendation that all housing options are available to YP waiting for asylum.

Table 3. Number of UASC in Cambridgeshire from 2011 to 2020.

Year	UASC in Cambridgeshire – no. (% of care-experienced population)
2011	15 (3.2)
2012	5 (1.1)
2013	10 (2.1)
2014	7 (1.4)
2015	19 (3.6)
2016	61 (10.0)
2017	67 (9.8)
2018	62 (8.9)
2019	79 (10.2)
2020	75 (10.5)

The maximum number of UASC that CCC can be responsible for is 92 individuals [2]. When this number is reached, UASC are transferred to other LAs. CCC receives a set fee per UASC from central Government to cover costs such as accommodation and support. When UASC turn 18 years old and if they have gained “leave to remain” status, they become eligible for housing benefits [2]. Alternatively, the LA continues to have a duty to pay for their accommodation until their status is determined [2].

UASC in Cambridgeshire are usually placed in supported accommodation provision (Table 4) [37]. This has put pressure on supported accommodation services available to YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire. Accommodation is the only factor that places UASC in competition with Cambridgeshire's YP with care experience. LAs have a duty to provide sufficient accommodation for both groups [29].

Table 4. Types of accommodation in which UASC were placed in 2017.

Accommodation Type	UASC in Accommodation – no. (%)
Children's Home	3 (4.5)
Fostering	18 (26.9)
Supported Accommodation	46 (68.6)

The accommodation options and resources available to YP with care experience and UASC should be the same, although UASC may need additional support. This could be done by incorporating a specialist PA to visit UASC at a higher frequency. This can also be carried out through putting them in supported accommodation for a shorter period of time or until they ready to transition into independent accommodation. In addition, this will allow these individuals to have access to the same opportunities as other YP with care experience so that they themselves can transition into independence after graduating from their unaccompanied asylum seeker status. Besides from accommodation, UASC are supported in the same way as other YP with care experience, for example with access to health and

education services [37]. It is odd, therefore, that the accommodation options are also not the same.

UASC should be granted access to all accommodation options. The needs of UASC "are not being properly assessed prior to and after placement, are not being met in unregulated accommodation and that they often do not understand their options for care/accommodation and do not have their views taken into consideration" [29]. There is also lack of comprehensive research regarding UASC [29]. Moreover, "the Department for Education recognises that UASC form a significant part of the growing number of children being placed in independent and semi-independent settings, which are not registered or inspected by Ofsted" [29]. The lack of access to all housing options if the YP is waiting for asylum is clearly an issue.

The number of UASC has increased due to the National Transfer Scheme but LAs are looking after a proportionate number of UASC. Nationally, UASC represent 6% of YP with care experience. Despite the proportional distribution and low percentage of UASC, LAs are challenged by the lack of available suitable accommodation for YP with care experience. This results in many of CCC's YP with care experience being placed in Peterborough and almost all of its UASC being placed in Peterborough [11]:

"In terms of resources and services, including Mosques and bilingual shopping facilities, Peterborough offers greater diversity and support for young people from overseas. Additionally, as a neighbouring Authority, and with a great many shared services Cambridgeshire Looked After Children are not disadvantaged by living in Peterborough, in the same way that a child might be considered to be if they live much further afield."

There is a need for CCC to expand their housing priorities so YP with care experience and UASC can stay in Cambridgeshire. This is preferable to relying on the resources of a neighbouring LA, especially if neighbouring LAs have reached maximum capacity. This would allow community support and development to increase over time in a similar fashion to Peterborough. Cambridgeshire could follow Peterborough's approach instead of redistributing UASC [11]. We recommend implementing a better system with improved management, as Peterborough has already demonstrated successful integration of UASC.

With the majority of UASC entering care between age 16 and 17 [37], they leave the care system relatively quickly. CCC therefore has a duty to help these YP transition into independence [2], meaning that the accommodation system has to be smoother and more efficient. Unfortunately, with the increasing number of UASC in need of accommodation, more affordable housing options quickly fill to capacity. By increasing access to all housing options for UASC, there is also a decline in affordability due to the higher competition for affordable housing. CCC identified that the funding coming from central Government is not sufficient with the estimated costs per week at around £800 [37]. As such, housing allowance costs for the 92 UASC should be increased.

The increase in housing options and housing allowance is integral in a successful transition for UASC as CCC is responsible for housing, living, and support costs until the Home Office has made a decision on their immigration status [2]. This process can be lengthy with UASC waiting for decisions for one to three years and with a small number of UASC waiting longer than three years. It is important to note that Cambridgeshire has not reached their limit for distribution yet. Cambridgeshire is at 92% of their limit under the 0.07% threshold [2]. This

threshold is set by central Government for the maximum number of UASC that CCC can take in. There is therefore still space to take in more UASC and implement changes to improve the process for current and future UASC. The recommendations are made to help mitigate the financial burden due to the increase in the number of UASC, and to help improve the transition for these YP when they do gain “leave to remain” status.

4. Implementation of Recommendations

An Accommodation Team would have initial costs but would reduce CCC’s spending in the long-term. A successful transition into suitable and affordable accommodation means that YP with care experience can pay more towards their cost of living and contribute to the local economy. The team would reduce the cost of YP classed as NEET ([Section 6](#)) as well as emergency housing for individuals that become homeless ([Section 4](#)). The team would also save CCC the cost of extra financial support if YP do not have a successful transition. In addition, the number of closed cases and successful transitions may increase leading to further reductions in CCC spending [38]. Implementing an Accommodation Officer/Team is an example of a “spend to save” recommendation in the long-term.

5. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

Providing suitable housing is a key component of CCC’s role as a Corporate Parent. Ignoring the recommendations outlined in this section may prevent YP with care experience from flourishing as well as increasing the financial resources required to help these YP if they become NEET and/or homeless. In the long-term, this will lead to the loss of financial saving opportunities.

Failing to invest enough time and resources into the accommodation process will impact many aspects of the lives of YP with care experience. For example, if YP do not have a stable home, this may affect their mental health ([Section 8](#)), create barriers to setting up a bank account as well as to attending work/education ([Section 6](#)). Having a safe and secure home is a basic need and without it an individual cannot move forward.

6. Summary

Securing housing is a complicated process for YP with care experience. A permanent Accommodation Officer/Team would help YP in Cambridgeshire navigate the complexities of the accommodation process. This duty should not be left to PAs, District Councils, and certainly not to YP. Instead, collective and centralised effort is required for YP to feel properly supported and to understand their entitlements, benefits, and resources. This task is a full-time job in itself. An Accommodation Team that can collate this information and deal with housing issues would be beneficial.

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Section Three. Guarantor Provision

Overview

Additional measures to support YP engaged in low-income EET are needed, since semi-independent accommodation can remove the financial incentive to work in these types of placement. The common requirement for a guarantor makes private accommodation inaccessible to many YP, who often do not have anyone to take on this role. Acting as a guarantor is a way in which CCC can support its YP and expand its role as a Corporate Parent.

Key recommendation

- **Act as a guarantor for YP with care experience, with a particular focus on helping those engaged in low-income employment and apprenticeships.**
-

1. Introduction

[Section 2](#) highlighted the difficulties faced by YP with care experience with regard to availability and cost of accommodation. These issues are further exacerbated when individuals are on low incomes, for example those undertaking apprenticeships. Here, we outline the complex issue that arises when trying to balance low pay with accommodation costs while maintaining the incentive of YP to engage in employment, education or training (EET), and propose how these YP can be helped when transitioning into independent housing.

One of the primary issues when considering housing for YP with care experience on low incomes is the inaccessibility of key accommodation types. Firstly, private housing is often inaccessible as these YP have no adult to act as a guarantor. Secondly, social housing is difficult to obtain due to high demand. A high number of YP with care experience in the UK therefore live in semi-independent housing (27% of 18 year olds; 14% of 19 to 21 year olds) [1]. There is a financial barrier to this type of accommodation for individuals on low incomes, leading to a situation in which there is no financial incentive for these YP to engage in EET.



There is no financial incentive for YP on low income to engage in EET.

1.1. Financial Barrier of Semi-Independent Accommodation for YP on Low Income

One of the most easily accessible types of accommodation for YP with care experience to live in is semi-independent accommodation. In cases where individuals are NEET, they will receive Universal Credit and their accommodation fees will be covered by their housing benefit. Those that work are required to contribute to their accommodation costs from their take-home pay. For those aged 16 to 18 and undertaking an apprenticeship, or those aged 19 and in their first year of an apprenticeship, the minimum wage is £4.15 per hour [2]. When working a 35-hour week, for example, the take-home pay of these YP following payment of the accommodation charge is comparable to the amount of Universal Credit received by those who are NEET. Additional costs associated with undertaking an apprenticeship, such as clothing and transport, can bring this level of take-home pay significantly under the value of Universal Credit and eliminate the financial incentive of employment. Although those in apprenticeships are eligible for additional support in the form of the Care Leavers' Bursary [3], this represents a single payment of £1000, leaving YP still with a low level of take-home pay. For social housing, take-home pay for YP is usually higher, but this type of accommodation is difficult to obtain due to the lack of priority status in social housing allocation ([Section 2, Part 3.5](#)).

This barrier may drive YP towards jobs that pay a higher rate than apprenticeships instead of pursuing aspirational careers through apprenticeship opportunities in their areas of interest. Compared to other YP of a similar age who may be able to live with parents, YP with care experience are already at a financial disadvantage in having to pay for accommodation, which may discourage them from aspirational opportunities, a problem that is further exacerbated by this specific issue.

Private accommodation is often inaccessible to YP with care experience on low incomes due to the requirement for a guarantor. YP with care experience often do not have an adult to act as a guarantor, leading to situations in which they have to either live in semi-independent accommodation and reduce their take-home pay significantly or live in hostels, which provide a lack of stability and safety concerns, as was highlighted in feedback from some of the YP who responded to our 2020 survey.

2. Potential Solutions

2.1. Rent Cost

One way of changing the system to make accommodation more affordable for YP with care experience on low incomes would be adjust the amount of rent they are paying. There are several options for how this could be implemented, including establishment of an income-based rent scale, provision of a housing supplement for those undertaking apprenticeships or establishment of a rent cap. Alternatively, this problem could be approached from the income end, with CCC providing an income top-up for those undertaking apprenticeships.

2.2. Improving Accessibility to Housing Types

The second potential solution involves ways in which CCC can support YP with care experience in obtaining alternative types of housing in which it does pay to work. Firstly, individuals could be shifted to in priority need for social housing allocation. Alternatively, the timeframe for applications to social housing could be extended ([Section 2](#)) although this would require a collaborative effort with District Councils.

Accessing private accommodation is difficult for YP with care experience as they often have no one to act as a guarantor. As their Corporate Parent, CCC is well-placed to take on this role. There is no legislation that restricts the Council from acting as a guarantor. The Localism Act (2011) states that “a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do” [4]. This power was highlighted during another LA’s investigation into the possibility of acting as a guarantor [5]. In addition to improving the living situations of those on low incomes, providing more types of housing would benefit CCC’s YP to whom it acts as a Corporate Parent.

Centrepont also highlighted that YP with care experience need their LA to act as a guarantor to improve their access to the private rental sector [7]. Centrepont’s report further indicates that this should be implemented with a clear contract that communicates the maximum guarantee that the LA is willing to provide.

The importance of establishing opportunities specific to YP with care experience will be discussed in [Section 6](#). In cases where opportunities consist of apprenticeships specific to these YP, such as the Kickstart scheme, the recommendations made here will be crucial.

3. Current Interventions

3.1. Cambridgeshire

While CCC provides useful information about the different types of accommodation available to its YP, CCC offers a limited amount of practical support ([Section 2](#)). Specific

accommodation support based on national schemes includes the Staying Put scheme for those in foster care, and the Setting Up Home Allowance [6]. The CCC website states that the Council is unable to act as a guarantor for its YP.

3.2. Cambridge's Geographical Neighbours

Within the East of England area, Essex County Council's Local Offer states that their Leaving and After Care Service is able to consider acting as a guarantor for their YP [8]. This is considered based on the outcome of a needs assessment, and is dependent on a number of conditions, including that the YP has no other accommodation options or individuals who could fulfil the role of guarantor. Additionally, YP must be motivated and able to maintain their own accommodation (Section 6, 8). We propose that a guarantor scheme within Cambridgeshire be extended beyond those with no other option, to allow YP working in low-income jobs and apprenticeships the option of private accommodation. In doing so, this would alleviate the financial and aspirational issues resulting from the financial barrier that occurs in semi-independent accommodation.

3.3. Cambridge's Statistical Neighbours

Several LAs within Cambridgeshire's statistical neighbours are able to act as guarantors for YP leaving care. Firstly, Wiltshire County Council act as a guarantor for individuals in the case where the income of these YP is sufficient to cover their rent and associated living expenses, and as of October 2018, the Council was supporting ten individuals in this way [9]. Each agreement is legally reviewed to minimise Council liability. Additionally, Wiltshire County Council considers its YP leaving care as a Band One priority group for social housing through their Homes4Wiltshire scheme [10]. We recognise that Wiltshire is a unitary authority and implementing this in Cambridgeshire would require collaboration with District Councils.

3.4. Other LAs

The LA held as an example of best practice for acting as a guarantor for its YP is Kent County Council. Kent County Council implemented a guarantor pilot scheme in July 2018 [5] which has since been extended and is still available to its YP [11,12]. The pilot was limited to 25 individuals and involved a guarantee of six months of unpaid rent, with a view to implementing a guarantor policy in the future.



Kent County Council implemented a guarantor pilot scheme in July 2018 which has since been extended.

The 12-month pilot accepted 26 YP aged 20 to 23, all in work or education, and none of the YP missed their rental payments [13], resulting in no monetary loss to the Council. Successful applicants were required to provide evidence that they could meet the costs independently. Six applicants for the pilot were unsuccessful, with three failing to provide this evidence and three being able to provide the necessary evidence but unable to find a suitable property to rent [13]. The review of this pilot highlighted in particular that each guarantor arrangement was closely monitored, meaning that any difficulties an individual had with paying rent were identified at an early stage.

Devon County Council, who implemented a guarantor pilot scheme prior to and informed the scheme in Kent, still maintain the role of being a guarantor in their Local Offer [14]. The Devon pilot was limited to YP who represented a lower risk in terms of financial liability for the Council such as those in University or employment. The assessment process of the pilot undertaken in Kent led to a similar outcome to Devon's pilot which had narrower initial requirements.

Nottingham County Council also highlights in its Local Offer to its YP that the Council "may be able to act as your guarantor" [15]. Several city-level LAs and County Councils outside England also act as guarantors for their YP, including Leeds City Council to those in full-time education [16] and a number of LAs in Wales [17].

4. Recommendations

We recommend that CCC employs a strategy for facilitating the move of YP with care experience on low incomes into housing types other than semi-independent accommodation or hostels.

Any of the potential solutions outlined in [Section 3 Part 3](#) would be a step in the right direction, but we specifically propose that that CCC should act as a guarantor for its YP, as this has been successfully undertaken by other LAs and can be implemented within the Council.

Guarantor provision could be implemented as a pilot scheme. This pilot scheme could be limited by a maximum number of YP or certain criteria at CCC's discretion. For example the scheme may initially only be available to YP in employment or education. As undertaken by Wiltshire County Council, all agreements should undergo legal review to minimise CCC's liability.

5. Implementation to Recommendations

The key barrier to CCC undertaking the role of guarantor for YP entering private rental agreements is the financial liability that CCC would be subject to in the case of unpaid rent. While this is a valid concern, the success of the guarantor pilot scheme in Kent demonstrates that in reality, significant financial loss is unlikely. Although circumstances may vary between Counties, we propose that implementing this recommendation within a limited pilot scheme would provide a useful indication of the precautionary budget required to introduce this recommendation as formal policy.

There would be less demand for a guarantor from YP in Cambridgeshire than in Kent. Cambridgeshire has a lower number of YP engaged in EET [18]. Kent has 221 YP aged 17 to 18 and 747 YP aged 19 to 21. Cambridgeshire has 59 YP aged 17 to 18 and 124 YP aged 19 to 21. Limiting the number of places on the pilot scheme would solve any issues of unexpectedly high demand.

A pilot scheme would provide the opportunity to assess the benefits of having a guarantor to the YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire and determine whether the scheme is suitable here, while limiting the financial risk associated with direct implementation. Risk of financial loss can be mitigated further through close monitoring of agreements to identify signs of YP struggling to pay their rent at the earliest possible stage. YP should work with

their PAs (or an Accommodation Officer) to ensure they can afford the rent costs in the first place. Evidence of this should be provided by the YP when applying for the scheme.

CCC would need to establish criteria to determine whether its YP are sufficiently prepared for living independently as well as how rent affordability is calculated for the approval process. Many LAs have resources to prepare their YP for independent living ([Section 7](#)). Similar resources could be used to ensure that CCC's YP are sufficiently prepared. Communication with LAs that have already implemented guarantor policies could be useful while establishing such criteria.

Kent demonstrated that schemes of this nature have difficulty engaging landlords due to their lack of experience with corporate guarantors [13]. This would require active engagement from the relevant Council team to overcome, but as stated in the case of the Kent scheme: "these efforts have been rewarded by our young people accessing private rental properties that previously they have been unable to".

6. Costs of Ignoring Recommendations

The main cost relates to the social aspect of the transition into independence. The lack of financial incentive to engage in EET while living in semi-independent accommodation may drive YP away from aspirational "stepping stone" roles, particularly those which have associated costs such as transport. Taking measures to avoid this problem may promote higher aspirations, as required by the Corporate Parenting principles. Moving into independent housing also represents a large step towards independence. The lack of access to this type of housing jeopardises YP's successful transition. Additionally, private housing is a more stable form of accommodation than semi-independent accommodation. Eliminating stable accommodation as an option for YP leaving care may increase the number of YP forced to live in hostels with their associated stability and safety concerns. Without this recommendation, the level of take-home pay of these YP remains low, which also may be a contributing factor to their financial concerns.

7. Summary

Although there is limited precedent for LAs acting as a guarantor, some areas have been running successful schemes for several years. By acting as one of the pioneering LAs, CCC could make a real contribution to helping its YP enter the private rental sector, and in doing so promote the pursuit of aspirational careers via uptake of apprenticeships. Other LAs have established ways in which this support can be provided while limiting the financial liability taken on by the Council. The extension of pilot schemes taking place in other areas is testament to the success of this type of support.

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Section Four. Homelessness

Overview

YP with care experience are disproportionately affected by homelessness in England. Homelessness can occur due to a variety of reasons and can lead to negative consequences on individuals across the lifespan. CCC's YP should not face homelessness or be forced into inappropriate accommodation. LAs should act to minimise the risk of YP with care experience becoming homeless, but it is important to be prepared for the worst. While CCC has introduced some preventative measures, stringent safety nets are required. CCC currently lacks emergency protocols to ensure that its YP avoid homelessness, a primary duty for any Corporate Parent.

Key recommendations

- **Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience.**
 - **Secure emergency accommodation specifically for YP who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown.**
-

1. Introduction

1.1. Defining Homelessness

Homelessness disproportionately affects individuals who experience other inequalities, such as YP with care experience. Homelessness takes on a variety of forms, all of which can have a detrimental impact on the individual facing homelessness. In this paper, homelessness is defined as [1]:

“Rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough); houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter); living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence); living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).”

While the definition may not fully encompass all of the experiences that come under “homelessness”, this definition provides a framework for our understanding of homelessness.

Prevention is CCC’s focus when it comes to homelessness but CCC does not yet have robust emergency protocols built into its homelessness prevention strategy. As such, YP with care experience can be classed as intentionally homeless and denied access to Main Housing Duty, a duty which provides temporary accommodation until a given time. As a Corporate Parent, CCC should do all it can to prevent any of its YP becoming homeless. YP with care experience do experience homelessness at greater rates than their peers. It is therefore vital that measures are in place to provide a safety net for YP where preventative measures have failed and/or homelessness is imminent, regardless of their circumstances.

1.2. Correlation between Care Experience and Homelessness

YP with care experience are a vulnerable group who are disproportionately affected by homelessness. In England, the estimated percentage of YP with care experience who also experience homelessness ranges from 22% to 35%. Crisis (2011) found that 25% of survey respondents who had experienced homelessness had also experienced care [2]. Another study reported that 35% of 106 YP experienced homelessness in the first 12 to 15 months after leaving care [3]. During this transition period, 37% of YP with care experience also experienced housing instability [3]. An additional study noted that 33% of YP experienced homelessness six to 24 months after leaving the care system [4]. Homeless Link’s Young and Homeless (2018) survey found that 22% of YP (aged 16 to 25) experiencing homelessness also had experience of care [5]. Leaving care was cited as a primary cause of homelessness in 17% of cases in this report [5]. In Scotland, the CELCIS reported around “17% of those eligible for aftercare” making a homelessness application [6]. Precautions must be put in place to provide support for YP facing homelessness.

The relationship between care experience and homelessness is also recognised in policy papers. The Care Leavers Strategy (2013) acknowledged that YP with care experience have particular needs in relation to homelessness [7]. The National Audit Office’s (2015) report also acknowledged the correlation between care experience and homelessness [4]. Finally, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness (2017) report focused on

homelessness prevention for YP with care experience [8]. The relationship between care and homelessness is an established issue in both research and policy contexts.

1.3. Hidden Homelessness

Homelessness casts a wide net. Statistics about homelessness often hide those individuals that are dealing with their situation informally, i.e. without LA support. This can manifest itself in many forms such as sofa surfing. Hidden homelessness is an umbrella term which often masks various precarious living situations ranging from sofa surfing at the house of friends or relatives, involuntarily sharing with other households, sleeping rough in hidden locations, and squatting [9]. The term sofa surfing itself is ambiguous and at times euphemistic; while commonly used to indicate periods informally spent with friends or relatives, such an understanding does not capture the different contexts in which homeless people may come to rely on lodging as provided by others [9]. Those who experience hidden homelessness often lack access to homelessness support, despite being in a precarious situation [9].



Hidden homelessness is an umbrella term which often masks various precarious living situations.

Accommodation insecurity is a real and persistent issue that disproportionately impacts YP with care experience. Often individuals who find themselves in this type of situation are not in a position to secure more stable accommodation and their current situation is not sustainable in the long-term. These individuals are in a particularly vulnerable position and depending on their accommodation context, they may be dependent on someone for a place to sleep.

However, often accommodation is transient and over time this support may also fall away. Centrepoint's (2017) report on post-care access to accommodation stated that 26% of surveyed individuals have sofa surfed and 14% had slept rough [10]. Moreover, 57% of those surveyed felt unsafe in the area where they lived immediately after leaving the care system [10]. This creates situations in which individuals turn to sofa surfing and other types of unstable housing situations [10]. A precarious living situation makes it difficult to move on and plan for the future. When an individual does not know what to expect from one day to the next it is difficult to engage in planning for education and work [10].

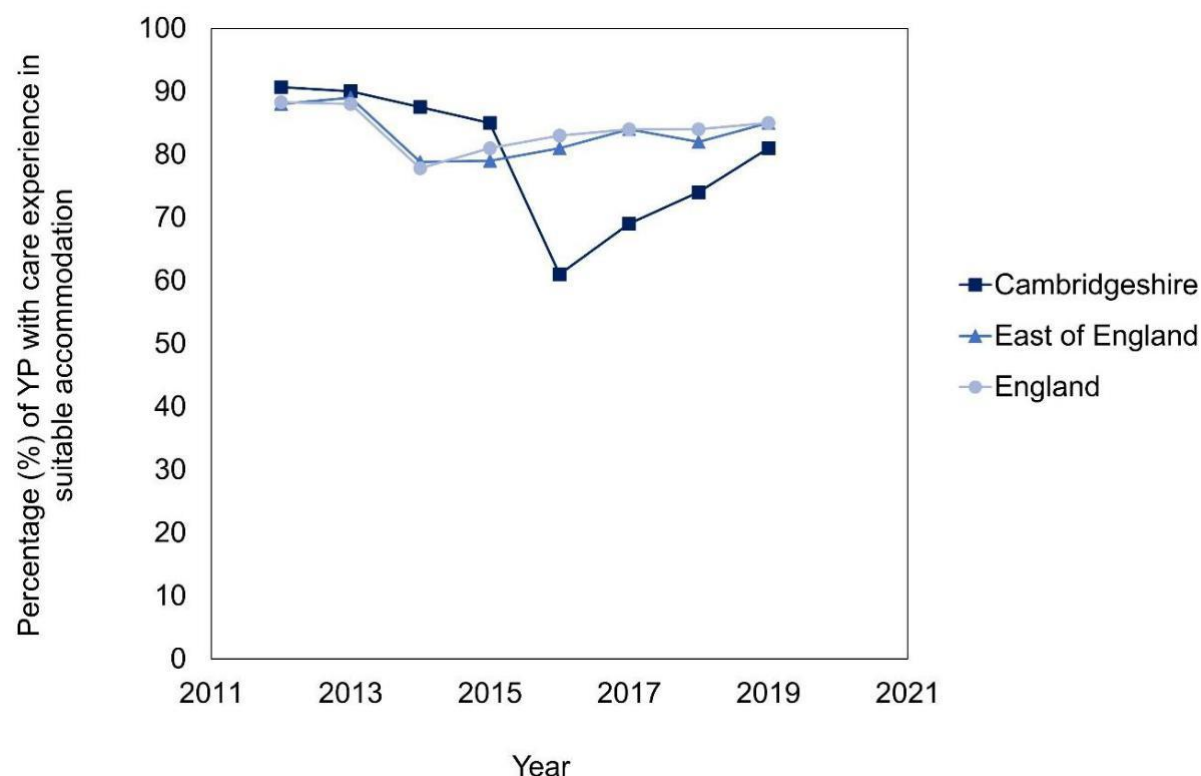


57% of those surveyed in Centrepoint's (2017) report felt unsafe in the area where they lived immediately after leaving the care system.

LAs are required to keep statistics on the number of their YP who have been suitably accommodated between the age of 18 and 21. There is a consistent gap between the number of YP with care experience recorded and the number who have been suitably

accommodated (Figure 1) [11], indicating the precarious living situation faced by many individuals.

Figure 1. Percentage of YP with care experience aged 18 to 21 in suitable accommodation.



As with other areas, precise statistics are not available for those aged 21 and over. Given the difficulties associated with classifying hidden homelessness, it is difficult to determine how many YP with care experience are not in suitable accommodation. While the results of our 2020 survey cannot be taken as representative of the experiences of all of CCC's YP, precarious living situations were noted by some of the 10 respondents. Survey respondents were asked about the type of accommodation they were currently living in and some respondents reported living at no fixed address, including sofa surfing etc. (Section 2 Figure 3).

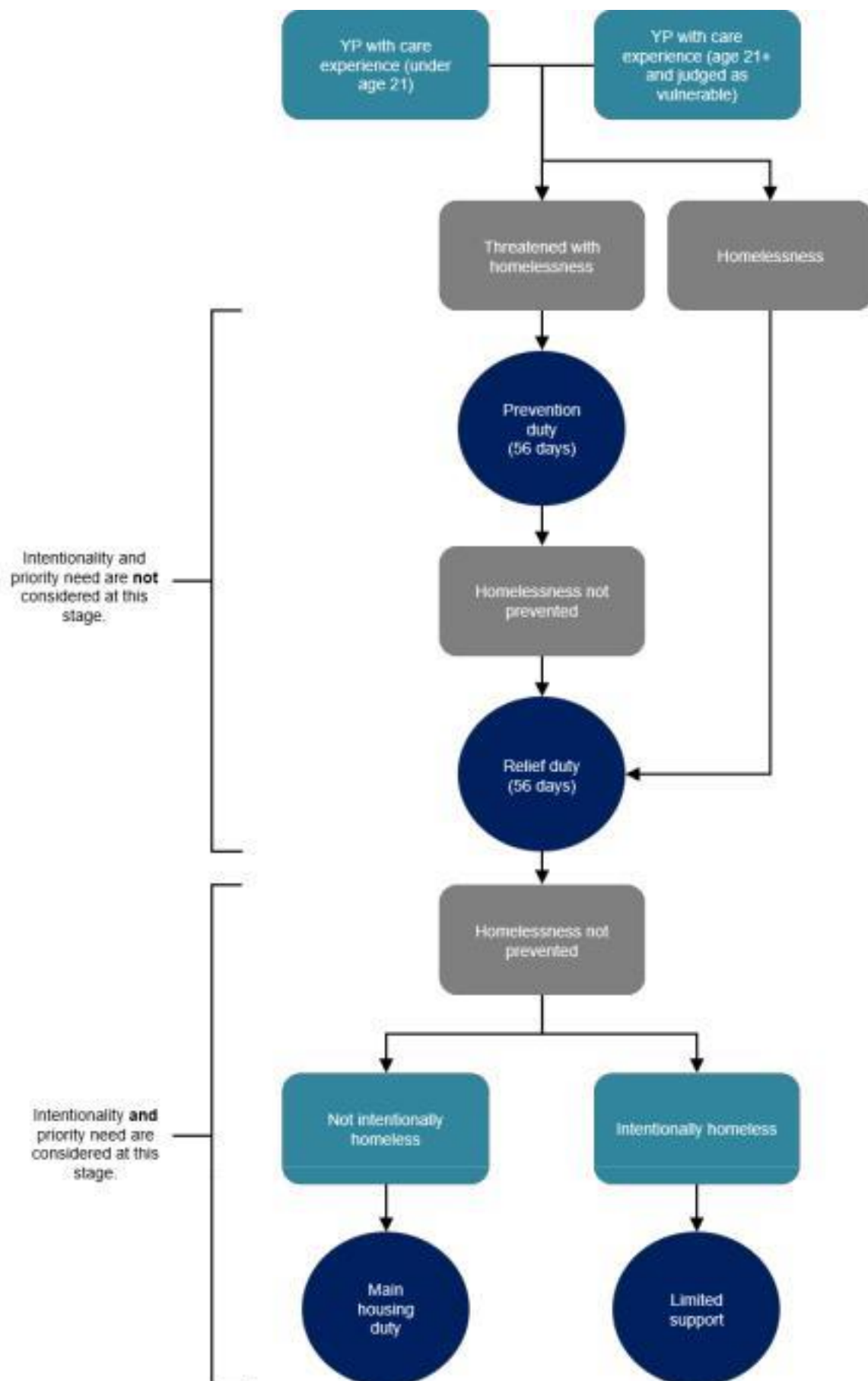
Respondents were also asked whether they felt their current accommodation was suitable and safe both now and in the future. Four out of 10 felt they did not have suitable accommodation to live in right now, five out of 10 felt they did not have suitable accommodation for the future. Two out of 10 felt they did not have safe accommodation to live in right now, and five out of 10 felt they would not have safe accommodation for the future. These responses show an alarming degree of variation. The fact that half of YP who completed the 2020 survey felt they lack access to suitable and safe accommodation for the future is particularly worrying.

1.4. Homelessness in Cambridgeshire

Homelessness duty refers to the duties owed by LAs to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. These duties include devising a personalised housing plan, to prevent or relieve homelessness, and to provide accommodation in some circumstances. An overview of this process is given in Figure 3. See [Section 4 Part 2](#) for further description of homelessness duty.

Data maintained by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding statutory homelessness gives the crude picture of households owed a homelessness duty [12]. The data does not represent the overall level of homelessness in England, it shows the number of households that were owed a homelessness duty in the 2019 to 2020 financial year. By taking the sum of households with and without a support need, the number of overall households that were owed a homelessness duty in Cambridgeshire can be calculated.

Figure 3. The process of owed homelessness duties.



Data for the number of houses owed a homelessness duty include specific numbers for different support needs, including (i) YP with care experience aged between 18 and 20, and (ii) YP with care experience aged 21 and over. Nationally, YP with care experience in either of these age groups make up 2.4% of households owed a homelessness duty in 2019 to 2020 (Table 1) [13]. In the East of England, these individuals also make up 2.4% of households owed a homelessness duty in the same year. The 3.1% share in Cambridgeshire therefore exceeds national and regional averages. During 2018 to 2019, 2.5% of households in Cambridgeshire that were owed a homelessness duty contained YP with care experience either aged 18 to 20 or aged 21 and over and classed as a priority need. In the East of England this figure was 1.9% and at a national level, this was 2.1% (Table 1) [13]. Cambridgeshire has clearly been underperforming in this area compared to the regional and national level for a number of years.

Table 1. YP with care experience (aged 18+) among households owed homelessness duty.

Region	No. of households with YP owed homelessness duty		Percentage (%) of YP with care experience among households owed a homeless duty	
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Cambridge	23	24	3.7	3.6
East Cambridgeshire	9	13	2.1	3.1
Fenland	36	27	5.7	4.8
Huntingdonshire	5	20	1.4	2.1
South Cambridgeshire	7	10	0.5	2.1
Cambridgeshire County	80	94	2.5	3.1
East of England	540	710	1.9	2.4
England	5720	6960	2.1	2.4

These are crude figures. They do not include the numbers for individuals who were denied an offer of settled accommodation because they were deemed to be intentionally homeless [8]. It also fails to account for hidden homelessness and accommodation insecurity (Section 4 Part 1). It is likely that the numbers for YP with care experience aged 21 and over only refer to those who are deemed to be in priority need and are thus not entirely representative. On the whole, the numbers outlined here are likely to be a conservative estimate of YP with care experience and experience of homelessness as defined by Section 4 Part 1.1.

Given that YP with care experience make up a small proportion of the population, the increase in YP owed a homelessness duty is concerning. A disproportionate number of YP with care experience have been in receipt of a homelessness duty. In 2018 to 2019, there were 262 YP aged 18 to 21 affiliated with CCC, including YP living out-of-county [11]. In the same year, 44 households in Cambridgeshire containing a YP with care experience aged 18 to 21, were owed a homelessness duty. This suggests a relatively large proportion of CCC's YP were owed a homelessness duty, reiterating the threat posed by homelessness to this community.

1.5. Causes of Homelessness

The onset of homelessness is often due to a series of structural and individual factors. The Homeless Link cited relationship breakdowns with family or caregivers etc. as the most common reason for homelessness [5]. However, a wide array of causes can be identified including unsuitable accommodation, financial issues ([Section 7](#)), benefits dislocation, substance abuse, physical and/or mental health problems ([Section 8](#)), abuse and neglect [5]. Homelessness can occur in a variety of contexts and it can occur all of a sudden.



Relationship breakdowns are the most common reason for homelessness.

The correlation between leaving care and homelessness suggests that certain aspects of the care and post-care experience increase the risk of homelessness. The journey of any YP into and out of the care system is an individual experience but it is often marked by trauma [14]. The nature of being in care means that many YP are unable to draw on traditional avenues of support that could help prevent homelessness [15]. The reasons for this are multifaceted. YP with care experience may have become estranged from familial networks of support or such networks may not be in a position to provide support. The moment when a YP leaves care, described by many as a cliff edge, sees the removal of many support networks. As an individual exits the care system, they are faced with many challenges coupled with a loss of support networks, creating an environment where YP with care experience may be more susceptible to homelessness.

1.6. Impact of Homelessness

Homeless can emerge from a variety of contexts, and the events which surround YP with care experience becoming homeless can be distressing for the individual. The impacts of homelessness can be severe for individuals affected, for wider communities, and for LA wallets. Becoming homeless can exacerbate an already bad situation leading to worse outcomes. It can also create a barrier for YP with care experience to transition into independence. Homelessness carries both short-term and long-term impacts that jeopardise a successful transition into independent adulthood.

As well as carrying social stigma [16], homelessness can lead to deterioration in an individual's physical wellbeing and mental health ([Section 8](#)) [1]. A fear of homelessness can itself cause ill health and exacerbate existing conditions [1]. The long-term effects of repeated or sustained homelessness are appalling. According to Crisis, the average age of death for an individual experiencing homelessness, is 47 years old for men and 43 years old for women, compared to 77 years old for the general population [1]. Homelessness can force YP into vulnerable situations, where they are at higher risk of abuse and violence. It is extremely difficult to plan ahead and take steps to move on with your life if you are threatened with or experience homelessness.



Homelessness can force young people into vulnerable situations, where they are at higher risk of abuse and violence.

Homelessness can negatively impact both the individuals who face it and their communities. Homelessness can stem from alcohol or drug misuse, however, the advent of homelessness can also exacerbate dependencies or even act as a route into addictions which threatens long-term safety and stability [1]. Homelessness is also a major disruptor to employment and education. YP who face homelessness are more likely to be excluded from school or to be NEET [1], since homelessness makes it more difficult to retain existing employment or secure new employment [1]. There are correlations between YP experiencing homelessness and increased risk of abuse and criminal and/or gang related activity [1].

This research seeks to suggest how CCC can aid the transition of YP from care into independent adulthood as well as their entry into employment. The impacts outlined here are an overview of how homelessness is a barrier to successful transition and employment. The impacts of homelessness are both disturbing and widespread for individuals put in a situation where they may face homelessness. Moreover, YP with care experience are often victims of circumstance. It is in the interest of YP with care experience, the local community, and the LA to ensure that these individuals avoid homelessness at all costs. Steps need to be taken to ensure that YP with care experience are not exposed to homelessness. As part of this commitment, LAs must have emergency protocols in place. Preventing homelessness is vital for YP with care experience who are faced with such a situation.

2. Current Interventions

Approaches to dealing with YP with care experience and experiences of homelessness should stem from the LA's duty as Corporate Parents to its YP. The Corporate Parenting Principles require LAs to act in the best interests of their YP. Corporate Parents should engender mental and physical wellbeing; promote safety and stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work lives; and prepare individuals for their transition into independent adulthood [17]. As Corporate Parents, LA members should show concern for YP with care experience as any good parent would towards their own child [17]. Allowing YP with care experience to become homeless conflicts with this duty. Enhanced emergency protocols aimed at protecting YP against homelessness would help CCC carry out its Corporate Parenting responsibilities in an empathetic and positive way.

Provisions aimed at providing safety nets for YP with care experience who become homeless is an ethical imperative. There are also practical reasons for such an approach. The impact of homelessness on an individual can be severe ([Section 4 Part 1.6](#)) and preventing YP with care experience from becoming homeless is more cost effective than attempting to improve the situation after the fact ([Section 4 Part 6](#)). Guidance published in 2020 by the Department for Education and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government acknowledges the fact that there will always be a need for emergency responses and urges LAs to have strong contingency plans in place for YP with care experience who are at risk of homelessness [18]. Where preventative measures have failed, emergency approaches present a vital opportunity to stop YP with care experience from

falling into homelessness. It is vital that CCC implement stringent emergency measures to ensure that YP with care experience do not become homeless.

LAs apply standards which influence how much support an individual making a homelessness application will receive (Box 1). If a YP with care experience is under age 21 then they have priority need and are eligible for emergency homelessness relief. Priority need status has not been extended *a priori* to YP with care experience aged 21 and over. According to the Homelessness Code of Guidance for LAs, priority is only extended to individuals after aged 21 who are vulnerable as a result of having been in care [19]. It states that Housing Authorities must determine whether an individual has been “looked after” and “they will need to consider whether they are vulnerable as a result” [19]. If the individual is identified as facing homelessness within 56 days, steps must be taken to ensure that they do not become homeless. This is known as Prevention Duty (Figure 3). In cases where homelessness has not been prevented, eligible individuals come under Relief Duty, which seeks to relieve homelessness by securing suitable accommodation for a minimum of six months. When a LA has reason to believe that an individual may be (i) homeless; (ii) eligible for assistance; or (iii) in priority need, then the LA has a duty to provide interim accommodation. This duty can arise at any point after the individual has applied as homeless, including during Relief Duty [19].

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Criterion 1: | Homelessness/threatened with homelessness |
| Criterion 2: | Eligible for assistance |
| Criterion 3: | In priority need |
| Criterion 4: | Homeless intentionality |



Box 1. Homelessness Assistance criteria.

The Prevention and Relief Duties apply irrespective of homelessness intentionality and priority need. However, if homelessness has not been relieved at the end of the Relief Duty, then priority need and homelessness intentionality are taken into account (Figure 3). If an individual is found to be both in priority need and unintentionally homeless, then they can be owed the Main Housing Duty. However, if they are in priority need and deemed to be intentionally homeless, then they are offered a more limited package of support. According to the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, the LA must still ensure suitable accommodation is available for a “reasonable” period of time [19].

CCC applied for funding from central Government to support a specialist PA focusing on homelessness. This role was filled in October 2019 and it is due to end in early 2021. To our knowledge, there is nothing in place to replace this service. CCC should explore ways in which it can implement systemic change to prevent its YP from becoming homeless ([Section 4 Part 4](#)).

3. Key Barriers

Currently, CCC's focus is on preventing homelessness among YP with care experience. This is admirable, however, the contexts in which YP with care experience can be made homeless are varied and complex. Despite best efforts, individuals may still find themselves in a situation where they are effectively homeless. CCC acts as a Corporate Parent towards its YP and wants to be the best Corporate Parent it can be. As such, it is important that steps are in place to provide support for individuals who become homeless. We envisage this support coming in two forms: (i) removing "intentional homelessness" decisions from CCC's YP and (ii) providing specific emergency accommodation for those individuals who face homelessness.

3.1. Intentional Homelessness

The Housing Act (1996) sets the following standard for homelessness intentionality [20]:

"A person becomes homeless intentionally if [s]he deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence of which [s]he ceases to occupy accommodation which is available for [her/]his occupation and which it would have been reasonable for [her/]him to continue to occupy."

When faced with homelessness, an individual can apply for homeless assistance. If YP with care experience are in priority need, as is the case for YP under age 21 or above age 21 and classed as vulnerable due to being in care, they may be eligible for the Main Housing Duty (Figure 3). This means that the LA will work to secure long-term accommodation for the applicant. Issues arise when a YP is deemed intentionally homeless. In this case, where an individual is thought to have lost their accommodation due to deliberate actions, they may no longer be eligible for Main Housing Duty. LAs may still be obliged to provide short-term accommodation for the individual so they can find accommodation for themselves but they are owed limited support compared with individuals not deemed intentionally homeless.

Concerns have been raised about applying homeless intentionality to YP with care experience. The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has recommended that housing authorities should do all in their power to avoid the impact of intentional homelessness decisions with regards to YP with care experience aged 18 to 25 [19]. Moreover, the 2017 All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness questioned the degree to which LAs were declaring their YP with care experience to be intentionally homeless and went on to recommend that the National Government should abolish homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience aged 18 to 25 (Box 2) [8]. Similar recommendations also feature amongst Centrepoin's 2017 report which state that homelessness intentionality should be removed for all YP with care experience under the age of 21 [10].

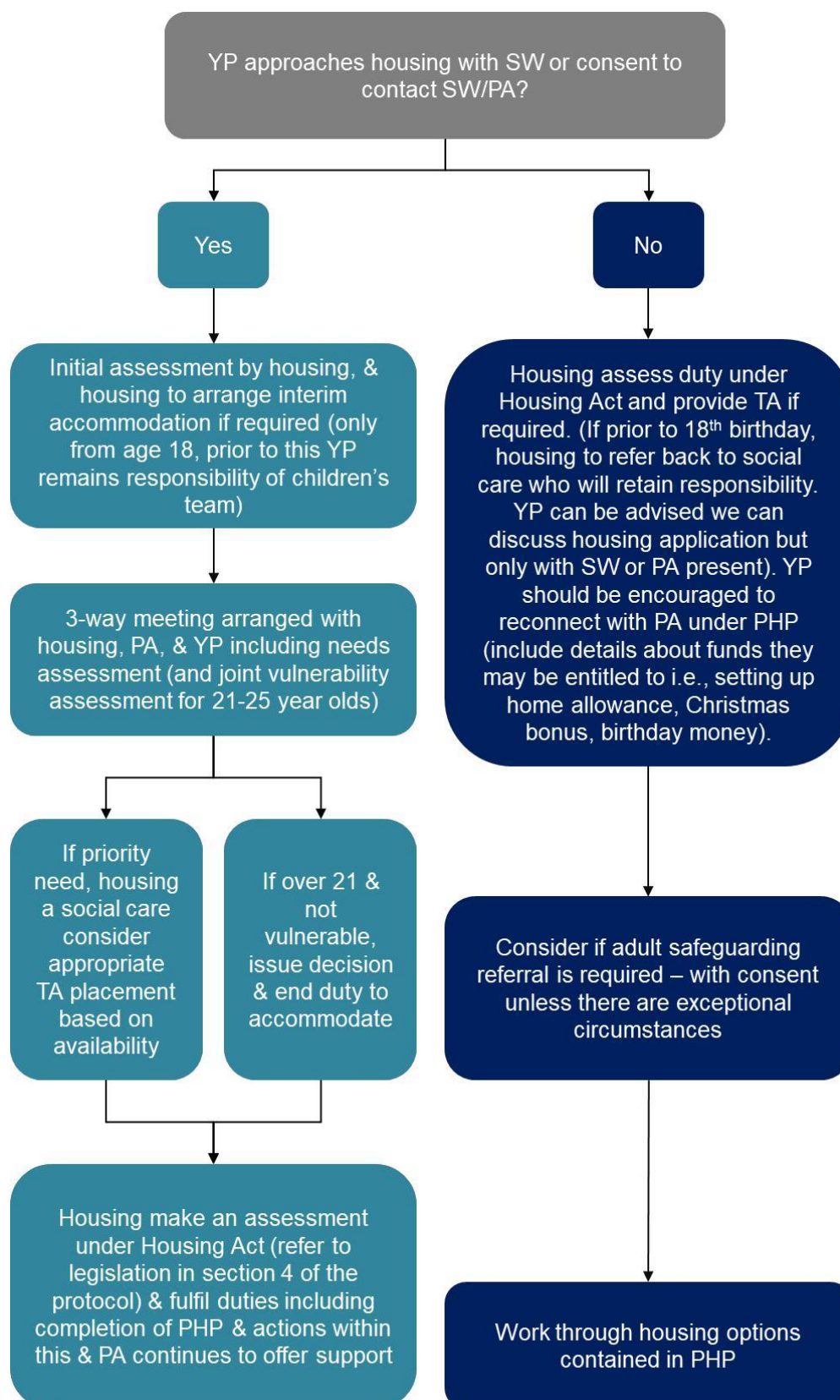
Allowing YP with care experience to be classed as intentionally homeless puts members of this group at high risk. This is particularly pertinent given the correlation between care experience and homelessness and the role of CCC as a Corporate Parent. This section shows that safety nets of support are something that is both vital and lacking within CCC. Given the threat posed by homelessness intentionality decisions, this seems like a natural place to start.

YP with care experience form a relatively small group yet the risk of them becoming homeless after being found intentionally homeless is high. YP with care experience have often lived very fragmented and sometimes chaotic lives before leaving care, therefore transitioning to adulthood can be challenging. We believe Housing Options teams are not properly investigating why a care leaver may have lost their accommodation or taking steps to resolve the issue, perhaps through mediation. Abolishing intentionality is one small measure which could drastically cut down on the amount of YP with care experience who are made homeless.

Box 2. Recommendation in 2017 All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness.

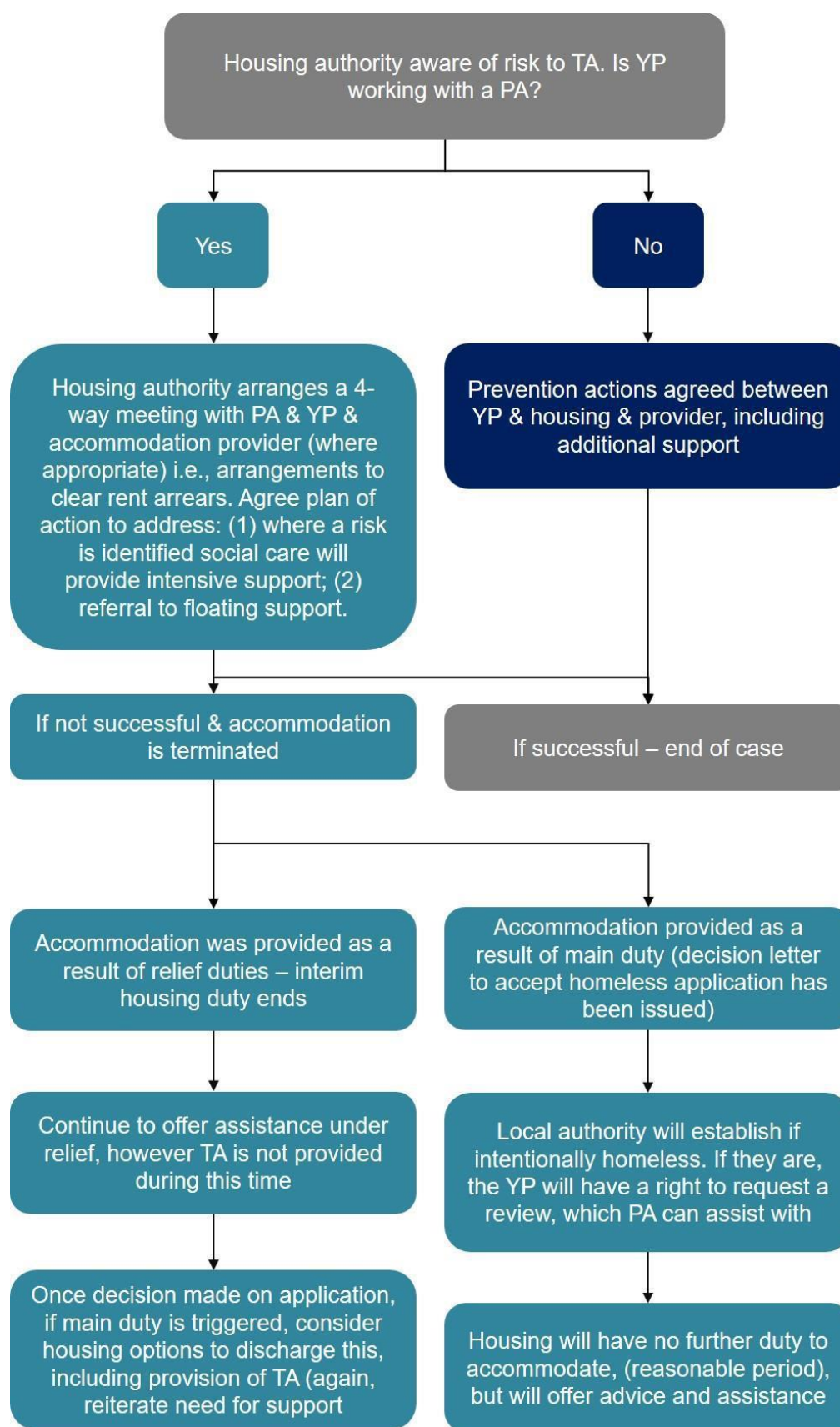
CCC has recently created a protocol which deals with housing and homelessness as recommended in the government funded report by Barnardo's and St Basils (Figure 4 & 5) [15,21]. The protocol represents a formal agreement between CCC and the District/City Councils, providing a strong basis for collaboration. The protocol acknowledges that "in most cases a care leavers up to the age of 25 will be vulnerable" and thus in priority need [21]. This is a welcome statement [21]. However, the protocol does not outline an agreement to remove homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience. CCC has improved safeguarding for its YP by implementing more stringent preventative measures. Yet, as this section has stressed, it is important that this preventative element is bolstered with safety net mechanisms. Removal of homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience will help to ensure that this group is protected from the potentially devastating impacts of homelessness. Given that YP with care experience are over-represented in homelessness statistics, which are likely to be conservative in their estimates, protection of this vulnerable group is needed more than ever.

Figure 4. Emergency Homelessness Situation protocol for YP with care experience. Adapted from CCC Protocol.



Key: TA=temporary accommodation, PHP=personal housing plan, PA=personal advisor, SW=social worker, YP=young person

Figure 5. Losing Accommodation provided by Housing Authority for YP with care experience (age 18+) Adapted from Cambridgeshire protocol.



4. Recommendations

4.1. Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience

Ideally, the removal of homelessness intentionality would apply to all YP with care experience up to age 25. At the very least, it should apply to individuals judged as being in priority need. Given the CCC protocol accepted that most YP with care experience aged 25 and under should be judged as vulnerable, any decision to remove homeless intentionality has the potential to encompass all YP to whom CCC owes a duty of care.

This recommendation can be implemented within the framework of current homelessness legislation as has been achieved by Salford City Council. In May 2020, Salford agreed that it would not deem YP with care experience as intentionally homeless [22]. Salford's decision was based on their statutory duty as Corporate Parents and on the negative impacts of being declared intentionally homeless on their YP [22]. Their approach utilises discretionary allowances within homelessness legislation to extend the period during which individuals are owed Prevention and Relief Duties [22]. A panel consisting of relevant individuals (including YP) will be set up and accommodation offers made via direct let rather than through bidding. Salford's focus balances avoiding homelessness and managing successful rehousing. This is by no means an isolated instance. Intentionality for YP with care experience has been abolished across the ten LAs that make up Greater Manchester [23]. Early indications suggest that this recommendation is starting to gain traction with LAs across England. To be the best Corporate Parent that it can be, CCC must follow suit and be at the forefront of the movement to remove intentionality from its YP with care experience.

Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for YP with care experience, recommends the abolishment of intentionality for YP with care experience [23]. It is worth echoing the question he poses to all Corporate Parents: "Would this be good enough for my own child?" This is a question worth asking at every available opportunity. Intentionality decisions should be seen as directly contradicting Corporate Parent responsibilities in spirit as well as in reality. CCC must act to amend this discrepancy.



Mark Riddell challenges Corporate Parents to ask themselves: "Would this be good enough for my child?"

4.2. Emergency Accommodation

The primary focus of CCC is homelessness prevention but even the most robust pathway planning will not bypass the need for emergency accommodation in all cases. The reasons for homelessness are varied and complex, and while striving for the best possible outcome, it is important to acknowledge that sudden fluctuations can occur, which may demand an emergency response.

Provision of emergency accommodation should be a key part of a LA's approach to accommodation [15]. Homelessness can be sudden and it can force an individual into a uniquely vulnerable position. As part of this research, we met with various YP with care

experience in Cambridgeshire. One individual provided a distressing account of how their living situation was dramatically overturned by a strained relationship with their caregiver, resulting in the individual becoming homeless. In these traumatic situations, designated accommodation is invaluable. When securing such accommodation, it is important to ensure the housing is of an acceptable standard. The accommodation must be safe and secure and it must meet YP's specific needs. The individual we spoke with was able to overcome their situation but they noted the lack of available support. Many other individuals may not be able to bounce back from such a setback. Therefore, YP with care experience should have access to suitable emergency accommodation if it is needed.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for LAs states that bed and breakfast accommodation is not appropriate for YP with care experience under age 25 [19]. The Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework restates that importance of having appropriate emergency accommodation available to care experienced YP. All-age hostels as well as bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation are also deemed inappropriate: "this sort of accommodation is never suitable as an option. It is often not only inappropriate but is unsafe for YP and provides little or no support, so not helping them to deal with what has happened and to move on with their lives" [19].

Interim temporary accommodation must be provided for those classed as: (i) homeless; (ii) eligible for assistance; or (iii) in priority need [19]. YP with care experience below age 21, and aged 21 or above and have been categorised as vulnerable, are in priority need and are owed interim temporary accommodation in the event that they face homelessness. St Basil's and Barnardo's Accommodation Framework notes that temporary accommodation should include on-site support or additional housing management, and that LAs must not place their YP in forms of shared accommodation with older adults who could present a risk to them [19].

In Cambridgeshire, YP with care experience who face homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless may be placed in one of the supported housing arrangements for YP facing homelessness such as those run by the CHS Group [24]. Alternatively, YP with care experience may be placed in a YMCA facility [25]. In some cases, YP may not be able to be placed in these kinds of facilities, due to capacity or "burned bridges" with such facilities in past experiences. This group often has specific vulnerabilities and are at particular risk of becoming homeless. A safety net is absolutely vital to ensure that no YP with care experience is faced with homelessness.

4.2.1. Secure emergency accommodation for YP who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown

Proposals to secure specific emergency accommodation YP with care experience are being looked into by Joe Gilbert (Specialist PA at CCC) and colleagues, with the support of Esther Baffa-Isaacs and Dan Quantrill (Senior Transformation Advisors at CCC). Specifically, they are looking at securing Council-owned premises for the purposes of emergency accommodation. CCC is currently assessing the process through which its property assets can be reused for YP leaving care and UASC (awaiting status accommodation) ([Section 1 Part 2.1](#)). We support this approach. Council-owned housing will provide an important safety net for CCC's YP facing homelessness, while allowing a suitable degree of flexibility when dealing with individual situations. Crucially, it would also provide a safe and controlled environment to support them in the short-term while longer-term options are explored.

The provision of specific emergency accommodation may be used as a mechanism to support the abolition of homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience. The recommendations in this section complement one another. YP facing homelessness will have a safety net in place which will avoid declarations of intentional homelessness and specific emergency accommodation will be in place, providing a context in which they will be safe and secure while long-term options are considered and implemented.

5. Implementation of Recommendations

5.1. Expected Outcomes

Implementation of these recommendations will prevent YP from entering the cycle of homelessness. CCC will be able to ensure that fewer of their YP experience homelessness. The provision of a stringent safety net will ensure that CCC is prepared to support all their YP at a critical point. The safety net will provide emergency support for vulnerable individuals and prevent the potentially disastrous impacts of homelessness. Supporting these recommendations will help CCC become the best Corporate Parent it can be.

5.2. Financial Implications

The proposed recommendations would not impose significant budgetary constraints on CCC. While it is vital that these safety nets are in place, the preventative measures already introduced by the Council will ensure that they will only be necessary for a minority of cases. The implementation of a procedural change, such as that in the first recommendation, should be relatively straightforward once agreement is made between CCC and the District/City Councils. Current scoping for emergency accommodation has focused on property owned by CCC, and as such does not require the utilisation of new resources. Any preparatory work could be undertaken by the specialist PA for homelessness or alternatively by a dedicated Accommodation Team ([Section 2](#)).

Importantly, when safety nets are necessary, they are designed as the final barrier between YP and homelessness. This section has discussed the potentially devastating impacts of homelessness above. Preventing an individual's entry into homelessness is not only beneficial for the individual, but it may prove cost-effective in the long-term ([Section 4 Part 6](#)). The effects of homelessness incur a variety of costs on LAs depending on individual cases. Taking decisive steps to limit YP becoming homeless will save costs in the long-term.

6. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

6.1. Financial Costs

Homelessness is a costly public expense at the local and national level. Crisis (2015) reported that the bill for rough sleeping over 12 months can cost more than £20,000 per person [26]. A follow-up study reported that public spending for homelessness over one year amounted to more than £34,500 per person (Table 5) [27].

Table 5. Cost of homelessness over one year.

Service	Estimated cost (£) to service per person
Homeless Services	14808
Criminal Justice	11991
NHS	4298
Mental Health	2099
Drug/Alcohol Services	1320
Total Cost	34518

The financial costs of homelessness rise in line with sustained or recurrent experiences of being homeless. Once established, homelessness becomes increasingly difficult to resolve [26,27]. The most cost effective strategy is to prevent or resolve homelessness at an early stage [26,27]. Councils spent £1.1 billion in 2018 to 2019 on temporary accommodation for homeless households; an increase of 78% over five years [28]. 31.3% (£344 million) was spent on emergency Bed and Breakfast accommodation; an increase of 111% over five years [28]. If CCC were to provide temporary accommodation from properties owned by the Council, it could expect savings on maintenance of empty properties as well as in emergency payments.

YP with care experience are disproportionately at risk of homelessness. The number of YP owed a homelessness duty in Cambridgeshire is also above national and regional averages. The costs associated with the removal of homelessness intentionality is likely to be negligible. In comparison, the provision of emergency accommodation by CCC-owned property may provide a cost-effective alternative to other types of emergency accommodation. Failure to implement these recommendations will be costly in the long-term.

6.2. Human Costs

Homelessness has a human cost and prevents successful transition from care into independence. Homelessness is associated with financial difficulties ([Section 5, 7](#)) and being NEET ([Section 6](#)) as well as physical and mental health conditions ([Section 8](#)), including substance abuse. Implementing the recommendations in this section will demonstrate CCC's commitment to its Corporate Parenting duties.

7. Summary

Homelessness is traumatic and disproportionately affects YP with care experience compared to their peers. Homelessness can negatively impact the transition from care into independence. Robust policies must be in place to prevent individuals becoming homeless. CCC's approach to this issue is already preventative but does not go far enough. Safety nets are needed. Classifying YP as intentionally homeless is damaging and conflicts with CCC's Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Permanent acquisition of emergency accommodation will provide a safety net for YP with care experience at risk of homelessness.

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Section Five. Council Tax

Overview

YP with care experience face a more difficult transition into independent adulthood than their peers. LAs can ease this transition by providing YP with care experience with a Council Tax exemption or discount, and in recent years most LAs have used Council Tax exemptions as a way of supporting their YP with care experience. CCC is one of only 17 LAs which does not provide its YP with care experience with any Council Tax exemption or discount. The reasons for this, as listed in CCC's consultation on the issue do not stand up to scrutiny. If CCC fails to implement Council Tax exemptions for YP with care experience, it risks reputational damage. More significantly, the Council's approach poses a risk to the transition from care into independent adulthood, and may even make Cambridgeshire a comparatively inhospitable place for YP with care experience, given that Cambridgeshire is now in the minority of LAs that does not offer any Council Tax assistance aimed specifically at YP with care experience.

Key recommendations

- **Provide Council Tax relief to YP with care experience until age 25.**
-

1. Introduction

An important way LAs have helped YP leaving care in recent years is by using their discretionary powers to offer Council Tax relief. Council Tax relief specifically aimed at YP with care experience has received widespread support from relevant not-for-profit organisations as well as interested parties affiliated with central Government. The provision of Council Tax relief mirrors support which other YP may receive from their family or from the state if they are at University. Blanket exemptions have already been introduced in other parts of the United Kingdom.

1.1. Council Tax is a Barrier to Successful Transition

YP with care experience face independence at a relatively early age and often have problems managing their finances. This can lead to a situation where they fall into debt [1]. Respondents to our 2020 survey plainly stated that they found it difficult to manage money. In a national survey of 'care leaver' experiences undertaken by Ofsted in 2022 that had 255 responses across a range of ages, money management was a major issue, with some individuals experiencing debt and unstable tenancies as a result [44]. Ofsted's survey found that being worried about money was the most common reason for feeling unsafe upon leaving care [44]. Thus, the inability to manage money can have drastic effects and facilitates wider problems faced by these YP. A Children's Society report highlighted that YP with care experience moving into independent accommodation for the first time are particularly vulnerable to Council Tax debt [2]. 1 respondent to the 2020 survey, expressing their individual view noted 'I cannot manage money. I'm unable to budget or value money.'

Leaving the care system requires a faster transition to independence than leaving home [3]. YP leaving care are expected to be largely self-reliant at a much earlier age than their peers, in terms of finances and accommodation [4]. This is hardly surprising given that youth transitions have become elongated for most YP, including education, housing, employment, and dependence on parents [5]. The way independence is conceptualised at the point that YP leave care needs to be reconsidered. To an extent, this issue has been recognised in local and national policies. The Children and Families Act (2014) formalised Staying Put arrangements while the Children and Social Work Act (2017) extends PA support to all YP with care experience until age 25 [6,7]. LAs should look for other ways to ease YP's transition into independence.

Of the 11 YP who responded to CCC's 2019 survey, Council Tax was noted as one of the biggest financial pressures facing YP leaving care in Cambridgeshire. Several respondents noted that they had fallen behind with Council Tax payments. Council Tax support, and financial support more generally ([Section 7](#)), was requested as an addition to the Local Offer. Provision of Council Tax relief for these YP could help address this issue by easing the transition from care to independence for Cambridgeshire's YP.



In CCC's 2019 survey of 11 YP with care experience, Council Tax was noted as one of the biggest financial pressures facing YP with care experience.

1.2. Charity Support for Council Tax Relief

Council Tax relief policies for YP with care experience have been promoted by various charities. The Children's Society has led the movement for Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [1,2]. The Children's Society 2015 report demonstrated how Council Tax debt collection has an adverse effect on YP with care experience and recommended Council tax relief for these YP until age 21 [2]. In a later report, The Children's Society extended this recommendation until age 25 [1]. Other charities, including Centrepoin, Barnardo's and St Basil's, have also recommended Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [9,10]. Children's charities have also produced a recovery plan for YP with care experience following the COVID-19 pandemic and have called for Council Tax relief up to age 25 as part of ensuring provision of housing [11]. Council Tax relief for YP with care experience reduces their risk of debt and associated housing insecurity [10].

1.3. Government Support for Council Tax Relief

Central Government supports local-level Council Tax relief policies for YP with care experience. There is no statutory requirement that LAs offer Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. Instead, LAs have powers to provide Council Tax relief to protect vulnerable individuals and groups where national discounts do not apply. Many LAs have pursued Council Tax relief as an effective way to provide tangible support for their YP as they transition from care into independence.

Central Government's 2016 report cited Council Tax relief as a means for Corporate Parents to help their YP achieve financial stability when leaving care [12]. In the same year, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee recommended that YP with care experience be made exempt from Council Tax until at least age 21 [13]. In their response to the report, central Government reiterated that local Council Tax relief was a LA matter. Citing North Somerset Council, which offers Council Tax relief for YP with care experience, they urged other LAs to consider similar ways of helping their YP [14]. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness 2017 report also urged LAs to use existing powers to offer Council Tax relief for YP with care experience until age 25 [15].



Central Government cited Council Tax relief as a means for Corporate Parents to help their YP achieve financial stability when leaving care.

The National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers has also voiced support for Council Tax relief up to age 25 and including individuals living away from their LA [16,17]. The Children's Commissioner for England has also called for Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [19]. Guidance for applying Corporate Parenting Principles to YP in/leaving care also highlighted Council Tax relief as a means of direct financial assistance [19]. YP with care experience in Scotland and Wales already benefit from Council Tax relief until age 26 and age 25 respectively [20,21]. Currently, whether YP receive Council Tax relief or not is something of a postcode lottery [15].

2. Current Interventions

Increasingly, it is becoming standard practice for LAs to offer Council Tax relief to their YP with care experience. This is partly because Council Tax relief is approved by central Government and not-for-profit organisations. It is likely that the number of LAs offering Council Tax relief to their YP will continue to increase. This year not only saw an increase in LAs offering Council Tax relief for their YP, but a number of LAs also expanded their existing offers. At the national and local level, CCC remains in the minority of LAs that have not yet offered Council Tax relief to its YP. As such, CCC's YP are at a disadvantage compared with YP with care experience living in other LAs that provide Council Tax relief.



CCC remains in the minority of LAs that have not yet offered Council Tax relief to its YP.

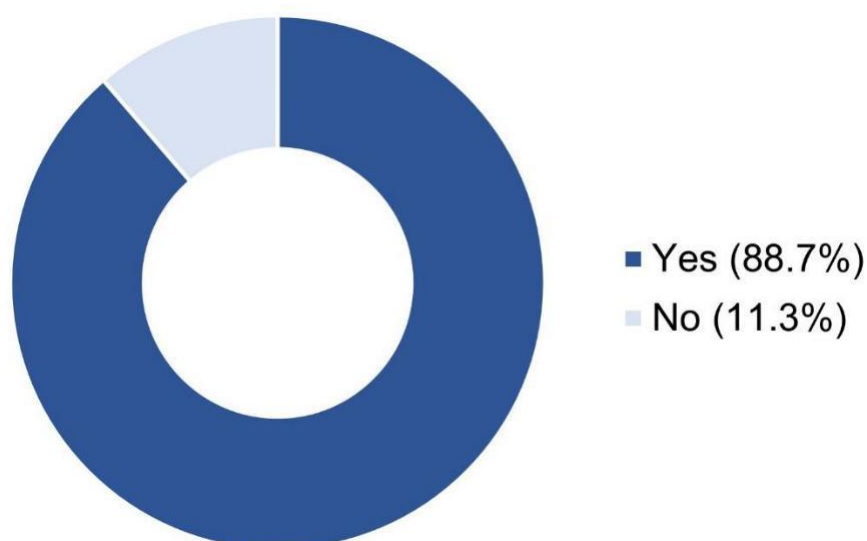
2.1. Cambridgeshire

The Cambridgeshire Children and Young People Committee met in 2018 to consider Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [22]. The committee decided that “adopting a scheme that exempts care leavers from paying Council Tax would not be appropriate in the absence of any national arrangements in this area.” Rather than implement a Council Tax reduction at the LA level, the Director of Children's Services wrote to central Government to support a national scheme of Council Tax relief that supports all YP with care experience living independently [22]. CCC were subsequently contacted by The Children's Society about their approach to which CCC restated its decision not to provide Council Tax relief to its YP.

2.2. England

The vast majority of LAs in England have offered their YP with care experience some sort of Council Tax relief. Of the 151 LAs in England, 134 offer some form of exemption or discount. This leaves only 17 (11.3%) of LAs that do not offer their YP any form of Council Tax relief (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of the 151 LAs in England offering Council Tax relief to YP with care experience.



These percentages do not take in account Council Tax relief offered only at the District or City Council level. Council Tax relief for YP with care experience is therefore likely to be more prevalent than the figures suggest. It is likely that more LAs will adopt Council Tax relief for YP with care experience in the coming years. Breakdown of the Council Tax relief offered by LAs in various regions is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of LAs offering Council Tax relief.

Type of Council Tax relief	LAs offering relief – no. (%)			
	England	East of England	Statistical neighbours	Two-tier councils
Full relief (until age 25)	97 (64.2)	4 (36.4)	3 (30.0)	10 (40.0)
Partial relief	37 (24.5)	3 (27.3)	4 (40.0)	10 (40.0)
Until age 21	24 (15.9)	3 (27.3)	2 (20.0)	8 (32.0)
Tapering relief	5 (3.3)	-	-	-
For 2 years or less	5 (3.3)	-	-	-
Until age 22	3 (2.0)	-	2 (20.0)	2 (16.0)
No relief	17 (11.3)	4 (36.4)	3 (30.0)	5 (20.0)

The LAs offering Council Tax relief to YP with care experience are not homogenous in their approach. Nevertheless, LAs generally either offer full relief until age 25 when Corporate Parenting responsibilities cease; or offer partial relief from six months to four years after leaving care. The most common method of partial relief is to offer exemption until age 21. Five LAs apply a tapering discount for Council Tax, in which YP with care experience receive a different rate of discount depending on their age (Table 2) [23-27].

Council Tax exemption should be offered to YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire until age 25. Tapering discounts can be confusing and cumbersome, both for the recipient and

the provider, and should be avoided. The recommendation for full Council Tax relief aligns with the extension of Corporate Parenting responsibilities until age 25 [16].

Table 2. Tapering Council Tax relief until age 25.

Council	Age (years)	Discount Rate (%)
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	18–23	100
	24–25	50
Sandwell	18–22	100
	23–25	50
North Somerset	18–21	100
	22–23	75
	24–25	50
Reading	18	100
	19	66
	20	33
Blackpool	18	85
	19	70
	20	55
	21	30

While the Council Tax relief methods mentioned above are generally adopted by LAs, specific circumstances can also influence the approach. For instance, a LA which offers a limited exemption may have provisions in place to extend the discount on discretionary grounds. Oxfordshire offers YP with care experience relief until age 21 but also has protocols in place to extend the exemption until age 25. Extension may be granted if an individual's financial liability for Council Tax is judged as "difficult to manage" due to specific circumstances or vulnerabilities [28]. In such cases, a written endorsement by a PA or social worker from the Council must be provided. Any subsequent agreement to extend Council Tax relief only remains in place for one year or the remainder of a year.

2.3. East of England

CCC also lags behind other LAs in the East of England with regard to Council Tax relief. Of the 11 LAs that make up the East of England Local Government Association, four (Bedford, Luton, Norfolk, and Suffolk) offer full Council Tax relief for YP with care experience until age 25 (Table 1). Three more LAs (Thurrock, Essex, and Southend-on-Sea) offer relief for YP with care experience until age 21. Thurrock allows the extension of this exemption in exceptional cases. Finally, four LAs (Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Hertfordshire, and Central Bedfordshire) do not offer clearly defined Council Tax relief for YP with care experience.

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing to the Corporate Parenting Panel (2018) report recommended that Council Tax relief be introduced for YP with care experience in Central Bedfordshire until age 25 [29]. A recommendation to approve the measure was included in the report, however, it has yet to be implemented. In its 2019 to 2022 Care Leaver Strategy, Hertfordshire County Council stated that a multi-agency strategic group was working towards extending Council Tax relief to its YP [30].

Peterborough also produced a consultation focused on Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. For similar reasons to Cambridgeshire, the proposal was rejected [31].

2.4. Cambridgeshire's Statistical Neighbours

Among its statistical neighbours, Cambridgeshire is in the minority of Councils that do not offer LA-wide Council Tax relief to YP with care experience (Table 1). Three statistical neighbours (Hampshire, Hertfordshire, and West Berkshire) offer no LA-wide discount but have expressed a desire to implement Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. Some District Councils in Hampshire already offer Council Tax relief for these YP. The Children's Services Inspection of Hampshire County Council by Ofsted noted with approval that the LA is working with District Councils to ensure that Council Tax relief is applied by them all [32]. Hertfordshire is also actively assessing the implementation of changes including Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [30]. West Berkshire states in its Local Offer that the LA is working towards introducing Council Tax relief for YP with care experience until age 21 [33].

Three of Cambridgeshire's statistical neighbours (Bath and Northeast Somerset, Wiltshire, and South Gloucestershire) offer a full Council Tax exemption for YP with care experience (until age 25) and a further four (Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, West Sussex, and Worcestershire) offer partial relief (Table 1). Both Gloucestershire and West Sussex offer relief until age 22 while Oxfordshire and Worcestershire offer relief until age 21. Oxfordshire's offer includes provisions to extend it beyond the age of 21.

2.5. Two-Tier Councils

CCC is a two-tier LA, meaning that it is not directly responsible for the collection of Council Tax. Instead, District Councils should impose Council Tax relief [34]. This may pose problems for implementing Council Tax relief for YP leaving care. An overview of 25 two-tier Councils in England suggests that this is a surmountable issue. Ten County Councils have implemented full relief measures while a further 10 offer various forms of partial relief. Only five County Councils offer no Council Tax relief for their YP with care experience.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. Changing Mindsets

A view persists at CCC that paying bills is a part of taking responsibility for oneself [22]. In effect, YP with care experience must learn the hard way.

“While seeking a fair and workable way of exempting care leavers from paying Council Tax may seem superficially attractive, the harsh reality is that paying bills is part of taking responsibility for oneself as an adult. Providing this relief for a period risks making the actual transition into having to eventually pay Council Tax a more difficult one as the young person concerned will have become used to managing on a budget that does not include having to meet this obligation” [22].

This sentiment does not acknowledge CCC's Corporate Parenting duties in word or in spirit. It ignores the unique situation in which YP with care experience find themselves. YP with care experience generally face independence in a very different context and at an accelerated pace compared to their peers, but YP with care experience need to reach independence in their own time [35]. As such, imposing a point of total independence based on an arbitrary

And irrelevant timescale of youth transitions is not appropriate. YP with care experience face a host of unique difficulties and pressures that emerge from their experience of the care system ([Section 2, 8](#)). A tough love approach does nothing to address the context of these YP's lives and fails to acknowledge the particularly damaging pressures that Council Tax debt can have. Paying bills is indeed part of "the harsh reality" of life, but given the circumstances of leaving care, age 25 is a more reasonable age to expect Council Tax payments from YP with care experience. CCC must recognise that its YP are in a unique situation which demands a different approach to Council Tax than that which is currently offered.

Our 2020 survey asked about the transition from care into independent living. One respondent said: "[We] need to have more gradual easing into independent living." Following the 2019 Ofsted report, CCC highlighted that improving delivery during this transition is an area to focus on. Council Tax relief is designed to help YP transition into independence and could support this effort. CCC should also consider other ways of engendering financial literacy in its YP. For instance, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole offer tapering Council Tax relief whereby YP with care experience are offered 100% Council Tax relief until age 24 before dropping to 50% Council Tax relief for their final year of support [23]. The rationale behind this approach is to ease YP with care experience into paying Council Tax before their 25th birthday, when any specific exemption will come to an end.

While 100% Council Tax relief until age 25 is preferable, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole's example shows that steps can be taken to prepare YP to pay Council Tax in addition to offering support in the form of Council Tax relief. CCC's approach currently does not acknowledge the circumstances in which its YP find themselves. It also does not take into account the Corporate Parenting principles or effective ways of instilling financial literacy. YP with care experience do need to learn money management skills. CCC should therefore endorse schemes that improve the financial literacy of these YP ([Section 7](#)).

3.2. Practical Considerations

3.2.1. Council Tax Relief or Refund?

YP with care experience could be offered a refund for Council Tax paid instead of Council Tax relief. This approach has the benefit of allowing YP with care experience to claim a refund for Council Tax paid before they were made aware of the scheme, dependent on any time-based restrictions. Offering a refund instead of Council Tax relief comes with its own challenges. For instance, if an individual has difficulty paying the bill in the first place, the question of what action would be taken is asked. While Council Tax relief is designed to ease the financial burden placed upon YP with care experience, it has a wider role in promoting a successful transition from care into independence. Relief creates space for individuals to learn how to manage their finances and budget correctly. Refunds would also demand a sustained application process and significant administrative procedures, making it more challenging to enact automatic application of Council Tax relief. Council Tax relief is thus preferable to a refund.

3.2.2. Means Testing

Means testing is the process of measuring a person's income to decide whether or not they should be entitled to benefits. CCC may decide to implement means testing for YP with care experience seeking a Council Tax relief. Most participating LAs offer Council Tax relief to YP with care experience regardless of their financial status, although some LAs do use means testing. For example, Bedford Council will only offer Council Tax relief to YP with care experience earning under £50,000 [36]. The Scottish Care Leavers' Covenant advocates an "assumption of eligibility" approach, whereby LAs assume that YP with care experience are eligible for available services and support [37]. Any attempt to introduce means testing would threaten to complicate administration and the associated application process for Council Tax relief. Means testing is only likely to eliminate a very small proportion of YP with care experience from being eligible for Council Tax relief. CCC should therefore avoid means testing YP with care experience seeking Council Tax relief.

3.3. Eligibility and Equality

It is important to define which individuals should be eligible for Council Tax relief. The Equality Act (2010) makes discrimination unlawful on the grounds of: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation [28]. Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010) places Councils and public bodies under a duty to promote equality (Box 1).

- 1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - a. Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - b. Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - c. Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Box 1. Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

Council Tax relief for YP with care experience means treating these individuals more favourably than others. However, this will act to remove disadvantages and promote equality of opportunity. Indeed, the Local Government Finance Act (1992) Section 13A gives LAs discretionary powers to support individuals or groups that may face financial difficulty, such as YP with care experience [34].

YP with care experience often face a more difficult path towards stable independent adulthood than their peers. Their time in care may be the result of deeper problems within their family unit. While Council Tax relief for these YP results in favourable treatment, it does so with the aim of advancing equality of opportunity and removing financial barriers to a stable transition. In turn, this will promote stable tenancies as well as increased EET opportunities.

Implementation of Council Tax relief for YP with care experience should have no significant equality or diversity implications, as noted in the Council's consultation [22]. The provision of Council Tax relief for YP with care experience in CCC is, however, complicated by two issues: (i) external YP with care experience from other LAs living in Cambridgeshire; and (ii) YP with care experience living out-of-county to whom CCC acts as a Corporate Parent. CCC raised concerns that unless these groups were included in any Council Tax relief scheme that CCC could be open to legal challenge [22].

3.3.1. External YP in Cambridgeshire

Potential discrimination-based legal challenges against CCC by external YP living in Cambridgeshire were presented as a reason for not introducing Council Tax relief for YP with care experience [22]. Given that other benefits and support are only offered to CCC's YP, this concern is dubious. For example, external YP living in Cambridgeshire do not receive support from CCC PAs, but to our knowledge this has never been considered a legal risk to CCC. Council Tax relief should not be viewed as a legal risk to CCC either.

While CCC may not have Corporate Parenting responsibilities for external YP with care experience, they do reside in Cambridgeshire and thus make up part of the Cambridgeshire care-experienced community. They face the same issues that affect CCC's YP. Helping these YP on their path to independence and financial stability will produce positive outcomes, such as encouraging engagement with EET that will benefit the community. Given that they are not living in their associated LA, external YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire may be at an added disadvantage. These YP may not be able to benefit from support that would otherwise be available from their own LA. The potential vulnerability of this group further justifies the provision of Council Tax relief.

An important step is required before this option is taken. There is no available data which indicates the number of external YP with care experience living within CCC's jurisdiction. These YP may already receive funding from their associated LAs to alleviate Council Tax costs. CCC should take steps towards identifying this group and understanding their circumstances. CCC will then be able to judge whether extending Council Tax relief to this group is financially feasible. This work would ideally take place after Council Tax relief has been given to CCC's YP with care experience and could be carried out by an Accommodation Team ([Section 2](#)).

Other LAs already offer all YP with care experience in their jurisdiction Council Tax relief. This represents best practice and we recommend that CCC move towards adopting this approach, although this may not be immediately feasible.

3.3.2. YP Living Out-of-County

CCC has a duty of care towards out-of-county YP with care experience until age 25. In many cases their placement outside of CCC was beyond their control. It is possible that if any proposed Council Tax relief is not extended to these YP then a legal challenge could be mounted [22]. Once again, this was presented by CCC as a reason not to go forward with Council Tax relief [22].

The proposed Council Tax relief would be offered through Section 13A of the Local Government and Finance Act (1992) [34]. The exemption would be channelled through District Councils to those living within their jurisdiction. As such, CCC would not be able to offer Council Tax relief to out-of-county YP with care experience. CCC is not discriminating against out-of-county YP, as presumably the exemption would be offered to these individuals if they moved back to Cambridgeshire. There is therefore not an adequate basis upon which to reject Council Tax relief in principle.

That being said, CCC still acts in the capacity of Corporate Parent for YP with care experience who live beyond its jurisdiction. These individuals are still members of the Cambridgeshire care-experienced community, and CCC should ensure that they receive adequate support. By living away from Cambridgeshire, these YP may have difficulty accessing CCC services and may face additional risks. For example, if an individual gets into financial difficulty due to bills such as Council Tax, they will be in an especially precarious position if they are out-of-county. For CCC's out-of-county YP, an "out of sight, out of mind" approach is not acceptable. The Corporate Parenting Principles specify that every CCC member must act in the interests of its YP as if they were their own children. This includes out-of-county YP with care experience.

Other LAs offering Council Tax relief to YP with care experience follow three approaches towards their out-of-county YP: (i) they do not extend Council Tax relief to out-of-county YP. In these cases, the eligibility criteria for relief explicitly states that an individual must reside within the LA; (ii) they offer partial relief to out-of-county YP e.g. the London Borough of Ealing offers out-of-county YP Council Tax relief until age 21. YP living locally receive Council Tax relief until age 25 [39]; (iii) they extend the same relief to out-of-county YP and local YP with care experience.

Extending full Council Tax relief to out-of-county YP with care experience represents best practice and should be adopted by CCC. The liability for providing Council Tax relief to out-of-county YP with care experience would have to be met by CCC. Relief could be delivered in the form of a grant claim system, as has been proposed by Norfolk County Council [40]. In this case, a process should be included to ensure that any grants issued are used for their intended purpose by the intended recipient.

3.3.3. Other Vulnerable Groups

CCC pointed out YP with care experience already receive a broad range of support from the Council [22]. This is in contrast with other vulnerable YP who face difficult circumstances and

are struggling with the pressures of independent living: “it is therefore arguable that providing support to all YP living independently through measures such as Council Tax relief is an approach that would have far greater impact than one that only provides exemption to care leavers” [22]. To our knowledge, this Council Tax support has yet to be implemented.

While CCC should do all they can to help all vulnerable YP in their transition to independence, CCC has a specific duty of care towards YP with care experience. YP with care experience have a uniquely difficult experience in their transition to independence. Financial problems are at the forefront of their concerns during this transition. These YP are recognised as a vulnerable group by researchers, central Government, and by CCC itself. The existence of other vulnerable groups is thus not an adequate basis upon which to reject Council Tax relief for YP with care experience.

3.4. Financial Considerations

Cost is a significant barrier to Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. LAs are rightly concerned that their policies not only provide support to vulnerable groups, but that the potential outcomes justify the associated costs.

Collaboration between levels in a two-tier Council is key for implementing Council Tax relief. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act (1992) gives LAs the ability to implement Council Tax relief on a case-by-case basis via request and on grounds of exceptional circumstances, and for certain groups of people where multiple taxpayers may fit into a group due to similar circumstances [34]. The cost of any relief must be borne by the LA itself and must be administered by the billing authority i.e. Cambridgeshire District/City Councils. As such, any relief should be implemented across all District Councils so that all eligible YP with care experience can benefit.

Council Tax relief would have financial implications for bodies that rely on such funding. These bodies include CCC, District Councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Fire Authority. CCC receives the greatest share from Council Tax payments. Presumably, CCC would forgo its share of the YP's Council Tax bills (68% to 75% of the bill per person). CCC should work towards securing agreements with the relevant parties, particularly District Councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner, to proportionally share the costs of applying a Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. Other two-tier Councils have achieved this and CCC should follow suit.

The Children's Society (2017) estimated the cost for LAs implementing Council Tax relief for YP with care experience until age 25 as £20,000 to £30,000 per year [41]. In 2018, CCC estimated the total cost of Council Tax relief for all its YP with care experience (aged 18 to 20 and living in Cambridgeshire) as £110,000 per year [22]. CCC suggested that at least £400,000 would be required to cover the costs of Council Tax relief for all local YP with care experience until age 25 [22]. This figure is likely to be an overestimate, as discussed below.

3.4.1. Liability

Assessing the financial implications of Council Tax relief is complicated by difficulty determining the number of eligible YP with care experience as well as liability and access to other discounts. Council Tax relief should be offered in all cases where YP with care experience are liable for Council Tax. In some cases, liability for Council Tax may be affected by an individual's specific living situation. For example, a YP with care experience

may share liability for Council Tax with individuals who were not in care. These cases must be planned for. Current practice offers several options: (i) revoke the exemption for the house in question; (ii) apply a set discount; (iii) apply a proportional discount; or (iv) offer a full exemption to the household.

Offering a full exemption would ensure that YP with care experience do not experience any financial hardship due to Council Tax payments. This may not be cost efficient, however. CCC should instead support the introduction of a proportional discount when a YP with care experience is living with other individuals who have not been in care. For example, if a YP with care experience lives with a partner who has not been in care, a 50% Council Tax discount should be offered. This policy would offer YP with care experience relief in terms of Council Tax liability.

Any Council Tax relief offered to YP with care experience should only be applied after existing discounts have been applied. This would significantly minimise expected losses. Students and school leavers are eligible for Council Tax relief and apprentices and youth trainees can also receive support in certain cases. Disabled or mentally impaired individuals also receive Council Tax relief, as well as individuals who live alone. The general population receives a range of discounts depending on their employment status, income, benefits, and dependents. Council Tax liability for YP with care experience may therefore be 0% before the proposed relief is applied. Many YP who are liable for some of their Council Tax payments may not be expected to pay the full amount anyway. As such, the cost of introducing Council Tax relief for YP with care experience is likely to be much lower than the maximum estimated cost.

It is likely that CCC's 2018 cost estimates overestimate the actual cost of implementing Council Tax relief for YP with care experience. Indeed, the cost estimate only explicitly took into account exemptions due to student status. In many cases, CCC's YP may not be liable for Council Tax payments at all but where they are liable for partial or full Council Tax payments, the burden of that cost can have a substantial impact on their financial stability.

CCC must take steps to make YP with care experience aware of any changes to their Council Tax liabilities. YP with care experience may be unaware of their entitlements and this is especially true when new measures are introduced. The Corporate Parenting Principles state that LAs must "help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners" [19]. The Council should advertise changes made to Council Tax liability in its Local Offer. Any exemption should also be listed on District/City Council websites under the Council Tax relief sections. The nature of the relief, as well as all eligibility criteria should be stated clearly and in full detail. Where possible, CCC should attempt to directly inform eligible participants about any changes. CCC should pay special attention to alerting YP who are no longer in regular contact with their PA as well as CCC's out-of-county YP. This could be implemented through an Accommodation Team ([Section 2](#)).

3.4.2. Future Savings

Aside from the reputational risks facing CCC if it remains in the shrinking minority of LAs that do not offer targeted Council Tax relief, failing to offer relief could have negative financial implications for the future. Council Tax relief will help promote financial stability among liable YP. As such, CCC can expect a reduction in costs associated with emergency intervention

since these YP will have more stable tenancies and less need for emergency intervention. Increased financial security of YP with care experience reduces their reliance on CCC support in other areas.

Failing to provide Council Tax relief may result in more YP with care experience moving out of Cambridgeshire for financial reasons. As more LAs offer Council Tax relief to YP with care experience, it might not be financially rational for CCC's YP to remain in Cambridgeshire. An increase in out-of-county YP would create additional costs for CCC. LAs continue to have a duty of care to their YP until age 25, which includes access to a PA and other services. If more of CCC's YP move out-of-county for financial reasons, it will become more difficult for CCC to provide its statutory duties, the work of PAs will become more challenging, and it will become more expensive for CCC to provide its services at a distance. Making sure that Cambridgeshire is an attractive option, not least in terms of finances, is not only a cost-effective strategy, but it will go a long way to improving the lives of CCC's YP and fulfilling its Corporate Parenting duties.

It is important that CCC helps its YP pursue aspirational careers. The current system is designed in such a way that it costs YP to pursue their aspirations ([Section 7](#)). Council Tax payments are part of this burden on YP with care experience. Council Tax relief until age 25 gives individuals the breathing room they need to pursue their aspirations. Council Tax relief will also help create financial stability. Fostering this stability during the difficult transition from care into independence will help create a situation in which a greater number of YP can meet Council Tax obligations after age 25. Long-term, this will help offset the costs of introducing the policy.

3.5. Application Process

YP with care experience are not always aware of services available to them or may have difficulty accessing these services. CCC should make any Council Tax relief easily accessible for these YP. Different approaches may be required depending on whether CCC extends Council Tax relief to: (i) local YP with care experience; (ii) out-of-county YP with care experience; and (iii) external YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire.

3.5.1. YP in Cambridgeshire

For CCC's YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire, best practice would be an automatic application. In this case, the Leaving Care Team would pass the necessary information to the Council Tax Officers when the YP leaves care. Various LAs use this approach. This approach places less responsibility on individuals to seek out support and ensures that all those who are eligible for relief receive it. CCC should move towards introducing automatic Council Tax relief for its local YP.

An automatic process may take time to implement and there may be additional issues. For example, if CCC cannot contact a particular YP with care experience, due to missing accurate contact information, it would not be possible to apply automatic Council Tax relief for this individual. A mechanism for updating contact details may be necessary ([Section 2](#)). In the short-term, an application process may be required for CCC's local YP with care experience. An application process would also benefit the YP that CCC have lost contact with. CCC should consider accessible application formats. Doncaster County Council insist on an application process but offer several formats through which applications can be made,

including online and via telephone. If CCC uses an application, it should be made as accessible as possible and could be managed by an Accommodation Team ([Section 2](#)).

3.5.2. YP Living Out-Of-County and External YP in Cambridgeshire

It is likely that an application will be required for CCC's out-of-county YP with care experience to receive Council Tax relief. Aside from contact details, this application may need to include a confirmation of their status as a YP with care experience as well as an ongoing process to ensure that any grant is being used for its intended purpose by the intended recipient. An application will also be required for external YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire.

4. Recommendations

CCC should provide Council Tax relief to YP with care experience until age 25:

- a. Council Tax relief should extend to CCC's YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire and out-of-county.
- b. CCC should determine the possibility of extending this policy to external YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire, if they do not already receive this support from their associated LA.
- c. Council Tax relief should be offered as an exemption not a refund and it should not be subject to means testing.
- d. In the long-term, CCC should apply automatic relief for its local YP with care experience. If an application process is necessary in the short-term, it should be clear, accessible, and include multiple formats e.g. online and via telephone.
- e. The Council Tax relief rate should be 100% when a YP with care experience lives alone or with other care-experienced individuals. The rate should be applied proportionally if the YP with care experience is living with non-eligible individuals.

5. Implementing the Recommendations

Council Tax relief will have a number of positive outcomes. YP with care experience will be protected from Council Tax debt and the destabilising effects this can have on finances and tenancies. Given the unique difficulties associated with transitioning from care into independence, Council Tax relief will help provide a more secure environment in which to facilitate this transition. CCC will align with most other LAs in England. This means CCC's YP will no longer be deprived of the support that other YP with care experience receive simply due to their association with a different Corporate Parent. Furthermore, implementing this recommendation will bolster CCC's commitment to its Corporate Parenting responsibilities, helping to make Cambridgeshire more hospitable for YP with care experience. Finally, Council Tax relief will bring CCC a step closer to addressing the criticisms outlined in Ofsted's 2019 Children's Services Report.

6. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

6.1. Reputational Damage

CCC remains one of the few LAs in Great Britain that offers no specific Council Tax relief for YP leaving care. CCC lags behind other regional and statistical neighbours in failing to provide relief, despite sustained calls for Council Tax relief from various stakeholders. Council Tax relief for YP leaving care is becoming a standard way for LAs to support their YP. CCC already faces the unenviable prospect of being one of the last LAs to refuse to offer such support. CCC faces reputational damage in its role as a Corporate Parent if it does not enact Council Tax relief for YP leaving care.

6.2. Jeopardising the Transition into Independence

More importantly, failing to implement Council Tax relief could have drastic consequences for YP with care experience in Cambridgeshire. For those that are liable, Council Tax constitutes a major financial burden. The transition from care into independence represents a sharp reduction in financial support provided by CCC. YP with care experience have reported that they have found it difficult to manage following the withdrawal of this support. Those who are liable for Council Tax but have difficulties fulfilling this obligation face debt which can destabilise tenancies. Individuals who can afford to pay Council Tax are faced with a financial loss to what is often an already tight budget. CCC's out-of-county YP with care experience and external YP living in Cambridgeshire may be especially vulnerable, as distance may pose barriers to accessing support from their own LAs.

6.3. Inhospitable Environment for YP

As more LAs offer Council Tax relief to YP leaving care, Cambridgeshire may become viewed as an inhospitable place for its own YP. This could create a situation where these YP are faced with the prospect of leaving Cambridgeshire in favour of areas which offer financial support not offered by CCC. This would create added strain and costs for CCC, as it retains its Corporate Parenting responsibilities towards these YP. Relocation could have a negative impact on YP. These individuals would be away from established support networks and receiving assistance from their LA would become more difficult. Relocation of many YP with care experience would also impose strain upon CCC's Leaving Care team, who would face the added difficulty of attempting to aid more individuals outside Cambridgeshire.

7. Summary

Council Tax payments place unnecessary financial pressure on YP with care experience. In this respect, Council Tax relief has become standard practice for LAs to support their YP. CCC remains in the minority of LAs which have failed to introduce Council Tax relief. As such, CCC's YP are disadvantaged compared to other YP with care experience associated with other LAs. The reasons given for CCC's refusal to implement Council Tax relief do not stand up to scrutiny. CCC should give Council Tax relief to all of its YP.

8. Update

On 8 February 2022 CCC voted to introduce Council Tax relief for YP up until the age of 21 with the potential for further discretionary support up until the age of 25 if deemed necessary [42]. This policy will take effect from April 2022. This will be offered to CCC's

YP who live in Cambridgeshire and in other LAs. This is an extremely welcome development and we are delighted that CCC have opted to adopt the spirit of this recommendation. This development emerged long after the completion of the main research for this report. This update is intended to offer further recommendations on features of this new scheme.

The mechanisms through which Council Tax relief will be delivered and administered are still under development. However, current proposals indicate that YP will need to apply for the relief and that they will receive a refund [43]. As noted above, a refund is not the best way to support YP through Council Tax relief. CCC should aim to bypass situations where YP have to pay Council Tax in the first place; it could achieve this by paying the billing authority directly.

CCC's decision to implement Council Tax relief has the potential to impact all of its YP who have left care until the age of 25. It is important that CCC takes steps to make the potential beneficiaries of this decision aware of these changes. While a starting point is listing the policy on the Local Offer, it is important that this is buttressed with further targeted initiatives aimed at informing YP. Given that there is an application element, it could be worth considering an online / in person workshop related to completing the application.

The initial recommendation in this report recommended blanket Council Tax support for YP until the age of 25. CCC have opted for a scheme in which blanket support ends at age 21 (and discretionary support continues thereafter). The section above worked through various approaches to Council Tax support with an aim at presenting different models and approaches. It is still our belief that support until age 25 is the best approach; this recommendation aimed to support YP in financial difficulties but also create space for the transmission into independence at a more general level. While we recognise that this may not be possible at the moment, we would urge CCC to commit to considering the issue of eligibility criteria in the future, when the costs of operating the scheme as proposed are fully known, so as to consider the extension of relief for Council Tax payments for YP until age 25, if financially feasible. Many other LAs subsequently improved their Council Tax offers for YP; there is room for this policy to develop in ways that support more YP.

The new recommendations are listed below:

1. Avoid a refund model of relief (for example, by paying billing authorities directly).
2. Ensure that robust steps are taken to inform potential beneficiaries of the policy.
3. Commit to reviewing the eligibility criteria for the policy in the future.

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Section Six. Employment Opportunities

Overview

This section focuses on the need for additional support in the transition to employment. YP with care experience appear to be more vulnerable to becoming NEET than their peers. Many YP with care experience have aspirations of stability. Paid employment is crucial to achieving stability and independence as well as having mental health implications. CCC, as an employer and a Corporate Parent, has the capacity to provide opportunities for YP but currently none are available. This can be changed by creating specific opportunities for YP with care experience e.g. ring-fencing of apprenticeships or a guaranteed interview policy for YP meeting the minimum requirements for Council roles.

Key recommendations

- **Increase provision of internal work opportunities and work experience at CCC for YP with care experience by:**
 - a. **Guaranteeing interviews for those who meet the minimum criteria for a council vacancy;**
 - b. **Ring-fencing specific opportunities.**
-

1. Introduction

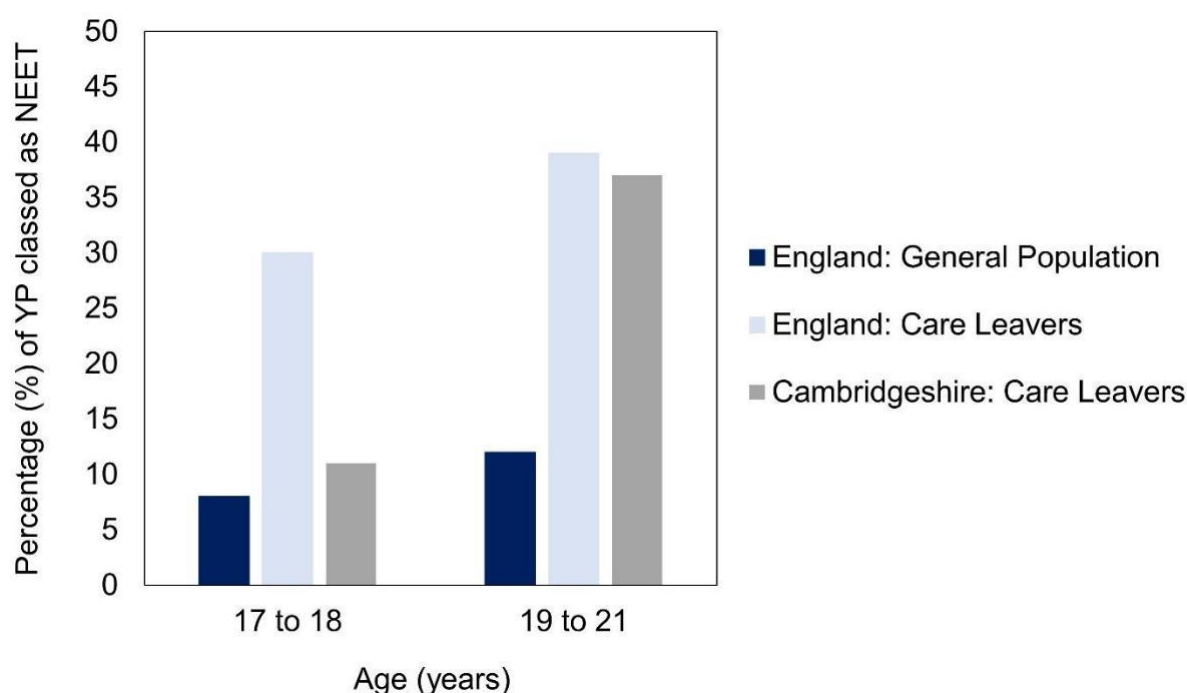
1.1. Barriers YP Face to Accessing Employment

Employment levels were most recently recorded in March 2019. In England, 39% of YP with care experience aged 19 to 21 were NEET [1]. Only 12% of 19 to 21 year olds in the general population were NEET (Figure 1) [1,23]. The national and local figures are similar. In Cambridgeshire, 37% of YP with care experience aged 19 to 21 were NEET in March 2019 [1]. YP with care experience are more vulnerable to becoming NEET.

YP with care experience face many barriers to employment. These barriers range from personal factors, such as lack of necessary skills and information, to structural barriers such as hiring behaviour [2]. Compared with their peers, YP with care experience also have lower attainment in school [3], which in turn is a predictor of unemployment [4]. Research has further highlighted a lack of skills/experience and low self-confidence in their ability to succeed as key issues ([Section 8](#)) [5].

The barriers to employment for YP leaving care are complex. Provision of specific and supported work opportunities could make a significant contribution to individuals gaining the skills, experience, and confidence needed to be competitive in the labour market. Moving into EET without adequate preparation can create a loss of confidence and discourage YP from further engagement with EET [2]. Any steps taken by CCC to equip its YP with relevant skills to help them enter the workforce or prepare them for future employment are encouraged.

Figure 1. Percentage (%) of YP classed as NEET in Cambridgeshire and England by age group.



1.2. Impacts of Barriers

While the results of the 2020 survey cannot be taken as representative of the views of all of CCC's YP, nine out of the 10 YP with care experience who responded to our 2020 survey expressed that they were either "somewhat concerned" or "very concerned" about the issue of employment. Employment should therefore be a priority area for CCC.



9 out of the 10 respondents to the 2020 survey are concerned about employment.

1.2.1. Financial Impact

There is a lack of existing data on the financial impact of YP with care experience being NEET, both to these individuals and to public finances, but costs are predicted to be high ([Section 7](#)). For a YP who is NEET, the predicted public finance cost is £56,000 over the working lifetime of the individual [6]. Nine out of the 10 YP with care experience who took our 2020 survey selected 'somewhat concerned' or 'very concerned' about the issue of finances. The recommendations we make here would provide the young people with workplace experience to help them become more competitive in the job market, and so increase their likelihood of obtaining a stable income.



For a YP who is NEET, the predicted public finance cost is £56,000 over the working lifetime of the individual.

1.2.2. Mental Health Impact

Seven of the 10 respondents to our 2020 survey felt either "somewhat concerned" or "very concerned" about the issue of mental health. Being NEET is associated with higher rates of mental health issues in YP [9], as are job insecurity, low pay, and temporary employment ([Section 8](#)) [7].

When asked about their aspirations and life goals in our 2020 survey, four out of the five respondents listed goals associated with stability i.e. building a career and housing. In response to a question asking about perceived barriers to meeting their aspirations, finances and self-confidence/mental health were specifically listed by respondents. Finding stable employment could be incredibly beneficial for YP, helping them to gain stability and work towards these aspirations. The ability to undertake work in a supported environment will further allow YP to build self-confidence in their ability to succeed.

1.3. Internal Employment Opportunities

Aiding the transition of YP leaving care into employment requires a dual-stranded approach. Firstly, they should receive support and guidance when applying for jobs, which is provided through PAs. Secondly, CCC should actively try to provide opportunities for YP with care experience in which they can gain experience of a workplace and build the skills necessary to engage with and sustain employment. The recommendations in this section focus on the provision of opportunities within the Council.

A key factor to consider when looking at employment-related support given to YP with care experience is the Corporate Parenting duties of CCC. The Corporate Parenting Principles require Councils to “promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people” and to “prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living” [8]. Provision of opportunities involving employment or work experience within CCC would represent a significant source of support for YP that aligns with these principles and has been likened to providing opportunities within the “family business”.

1.4. Ring-Fenced Apprenticeships

The Corporate Parenting model represents an underutilised means of providing opportunities for YP leaving care. It proposes ring-fencing of placements within the Council and interview guarantees for Council roles. A guarantee of an apprenticeship interview is one of the 10 Asks for Care Leavers recommended by the Children’s Commissioner for England in October 2020 [11].

Councils are able to ring-fence apprenticeships for YP with care experience when applying the Corporate Parenting Principles [12]. These placements can take place in any Council department. Providing these opportunities is a way for the wider Council to contribute to its YP with care experience. It is also noted that this is distinct from a differentiated service being provided for care leavers. Making YP aware of any apprenticeships offered by the LA, in particular any opportunities ring-fenced for them, is reiterated in the 2018 Department for Education’s Local Offer Guidance for Local Authorities [13]. Additionally, when discussing the ring-fencing of apprenticeships for YP with care experience, the former Minister for Children and Families said that “many Local Authorities do this already, but all of them should” [14].

Ring-fencing of opportunities in the Council is a key method of support encouraged by the Care Leaver Covenant [15]. The Covenant promotes internships for YP with care experience that are paid at least the minimum living wage for the area, and last for at least 12 weeks. The Care Leaver Covenant also recommends additional support during these placements such as a mentor, certification of the skills acquired during the placement, and the opportunity to continue into a job, for example through a guaranteed interview.



Care Leaver Covenant Outcome #3:

“Care Leavers have improved access to employment, education and training.”

Finally, ring-fenced opportunities are specifically recommended as a simple way through which Councils can improve the rate of engagement with EET for their YP in the National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers’ First Year Report (2018) [16].

1.5. Similar Schemes for Other Groups

Similar schemes exist to boost employment prospects for other groups in the UK. Many employers, including Citizens Advice and the Civil Service, commit to guaranteeing interviews for applicants with disabilities who meet the role’s minimum criteria as part of the

Disability Confident Scheme [17]. Additionally, the Great Place to Work for Veterans scheme, operated by the Civil Service, guarantees interviews to military veterans who meet the required criteria [18].

2. Current Interventions

2.1. Cambridge's Geographical Neighbours

Within East England, Worcestershire County Council offers internal work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for YP with care experience. In Southend-on-Sea, work experience placements are provided at the Borough Council, which acts as the Corporate Parent for YP with care experience in the area. Additionally, their policy is to offer an interview to all YP with care experience within the Borough who apply for a Council apprenticeship and meet the entry requirement. Luton Council also guarantees interviews for its YP with care experience for L1A to L3 Council vacancies.

2.2. Cambridge's Statistical Neighbours

Oxfordshire County Council provides YP with care experience who meet the minimum requirements for Council vacancies with a guaranteed interview. The Council's Human Resources Department provides one-to-one guidance about Council job applications to its YP and can organise short work experience placements. Wiltshire County Council grants favourable access to its YP for Council apprenticeships. West Berkshire provides internal opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment, including via Councillors. South Gloucestershire County Council also has a guaranteed interview policy for its YP applying to council apprenticeships.

2.3. Other LAs

2.3.1. Guaranteed Interviews

Several other Councils guarantee interviews for YP with care experience, including Wolverhampton City Council, Islington Borough Council and Somerset County Council. Both Bristol City Council and Cumbria County Council have a guaranteed interview scheme, and both provide YP with a financial supplement when undertaking a Council apprenticeship. In particular, Wolverhampton City Council's guaranteed interview scheme is highlighted as an example of good practice in the 2020 report from the Department for Education's National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers' [19]. Monmouthshire County Council approved implementation of a guaranteed interview scheme earlier this year [20], in addition to developing work experience and apprenticeships schemes for its YP and requiring work experience opportunities from its contracted providers.

2.3.2. Ring-Fenced Apprenticeships

Several LAs have apprenticeship opportunities that are ring-fenced for YP with care experience. These include Leicestershire County Council, Wirral Council, Gateshead Council, and Warwickshire County Council.

Durham County Council has committed to implementing both a guaranteed interview scheme and ring-fencing of a council apprenticeship by March 2022 for its YP as part of its Apprenticeship Strategy 2019 to 2022. They have achieved this by guaranteeing interviews

for YP with care experience who meet the essential criteria and by ring-fencing an apprenticeship in the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Team [21].

2.3.3. Young Director Positions

Bexley Borough Council has introduced the position of Young Director within the Virtual School and Participation Team. The Young Director position is an apprenticeship undertaken by a YP with care experience to ensure that the voice of YP is central to the work of the Council. Similarly, Croydon Borough Council have established Young Director and Deputy Young Director positions with the same responsibilities.

Implementing strategies such as these would enable CCC to take a further step to support YP with care experience in gaining experience and acquiring skills. It would represent a strong reaffirmation of Corporate Parenting Principles and provide CCC with valuable insight when carrying out work related to the care of its YP. Through their work, YP with care experience may also engage more with the local community.

2.4. Cambridgeshire

CCC currently publicises several work opportunities to YP with care experience. These include guaranteed job interviews for internships at Reed Specialist Recruitment and Amazon, fast-tracking to the recruitment workshop at Evolve, and two weeks pre-employment training at Compass Group UK.

As part of the Cambridgeshire Care Leaver Community Champions scheme, Cambridge Re-Use guarantees interviews for YP with care experience. Volunteering opportunities are available for YP with care experience at Cambridge Re-Use, Barnardo's and Salvation Army [9]. While these opportunities are valuable for YP, the lack of opportunities within CCC represents an area for improvement. Provision of these opportunities is a simple method through which valuable support can be given.

As part of the Government's Kickstart scheme, CCC is also in the early stages of implementing a local programme of placements for YP [10]. Consideration is being taken to determine whether the scheme can have priority entry for CCC's YP or be expanded for these individuals. This scheme could provide an ideal framework for implementing the recommendations in this section.

3. Recommendations

The existing volunteering opportunities and work experience promoted to CCC's YP provide useful skills to YP with care experience prior to employment, but CCC should implement further policies with a focus on supporting YP with care experience to obtain paid employment.

One of the following steps should be taken to provide internal opportunities at CCC for YP with care experience:

- a. YP with care experience should be guaranteed interviews for job vacancies at CCC for which they meet the minimum requirements for the role;

- b. Specific opportunities for YP with care experience should be created and ring-fenced.

The Learning and Work Institute recommends an informal and semi-structured approach when interviewing YP with care experience. This guidance is also given by NHS Employers to recruiters. The Learning and Work Institute suggests that additional support is given to YP prior to an interview, including details of what the interview will include and dress expectations for the applicant [22]. Additional support of this kind should be considered when implementing one of the recommendations. Similar strategies for interviewing YP with care experience for the Kickstart scheme are being considered, including reducing the formality of the interview process and reduced application forms. Both of these methods provide useful ways to create a more accessible and semi-structured way of approaching the interviews. Additionally, the Kickstart scheme is considering allowing YP with care experience who are successful in obtaining places to sit on Council recruitment panels to gain insight into the hiring process. This is a simple way of familiarising YP with how recruitment works and help prepare them for similar experiences in the future.

One approach to ring-fencing opportunities could include the establishment of a scheme focused on a broader group of YP, with places reserved for YP with care experience [23]. In this case, it is important to ensure that the work required for the role is pitched appropriately for YP with care experience.

We suggest the following ways in which ring-fencing of opportunities for YP with care experience could be implemented:

- a. Commitment by CCC to provide a minimum number of apprenticeships per year to its YP, which may involve reserving spaces within a wider scheme;
- b. Commitment by CCC to provide all YP with care experience with a work experience placement of a standard length of time in a department of their choice.

4. Implementation of Recommendations

If specific opportunities need to be created, cost may pose a problem for the implementation of ring-fenced apprenticeships. While this is a valid concern, a guaranteed interview policy can be implemented within CCC's existing resources. Guaranteed interviews provide a simple and low-cost way to improve the employment prospects of CCC's YP, and follows an established path taken by other LAs.

Directing YP towards work experience in a particular Council team may alter their future employment options. Consideration for this issue should be taken but it can be alleviated by establishing the recommendations across different Council teams and allowing individuals to choose which department they are placed in. CCC should also consider the benefits of first-hand insight if opportunities are created within Council teams relevant to the provision of services for YP with care experience.

Finally, geographical barriers need to be taken into consideration. YP with care experience may have financial and practical difficulty with transportation to and from the place of work. Although work can be undertaken virtually, provision of support may be difficult, particularly at the beginning of their placement. This may cause a sense of isolation for the individual. A second option is that CCC pays for transportation costs, as is done by a number of other

councils, including statistical neighbours of Cambridgeshire (West Berkshire and Worcestershire). Alternatively, allowing YP to work in an office closer to their residence would allow them to experience the workplace and reduce transport pressure, but would require support from individuals who work in that office. Finally, a framework that improves access to opportunities through consideration of multiple factors could be implemented, ensuring that opportunities are allocated according to the aspirations and strengths of YP and their location.

5. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

Perpetuation of existing barriers for YP attempting to enter employment is the key cost of ignoring these recommendations. Many YP will continue to lack workplace experience and may move into non-aspirational jobs. Additionally, the difficulty of entering paid employment will mean they are unable to lessen their financial stress. These costs are avoidable since simple and low-cost options such as an interview guarantee policy are available.

6. Summary

Employment is a particular challenge for YP with care experience yet it represents a central part of the transition into independence. As an employer and a Corporate Parent, CCC has a unique chance to provide opportunities to their YP, much like a family business.

Implementing one of the recommendations in this section would improve the chance of YP entering paid employment or gaining the necessary skills to do so. These recommendations also represent a low-cost strategy for CCC with a clear precedent from other LAs.

Facilitating movement into employment would demonstrate CCC's commitment to its YP, along with their aspirations, financial stability and mental health.

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Section Seven. Financial Education

Overview

Financial education is a pivotal skill for a successful transition to adulthood. This is particularly true for YP leaving care who often have a more rapid transition into independence than their peers. Despite this, YP leaving care do not always have sufficient access to financial education. CCC must provide more opportunities and information for YP leaving care to learn how to properly manage money and avoid debt.

Key recommendations

- **Create a designated money and budgeting page in CCC's Local Offer which guides YP in/leaving care to financial services and courses as well as charity/private support.**
 - **PAs and care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance on how to provide financial education.**
 - **Pathway Plans for YP in care should have a specific section dedicated to the development of knowledge and skills required for independent living.**
-

1. Introduction

Early-life financial education is key to develop skills for adulthood and to have a successful transition from care to independence. In a UK-wide survey of over 1000 YP, only 55% of respondents had any financial education [1]. Among individuals who said they had financial education, the majority (87%) had not received training or had learned the relevant skills from a carer or parent [1]. An Action for Children survey identified that 59% of YP with care experience found banks intimidating and/or unhelpful, a factor which prevented them from going to the bank to open an account [2]. In the same survey, 87% refused to go to the Jobcentre for help or financial information as it was considered a “no-go area” [2]. Missing out on learning how to manage money at home or in school, not having the luxury to learn from financial mistakes, and the lack of support with finances means that financial education is necessary for YP leaving care.

1.1. Missing Out on Financial Socialisation

Financial education and subsequent growth of financial literacy is lacking for YP leaving care. This shortfall is due to the lack of financial socialisation provided in school and at home, as a result of disruptions or exclusions from learning [3,4,5]. For example, children in care are three times more likely to be excluded for a school term and twice as likely to be excluded permanently from school compared to their peers [4]. Kinship carers (i.e. carers who are friends or family of the child’s parents) have also been associated with financial difficulties and socioeconomic deprivation. Kinship carers may hide these problems from the YP in their care and may also struggle to deliver appropriate financial education to the YP [6]. YP leaving care therefore often have limited opportunities to be educated about managing and saving money [6]. The lack of such skills can have a detrimental impact on the transition out of care.



YP leaving care often have limited opportunities to be educated about managing and saving money.

1.2. Financial Mistakes Can Be Detrimental

YP in/leaving care often do not have the luxury to learn from their financial mistakes. A single financial error may cause significant issues such as homelessness ([Section 4](#)), being in debt to payday lenders, food insecurity, and/or bailiffs. A study by The Centre for Social Justice reported that more than 50% of YP with care experience in the UK struggle to manage their money [7]. Furthermore, 33% of YP with care experience in the UK are in debt [7], with 28% of those owing more than £5000 [3]. Financial education may help reduce these percentages.



More than 50% of YP with care experience in the UK struggle to manage their money.

YP leaving care do not always have reliable and consistent financial support to help them get back on their feet. Nor do these YP have consistent and dependable mentors focused on their finances. Moreover, many YP in care experience events in their childhood that negatively affect their mental and physical wellbeing, leading to devastating consequences for their education [8]. It therefore comes as no surprise that YP leaving care are more prone to financial difficulties and falling into debt than their peers [9].

1.3. Lack of Quality Financial Education by LAs

YP leaving care are less likely to have received adequate financial education than their peers. In contrast, YP leaving care are more likely to require financial advice, partly because they often become independent at a younger age than their peers. Leaving care signals the transition from minimal financial responsibility to complete financial freedom with limited support and financial aid.

Government guidance for how to prepare YP for leaving care states that LAs should place emphasis at an early stage on financial education and literacy [10]. The guidance states that pathway plans must address “the young person’s financial capabilities and money management capacity, along with strategies to develop the young person’s skills in this area” [10]. This Government guidance clearly highlights the importance of financial education.

Despite Government guidance, financial education is not always available or accessible to YP leaving care. In a study of 111 LAs across the UK, almost half (46.8%) did not provide any financial education to their YP beyond what is provided by PAs [9]. PAs therefore need the skills, knowledge and capacity to provide appropriate financial education to YP leaving care. In a study by the Children’s Society, YP with care experience said they would have appreciated more financial support and education before leaving care [9]. These YP stated that they had to work out their financial responsibilities independently since their LAs did not prepare them. In many cases, YP leaving care understood the concept of bills but did not know practically how to pay them [9]. LAs should ensure their YP have sufficient financial literacy before they leave care.

1.4. Lack of Support with Finances

Financial support for YP leaving care often comes in the form of crisis management. This is where the LA steps in to help YP when they may be already in financial hardship. Crisis management does not usually prevent future financial difficulties; it is a temporary solution. Crisis management may come in the form of a discretionary fund, food packages, paying for essential good, or emergency housing. Although such support is required in times of need, crisis management does not address the underlying issues which led to financial hardship in the first place. LAs should approach the financial needs of YP leaving care holistically and attempt to implement preventative measures. In this way, LAs could better understand why financial hardship is more common among YP leaving care than their peers and focus on dealing with the underlying issues.

YP leaving care are entitled to a variety of grants and benefits. It is a statutory requirement for LAs to provide a weekly allowance to their YP aged 16 to 17 and living in semi-independent or supported housing. This allowance must be equal to at least the benefit

rates. Weekly allowance is given regardless of additional incomes YP may receive (e.g. wages, education grant, training allowance) but these benefits are discontinued when YP turn age 18. Once YP leaving care turn 18 years old they are eligible for different benefits but they are expected to have financial responsibility for themselves. Such benefits can include Housing Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Council Tax support (Section 5), Universal Credit and Jobseeker's Allowance. YP leaving care are entitled to grants such as the Setting Up Home Allowance (also known as the Leaving Care Grant). This grant is a maximum sum of £2000 given by CCC to YP leaving care. Unfortunately, grants often arrive as a lump sum without accompanying guidance, a difficult management task for YP transitioning into independence. In addition, being dependent on Universal Credit may be problematic as it is paid monthly rather than weekly and may lead to budgeting issues. LAs therefore have to work closely with YP leaving care to ensure they will be able to manage their budget to make the money to last the month. Management of money in adulthood requires a combination of skills, experience, and knowledge. These attributes must be developed before YP leave care.

1.5. Financial Difficulties in Cambridgeshire

YP leaving care in Cambridgeshire face an array of financial and emotional obstacles during their transition to adulthood. Nine out of 10 respondents in our 2020 survey were concerned about their finances. These obstacles may make YP financially vulnerable (Section 1.2, 5, 8). While responses to the 2020 survey should not be taken as representative of the experiences of all of CCC's YP, responses highlighted various financial pressures faced by YP including job loss, housing, renting, and running a car. Four out of the eight respondents to this question struggled in general with money, with one YP struggling with everyday life and paying off debt. Another respondent was struggling with bills and Universal Credit. One YP admitted that the biggest financial pressure they face is that they cannot budget or value money.



**9 out of 10 respondents to the 2020 survey
are concerned about their finances.**

Over half of the 11 participants in CCC's 2019 survey had fallen behind with payments in either Council Tax, water/utility bills, or accommodation costs. Although there were a limited number of participants in both the 2019 and 2020 surveys, they were nonetheless instrumental for gauging some of the financial struggles facing YP leaving care in Cambridgeshire.

CCC's 2019 Ofsted report stated that there was a lack of support/preparation for children and YP in care to become independent. Ofsted stated:

"Work to prepare children in care and care leavers for independence is not strong. Most pathway plans do not help with this. Many are lengthy but lack a sufficient depth of consideration of young people's needs or aspiration for their futures."

YP leaving care in CCC require more help to prepare them for their transition into independence. The support given by CCC should be reflected in both the Local Offer and

the Pathway Plan. Good financial education to help minimise debt and improve budgeting is required.

1.6. Local Offer

Budgeting support in the CCC's Local Offer is limited [11]. Money management is only mentioned in the Pathway Plan section of the Local Offer. Advice about loans and financial support are briefly discussed in the Accommodation and Money Matters section respectively.

The Pathway Plan section states that "you can get various financial support, based on your situation and eligibility. You will also discuss budgeting; savings and any money worries you may have" [11]. Your Money is a subsection of the Pathway Plan which is dedicated to assessing how confident an individual is in budgeting, paying bills, dealing with banks, debt and saving as well as assessing the money spent and money received by the YP i.e. wages, housing benefits, other benefits, and student loans or maintenance. The end of the section states that issues with managing a budget should be taken up with your PA. However, in our 2020 survey, only three out of the 10 respondents agreed that their PAs provided them with practical advice to prepare them for independent adulthood. There is no designated course, no tips for improving money management skills and no suggested steps to budget or save money before age 18 to aid the transition into independence.

The Accommodation section of the Local Offer advises against entering a hire purchase agreement or getting a bank loan since repayments can be very high [11]. This advice is given in the context of the Setting Up Home Allowance (or Leaving Care Grant), an amount of up to £2000, which can be provided to YP leaving care for essential items when moving into semi-independent or independent housing. CCC's PAs are responsible for guiding YP leaving care on how to use the grant effectively. There is no section or subsection in the Local Offer designated to money management and budgeting. There are also no relevant courses offered or links to freely available resources that could strengthen an individual's financial education.

The Money Matters section of CCC's Local Offer provides brief details on the financial support available to YP with care experience aged 16 to 17 and 18 to 25 [11]. The process of claiming benefits, a link to the relevant section of the Government website, and a benefits calculator are given. There are brief sections on discounts, health costs, identification documents, birthday payments and Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority Payments (CICA).

CCC does not give details of the full extent to which financial support is available to its YP. For example, CCC has an initiative in which YP leaving care, whose Universal Credit payments are delayed, are given the equivalent amount of funding. This initiative is not mentioned in the Local Offer, despite CCC's statutory duty to present any services or support offered to its YP in the Local Offer.

1.7. Government Inquiry

An inquiry undertaken by the All-Party Parliamentary Group found that financial education is one of the key obstacles facing YP in the transition from care to independence. Following the inquiry, a report was published in 2019 about the importance of financial education [3,8]. This report was based on evidence provided by 25 organisations, two sessions with key

stakeholders, and oral evidence provided by a group of YP with care experience. It details practical and concrete policy recommendations to improve financial education for YP in/leaving care. The report's recommendations, discussed below, emphasise the roles that government, schools and organisations should play to improve access to financial education for YP in/leaving care.

1.7.1. Financial Education should be High Priority in the Development of Local Offers and Pathway Plans

LAs have a duty to provide a Local Offer for YP with care experience that clearly informs YP where they can access information and support about money management. The report stated that life skills, including financial education, should be a key part of the provisions given by Leaving Care teams to YP leaving care. There should be specific goals and action points outlined by PAs and on the pathway plan. Both children in care and YP leaving care should be given multiple opportunities to access financial information, education and support. This is important to allow YP to learn at their own pace and in a way which suits them.

1.7.2. Requirement of Support Workers to Receive Training in Financial Education

The report revealed that PAs and social workers often do not have the skills or confidence to teach money management skills to YP in/leaving care. This is despite current guidance which requires PAs to have knowledge of sources of financial support for YP leaving care. The requirement for PAs to be trained in providing money management skills was also highlighted in a Government report (2016) called *Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence* [12]. This report stated:

“It is crucial that personal advisers are able to give care leavers good quality information about managing their money, from budgeting to paying bills on time. Through our review of the personal advisor role, we will consider how we can best ensure that personal advisors are equipped to carry out this role”.

Central Government should require all social workers, PAs and children's home staff that work with YP in/leaving care to be trained in delivering financial education. The report recommended that in the interim LAs should encourage and support such staff to voluntarily obtain these skills.

2. Current Interventions

2.1. Cambridgeshire's Geographical Neighbours

Cambridgeshire's geographical neighbours include five County Councils: Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Essex County Council, Central Bedfordshire County Council, and Hertfordshire County Council. All of Cambridgeshire's geographical neighbours have a designated section in their Local Offer for budgeting and money management advice (Table 1).

Table 1. Local Offer budgeting support offered by CCC geographical neighbours for YP with care experience.

County Council	Local Offer Budgeting Support
Central Bedfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile App co-produced with YP with care experience with a Managing Money section. • Managing Money: explains the importance of money management, how to start budgeting, how to open a bank account, and detailed explanation about which bills you have to pay and what they are (i.e. rent, utility bills, Council Tax, telecom bills, TV license, insurance, service charges ground rent, and parking).
Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Youth Adviser within the Leaving Care Team can help with a course that teaches independent living skills. • Designated money advice website page covering: Leaving Care Grant, claiming benefits, tips on managing debt, links to useful resources (e.g. Step Change, CAP UK, National Debt Line, Debt Advice Foundation, Money Advice Trust, Money Advice Service, and Citizen's Advice). • Updated Finance Handbook (PDF format) which covers in detail all the financial benefits a YP leaving care can access from age 16 to 24.
Hertfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated money management website page covering: banking (e.g. how to open a bank account, pros/cons of credit cards, and links to designated pages on Citizen's Advice), budgeting, tips for saving money, bills, and debt (e.g. link to Money Advice Service).
Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated money and budgeting advice page with a link to the Money Support Service available at Norfolk County Council and a link to a budget planner tool. • Money Support Service: budgeting training, help with money advice, support on how to reduce bills, and links to useful resources (e.g. Money Advice Service, Citizen's Advice, National Debt Line, National Debt Advice, Step Change, and Debt Tester).
Suffolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated website including My Money which contains resources on how to look after your money and savings (e.g. Money for Life, Money Saving Expert, Young Enterprise).

- Website pages: Junior ISAs and how to use them, how to manage money and debt (e.g. Money Advice Service and National Debt Line), and how to deal with gambling and gaming.
- Designated activities within the Pathway Plan to develop independence such as managing and budgeting of personal finances, paying bills, meal planning, and shopping.
- Updated leaving care financial policy (PDF format) which outlines in detail the financial responsibilities of the County Council to YP leaving care.

2.2. Cambridgeshire's Statistical Neighbours

CCC's closest statistical neighbour is Oxfordshire County Council [13]. In collaboration with Metro Bank and the Care Leaver Covenant, Oxfordshire County Council has set up a pilot study to understand the needs of YP leaving care when it comes to money management and setting up a bank account. Metro Bank has committed to helping YP leaving care open cash accounts, current accounts, and saving accounts. Through the pilot, the only requirement to set up one of these accounts at Metro Bank is a letter from the LA and a telephone call for verification rather than ID, which YP leaving care do not always have. Metro Bank is also piloting money management sessions to help YP leaving care understand how to use a bank and how to budget. Metro Banks, such as those in Oxfordshire, have an assigned representative specifically for YP leaving care to help them with any issues.

2.3. Other County Councils

There are a number of other County Councils that have employed various methods to support the financial education of YP leaving care (Table 2). Kent County Council's peer to peer model has also been suggested by University of Edinburgh researchers following consultation with YP with care experience, money advice services, and organisations working with YP in/leaving care. A potential barrier to the peer to peer scheme is recruiting enough YP with care experience to support the initiative [14].

Table 2. Local Offer budgeting support offered by other County Councils for YP with care experience.

County Council	Local Offer Budgeting Support
Cumbria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Welfare website page covering: credit unions available in county, welfare, accessing state benefits, debt and borrowing money, types of credit cards, payday lenders, loan sharks (and how to report them), managing your debt, saving money, pension, fraud and scams, types of bills, paying bills (e.g. link to Mix Website), telephone line services charges and mobile phone contracts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples and detailed explanation of what each part of a bank statement and payslip means. • Access to a freely available budgeting course offered by the Open University. Upon completion, the YP receives badges towards the Council Achievement Scheme. • PDF document outlining all the financial obligations the Council has towards YP leaving care.
Derbyshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living Skills and Tenancy Preparation Workbook: YP and PA work through together and includes a detailed sections on money management to help YP understand their spending habits, as well as key considerations when budgeting and saving money.
Kent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited course: learn how to budget and live independently. • Plans to set up a peer to peer financial mentoring model where YP with care experience can support current YP leaving care and share advice about potential issues, personal budgeting and finances.

2.4. Financial Education Courses

There are a number of financial education courses available to YP leaving care. In the UK, MyBnk and Young Enterprise are two of the key organisations empowering YP to harness their personal and financial skills.

MyBnk delivers a number of award winning workshops to YP aged between 11 and 25. Their workshops focus on topics such as tax, debt, saving, and budgeting. These programmes have been developed by their in-house team in collaboration with industry experts and YP. The survival money management course, Money Works, is particularly relevant to YP leaving care. Money Works is a digital and financial skills workshop tailored to YP transitioning into independent living. The course aims to help YP confront any worries they may have about money. It focuses on four key topics: (i) household costs and budgeting; (ii) sources of income (including information about National Insurance, benefits and Universal Credit); (iii) banking and understanding contracts and tenancy agreements; and (iv) scams, borrowing, and debt. Money Works has won the Children and Young People Now Leaving Care Award.

The Money Works course was examined in an independent year-long impact study [15]. More than 1000 YP leaving care and/or NEET (aged 16 to 25) were involved in the study. The report demonstrated that the average debt of YP who took part in the course dropped by 60%. In comparison, the average debt of YP in the control group grew by 50% (i.e. YP who did not take part in the course). The number of YP who were saving money increased by 23%. Over 50% of YP who took part in the course felt confident to seek specialist advice from organisations such as Citizen Advice or Step Change, compared with only 32% of the control group. Financial confidence increased by 24% with more YP going online to pay their taxes and make transactions. Importantly, overall life satisfaction increased from 37% to

65% (an increase of 28%) among YP who took part in the course. This is higher than the national average of 61%.

Although Money Works provides invaluable skills in financial management, the lack of participation by YP is a key issue. The impact study states that “one of the main challenges with coordinating the Money Works sessions tends to be the number of times than not enough young people turn up to the course” [15]. Lack of interest in participation in such courses is not uncommon among YP with care experience.

YP leaving care have a high sense of self-reliance. Evidence shows that some YP leaving care reject organised help as a way of separating themselves from the care system [16,17]. Other studies have demonstrated that YP leaving care felt ashamed or perceived themselves as lacking self-worth if they asked for help [16,18,19]. Researchers have therefore recommended that PAs should approach their YP with offers of help to tackle this problem. When it comes to financial education, PAs should also approach YP leaving care to offer assistance with any financial issues.

Young Money (part of Young Enterprise) is a national UK charity that believes the most sustainable avenue to financial education is to provide support to individuals involved in educating YP. Young Money have trained over 1,247 educators on how to deliver effective financial education classes. Although the majority of training provided by Young Money is delivered to teachers, training is also given to practitioners working with vulnerable YP. The aim of the training is to provide practitioners with the tools, skills, and confidence to convey what they have learned to the YP they support. Training for practitioners comes in the form of regional training events or through support given to organisations that work with vulnerable YP.

3. Recommendations

CCC requires a more systematic and uniform approach to financial education for its YP leaving care. Financial education should focus on common issues faced by this group across their lives, including: (i) which bills should be prioritised; (ii) and importance of good budgeting and regular savings. Courses such as Money Works demonstrate that by equipping YP leaving care with financial knowledge, these YP can successfully apply these skills in everyday life.

While the CCC provides some support for financial education in its Local Offer and Pathway Plan, minimal support with money management and budgeting is given to YP in/leaving care. CCC should implement policy recommendations focused on helping its YP gain adequate skills and confidence managing money to support their transition into independence.

- 1) Create a designated money and budgeting page in the CCC Local Offer which guides YP in/leaving care to available financial services and courses as well as charity or private based support.
 - a. CCC’s website should be updated and include available services and courses designated for money management and debt information.
 - b. A PDF or mobile application should be created which provides information on all the financial benefits available to YP leaving care.
- 2) PAs, social workers, and children’s care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance to provide financial education.

- a. Training should be focused on how to effectively provide advice on money management, budgeting, saving and spending to YP leaving care.
 - b. Clear guidance should be given to these workers to follow when providing financial education to YP leaving care.
- 3) Pathway Plans for YP in care should have a specific section dedicated to YP developing the knowledge and skills required for independent living.

4. Implementation of Recommendations

Although the recommendations are focused primarily on the financial education of YP leaving care, financial education and good budgeting habits should start from an early age. No single solution will resolve the lack of effective financial education for YP leaving care. As stated by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Financial Education for Young People [8]: “Intervention needs to take place at multiple levels to ensure that children in care are provided with opportunities to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage their money. Concrete commitments from central Government, LAs, foster carers, charities and business are required.”

Financial skills can help mitigate or prevent financial hardship but no amount of budgeting can help individuals on low incomes with bills to pay. It is key, therefore, that YP leaving care have financial security in addition to financial education. As a Corporate Parent, CCC must take all the necessary steps to prevent YP leaving care from financial hardship.

5. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

By implementing these recommendations, CCC commits to improving financial education among YP leaving care. These individuals would benefit by having a clearer idea of what to expect when they transition into independence and understand how to budget and manage their money. Financial independence would help to build self-confidence and self-worth.

A failure to provide financial education to YP leaving care may cause individuals to make uninformed decisions about money and budgeting. Poor financial management can have detrimental effects to YP leaving care throughout their adult life. If YP leaving care do not know how to manage money they are more likely to fall into debt or financial hardship, possibly resulting in homelessness. MyBnk demonstrated that for every £1 spent on their Money Works course, £5.57 in social value was produced, with the financial/social return increasing over time [15]. Therefore, the benefit of providing financial education to YP leaving care far outweighs the cost.

Unexpected financial hardship among YP with care experience would be costly for CCC. CCC would have to provide financial aid to temporarily remove individuals from difficult situations. CCC's YP would also remain more dependent on LA handouts and support. A lack of financial education leaves individuals vulnerable to repeated cycles of financial hardship and instability.

6. Summary

YP leaving care face many barriers during the transition from care into independence. It is no surprise that many YP leaving care feel unprepared for financial independence. Financial education is a key skill to have for all YP. It is particularly important for YP leaving care as they often do not have familial support networks to fall back on. An inability to manage money can result in financial hardship for the YP and higher support costs for CCC. CCC should thus invest in preventative measures, such as providing financial education for its YP before they leave care.

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Section Eight. Mental Health

Overview

The mental health of YP leaving care is of particular concern. Poor mental health can affect all aspects of a YP's life. The council needs to do more to improve the mental health of YP leaving care. Insufficient recognition of mental health needs, lack of mental health support and insufficient support networks are barriers to achieving good mental health for many YP leaving care.

As a Corporate Parent, LAs are responsible for the mental and physical health needs of the YP in their care. Improved mental health would be beneficial in the eyes of Ofsted who measure how well the council supports its YP in their transition, and monitor figures for EET.

Key recommendations

- **Embed a mental health professional within the Leaving Care Team.**
 - **Develop mental health training following Mental Health First Aid England guidelines.**
 - **Create a clear guide to accessing mental health services.**
-

1. Introduction

1.1. Mental Health in Cambridgeshire

Mental health is a national and local concern. In 2020, CCC has listed mental health as one of its potential priority areas [1]. The GP recorded prevalence of mental health conditions as a whole are generally lower in Cambridgeshire than the national average [1]. However, rates of emergency admission to hospital for self-harm are significantly higher across Cambridgeshire (243.5 per 100,000) compared to the national average (193.4 per 100,000), and rates have been at a relatively high level over time [1]. In addition, Cambridgeshire has higher recorded prevalence of serious mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other psychoses) than the national average and Fenland has higher recorded prevalence of depression (Table 1) [1]. Moreover, rates of claimants for Employment Support Allowance for mental and behavioural disorders are increasing across Cambridgeshire and England. Rates of claimants are significantly worse than national levels (27.3 per 1,000) in Peterborough (29.0 per 1,000) and Fenland (30.3 per 1,000) [1]. Work across Cambridgeshire and England is required to reduce the burden of mental health conditions.

Table 1. Prevalence of mental health conditions in 2018/2019.

District area	Number of people (%)	
	Serious mental illness	Depression
Cambridge	2,079 (1.1)	12,186 (7.3)
East Cambridgeshire	616 (0.7)	7,097 (10.3)
Fenland	784 (0.7)	11,417 (12.1)
Huntingdonshire	1,333 (0.7)	15,029 (10.4)
South Cambridgeshire	1,094 (0.8)	10,167 (9.4)
Peterborough	1,935 (0.9)	15,652 (9.1)
Cambridgeshire	5,906 (0.8)	55,896 (9.6)
England	570,675 (1.0)	5,077,090 (10.7)

1.2. Mental Health Problems Begin in Early Life

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, good mental and physical health must be achieved before psychological and self-fulfilment needs can be met. When applying this principle to YP with care experience, prevention and treatment of mental health disorders should be a priority. This is particularly pertinent given that YP in/leaving care are over-represented in mental health statistics [2].

The majority of mental health problems are established before YP leave care. Approximately 50% of mental health conditions are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24 [3]. Around 19,340 (13%) YP aged five to 19 in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have at least one mental health disorder and 17% of YP aged 17 to 19 have experienced a mental disorder [1].

YP leaving care in Cambridgeshire recognise the importance of mental health. Seven out of the 10 respondents to our 2020 survey were concerned about their mental health. Specific information about the mental health of YP with care experience is difficult to find.



**7 of the 10 respondents to the 2020 survey
were concerned about their mental health.**

YP who enter care are a vulnerable group that may be at particularly high risk of developing mental health disorders. Prior to entering the care system, many YP in care are exposed to higher levels of childhood adversity than the rest of the population, with many experiencing the “toxic trio” of parental domestic violence, substance misuse, and mental illness [4]. In addition, the number of UASC in care, a group with complex mental health needs, has been increasing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ([Section 2 Part 3.6](#)) [5]. Childhood adversity is one of the most robust risk factors for mental health disorders. In addition, family history of mental health disorders and prior experience of mental health problems are both associated with higher risk for subsequent mental health problems. Given their relatively higher risk for mental health disorders, the Corporate Parent should place the mental health of YP in/leaving care at the top of their priorities. Indeed, the earlier a mental health problem is identified and treated, the faster the recovery process is likely to be.



**50% of YP in care have a diagnosable mental
health disorder.**

Once in care, nationally around 25% of YP are bullied for being in care, 50% have a diagnosable mental health disorder, 80% experience depression, and 90% experience low self-esteem [6-9]. In 2019, the emotional wellbeing of YP in care in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was a cause for concern in around 41% and 38% of cases respectively [10]. Poor mental health can contribute to an unstable care journey and subsequent difficulties across the lifespan. An unstable and unsupported care journey costs an additional £22,415 per person per year than a stable and well-supported care journey [11]. Supporting YP in/leaving care is therefore beneficial for both the individual and the care system.



**An unstable and unsupported care journey costs an
additional £22,415 per person per year than a stable
and well-supported care journey.**

1.3. Mental Health during the Transition from Care to Independent Living

The transition from care into independence is a time of upheaval and disruption for many individuals. In the UK, YP with care experience often have poorer mental health outcomes than their peers [12]. Over 25% of YP experience a mental health crisis after leaving care [13]. Even more alarming is that YP with care experience are five times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers [14]. Poor mental health affects multiple aspects of life for many YP with care experience and it can limit their ability to function independently. For example, serious mental health conditions condemn many YP with care experience to homelessness or increasingly limited housing options ([Section 2, 4](#)). Without proper support, the mental health of YP in care is unlikely to improve and may even get worse after leaving the care system.

Many YP in care have aspirations but mental health is a major barrier to achieving their goals. In our 2020 survey, respondents were given the opportunity to express their personal goals in free text sections, and respondents explained how they sought happiness, safe housing, employment, education and other personal passions. However, some respondents noted mental health and low self-confidence as a key barrier to achieving their goals. One of the main reasons YP with care experience struggle to engage with EET is due to mental health issues ([Section 6](#)) [2]. Mental health should be recognised as a key barrier to YP engaging with EET [2]. In addition to improving the quality of life of YP with care experience, better mental health support may also increase engagement with EET.

2. Current Interventions

2.1. Central Government Guidance

The Children and Social Work Act (2017) requires all LAs to publish a Local Offer for its YP leaving care ([Section 1 Part 1.4](#)). Central Government provides guidance for LAs on how to present their Local Offer. The guidance states that the Health and Wellbeing section of a Local Offer should include details of “services that teach about, support and enable good health and wellbeing. It should include links to, or information about, universal health services that might be particularly relevant to YP with care experience, as well as specific health and wellbeing services targeted at them” [15]. See Box 1 for the central Government template for the Health and Wellbeing section of the Local Offer.

Below are some of the ways our care leaving team and your personal adviser can support you to stay healthy and look after your physical and mental health. We can:

- Give you information on healthy living
- Give you information on getting help to pay for prescriptions
- Support you to register with a GP
- Support you to move from CAMHS to adult services
- Give you information about counselling services that are available locally
- Give you help with transport costs when attending health appointments
- If you are a young parent, we will support you to do the best for them. We will help you arrange childcare, if this is what you want.
- Offer free or subsidised access to the leisure centres we run
- Give you information about health drop-in centres
- Work with you to develop a 'health passport' containing key information from your childhood (for example, when and if you have had immunisations) and your current health needs.

Box 1. Central Government template for the Health and Wellbeing section of the Local Offer.

2.2. Local Offers

Limited mental health pledges in Local Offers appear to be a widespread issue across England, despite mental health being a major issue for YP with care experience. The government local offer template should not be the only mental health support offered to YP leaving care, yet 13 county councils (54% of all county councils) do not go beyond this template. These councils are: Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Warwickshire, West Sussex, and Worcestershire. Peterborough (Unitary Authority/City Council) also do not go beyond the template. Given that the Government recommendations require YP to demonstrate active help-seeking behaviour, which may not be realistic, these Councils should think holistically about how they can better support the mental health of their YP leaving care. While our survey of YP should not be taken as representative of the views of all of CCC's YP, seven out of the ten respondents felt that CCC did not focus on issues relevant to them.

A number of County Councils offer more mental health support to YP leaving care than CCC (Table 2). Staffordshire and North Yorkshire County Councils offered the most additional support to YP leaving care, followed by Cumbria, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Most of these Councils continue to offer in-house mental health services to YP once they have left care.

Table 2. Mental health support in County Council Local Offers for YP with care experience.

County Council	Local Offer Health and Wellbeing Support
Cambridgeshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary access during COVID-19 pandemic to clinician to help with referral procedure
Cumbria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital badge for mental health to show to landlords or employers • Health and Wellbeing Coaches service run by the council
Devon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still able to contact Specialist Nurses for YP in Care above age 18
East Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support beyond age 18 by Specialist Nurses within Through Care Service and involving Adult Social Care if necessary
Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Coordinator in Leaving Care Team offers counselling and advice
Lancashire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from Looked After Children Nurse up to age 24
Lincolnshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At One Wellbeing Project provides mental health interventions between age 18 and 24 • Wellbeing Service for age 18+ to assist with personal wellbeing goals
North Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Clinical Psychologists provide mental health support in collaboration with Leaving Care Case Worker • Family Group Conference Worker to help identify people who can give support • North Yorkshire Mental Health Helpline
Northamptonshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing Wednesday sessions every month • Crisis Cafes drop-in sessions for under/over 18s in crisis or in need of help with mental health
Staffordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mental health support with partner Sustain+ up to age 25 • In-house Adult Services for assessment of needs beyond age 18 • Drop-in service for YP with care experience
Suffolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Emotional Health and Wellbeing Hub containing Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners up to age 25
Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Practitioner to support all aspects of health within Care Leaver Team

Another Local Offer of note is from Trafford Council [16]. The Trafford Council Local Offer includes access to Talkshop, part of Trafford Council's Youth Engagement Service. Talkshop is a specialist service where YP in/leaving care aged 13 to 25 can receive support from Youth Workers with issues such as family breakdowns and common mental health problems. The Trafford Transitions Team also contains one social worker and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Worker.

Most County Councils signpost to local or national charities that provide independent mental health services for YP with care experience. In Cambridgeshire, a number of local mental health services are signposted on the Keep Your Head website [17]. Most of these services operate via self-referral and are available up to age 25. For example, Kooth is a free online mental wellbeing community with a space designed specifically for children and YP [18]. Barnardo's offer ongoing support and counselling after YP leave care [19]. Become also offers a free life coaching programme designed to support YP with care experience with both practical and emotional challenges [20]. Catch22, a charity specialising in youth services, supports the direct delivery of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and aims to improve the transition into adult services for YP with care experience [21]. The Care Leavers' Association focuses on increasing the voice of YP with care experience by establishing regional forums in London, Birmingham, and Manchester, and establishing a virtual social network [22].

King's Fund previously provided a two-year grant of £70,000 to Lewisham to bring mental health services to YP with care experience [23]. The project was a partnership between Lewisham Council, NHS Trust, and other organisations and consisted of a community psychiatric nurse or social worker holding regular drop-in sessions for YP with care experience. YP with care experience were also trained to act as mentors or advocates for other YP leaving care. These services all offer important mental health support to YP leaving care, and while Councils, such as CCC, jointly commission initiatives with the voluntary sector, more can be done in this area.



As a Corporate Parent, the mental health of YP with care experience is the responsibility of CCC.

2.3. Local Transformation Plans

Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) set out how local services will invest resources to improve the mental health of YP in that area. LTPs involve a variety of professionals from across the NHS, public health, children's services in LAs, education and youth justice as well as YP and their families [24].

Out of the 25 County Council LTPs, 24% do not mention the mental health needs of YP in/leaving care. These councils are: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority [25], Cumbria, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk and West Sussex. North Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire have made the greatest commitment to YP leaving care (Table 3). In addition, the Lincolnshire LTP was also highlighted in Barnardo's 'Neglected Minds' report for taking the mental health of YP with care experience seriously [13].

Table 3. Mental health support in County Council LTPs for YP with care experience.

County Council	LTP Commitments to YP With Care Experience
Derbyshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Kooth up to age 25 • Trauma-Informed Service for children in care identified as having deteriorating mental health from April 2020
Devon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen individuals in care for mental health needs
East Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPFT provides mental health nursing direct in the YP with care experience' Team
Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority access for looked after children to mental health assessments by specialist practitioners in Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service
Gloucestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempting to fully embed revised pathway of mental health support for children in care
Hampshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised psychological assessment of individuals known to the Children in Care Mental Health Service
Hertfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leaver Support Worker to improve interface of YP leaving care with Mental Health Services
Leicestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YP's Health Team for looked after children and other vulnerable groups • Mistle Project provides some post-placement psychological services to YP aged 16 to 20
Lincolnshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Kooth up to age 25 • Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Service up to age 25 focuses on early intervention and fast tracking assessment and treatment for YP in/leaving care
North Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Wrong Door support service including Clinical Psychologist • Partner in Practice support YP leaving care up to age 25 • Voice, Influence and Participation Team facilitates opportunities for children and YP in/leaving care to express views on services
Northamptonshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempting to make LAC Health Service that includes specialist mental health team accessible for YP leaving care
Nottinghamshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition Lead to support YP in care with mental health needs during transition to adulthood and transfer to adult services • Personal Budget for YP leaving care to support their emotional wellbeing and mental health • You Know Your Mind Project for YP leaving care age 18 to 25 who are experiencing poor or deteriorating mental health
Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSCA Service provides mental health interventions to YP leaving care up to age 25
Somerset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Children in Care and YP with care experience Health and Wellbeing Group
Staffordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leaver Ambassador to support children in care
Suffolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of CONNECT Service, a therapeutic service for

	children in care, to include YP leaving care up to age 25
Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Mental Health Practitioner within Care Leaver Team • YP who have left care represented in presentation about self-harm to YP with care experience Team
Warwickshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand CAMHS LAC Service to YP leaving care to age 25
Worcestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YP who have left care included in Young Commissioners group to evaluate Mental Health Services

YP in Cambridgeshire do have access to Kooth and had access to drop-in clinics at Centre 33 before the pandemic. Advertising these services is not permitted on Pathways4Us, leaving it down to PAs to remember which services are available locally as well as to YP to feel comfortable discussing mental health issues with their PAs. Given the nationally recognised higher incidence of serious mental ill-health among YP leaving care, it is clearly very important that PAs are confident in talking about mental health issues and have access to the necessary specialist support. Respondents to our 2020 survey, while not representative, said that they did not find that this was always the case.

3. Key Barriers

The mental health of YP in/leaving care was classified by Ofsted as an area that needs improvement [26]. Based on the available evidence, a number of problems contribute to the poor mental health and coping abilities of many YP leaving care, including (i) insufficient recognition of mental health needs, (ii) lack of mental health support, and (iii) insufficient support networks.

3.1. Insufficient Recognition of Mental Health Needs

Despite the high prevalence of mental health conditions among YP in/leaving care, any existing mental health support stops when CCC's YP transition to independent living [7]. A report issued by Care Leavers Association at the end of a three year project found that the health and wellbeing needs of YP with care experience are largely ignored [7]. Information about individual mental health needs is not always passed on to Leaving Care Teams and YP are not always aware of how to access relevant services [13]. If mental health needs are therefore not handled early enough they may become critical.

The divide between District and County Councils may perpetuate the insufficient recognition of mental health needs. Disconnect between the two-tiers makes it easy to shift accountability onto other teams or services. In addition to the remit of the NHS, the District Councils and County Council have a responsibility to vulnerable people. At the District level, this responsibility is in the form of Community Safety Partnerships, which feed into many areas where LAs are audited/assessed and both tiers have to spend more to fix the problems not being addressed by mental health support. The divide between District and

County Councils may perpetuate the insufficient recognition of mental health needs. Disconnect between the two-tiers makes it easy to shift accountability onto other teams or services. In addition to the remit of the NHS, the District Councils and County Council have a responsibility to vulnerable people. At the District level, this responsibility is in the form of Community Safety Partnerships, which feed into many areas where LAs are audited/assessed and both tiers have to spend more to fix the problems not being addressed by mental health support. With CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services overwhelmed, more responsibility by the LAs must be taken. The disjointed approach to the mental health needs of YP with care experience may therefore result in missed opportunities, delays, and inefficiencies in spending and service delivery. The District/County Council divide is therefore an important barrier to effective and timely mental health support.



Both the District Councils and County Council have a responsibility to vulnerable people.

3.2. Lack of Mental Health Support

Mental health support is often lacking, partly due to failures in mental health training for carers. Many LAs fail to equip foster and residential carers with the knowledge and skills needed to support children and YP in care with mental health conditions [28]. In addition, professionals working with YP leaving care may lack expertise in mental health [13]. In Cambridgeshire, the Clinical Team (comprising clinicians) leads training for foster carers and offers consultation to PAs and social workers. Social workers also receive some training in mental health. However, it is always possible to offer more and better training. While the Clinical Team will discuss issues with PAs or social workers, it can be difficult for the information to be properly understood and fed back to the YP, leading to disconnect between trained specialists and vulnerable YP.

Mental health services often fail to meet the specific mental health needs of YP leaving care. King's Fund research showed that YP who leave LA care are at an increased risk of mental health problems and that traditional services let them down [23]. There is currently a 16 week waiting list for NHS Mental Health Services, although in reality it is far longer. Many individuals transitioning out of care are too old to receive support from CAMHS, which tends to operate with a cut-off point of 18 years old, and lack a specific mental health diagnosis required to access adult mental health services [13]. CAMHS tier three and four does exist for the support and treatment of complex mental health needs but clearly these types of services are not appropriate for everyone. In addition, some YP in/leaving care may require a long period of time before they feel ready to engage in any form of therapeutic interventions.

Mental health services are diagnosis driven, which conflicts with the fact that many YP in/leaving care have mental health needs that do not present as a discrete difficulty. CAMHS also refuses to see YP without a stable placement or they delay access to their services until a placement becomes permanent [28]. YP who took part in our 2020 survey were concerned with the lack of mental health support, particularly after age 18. Issues with drug and alcohol use further complicate the process of receiving care [13]. The inflexibility of national mental health services means that many YP leaving care with mental health needs are not currently receiving any statutory service [13]. A dedicated Clinical Team within LAs can help address this issue.

There is a gap in national mental health services which presents significant challenges, but there are things that Corporate Parents can do to help bridge this gap. The DfE New Care Leaver Covenant Board is looking at how to support councils to employ adolescent mental health workers in every leaving care team in the country. The Cambridgeshire Local Offer states that YP in care will be given priority access to a temporary mental health clinician, although the clinician can only really offer support with referrals to other services [29]. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough reported that YP leaving care are often frustrated by the lack of mental health support but can be resistant to support when offered it; the YP may feel they want someone to support them but are also uncomfortable with talking about their experiences. While the views expressed in the 2020 survey do not represent all of Cambridgeshire's YP, in their comments, some YP living independently expressed concerns about mental health provision.

3.3. Insufficient Support Networks

Effective support networks may help mitigate some of the psychological effects of transitioning from care to independent living. The sudden loss of a support network and the associated isolation can lead to a lack of emotional and psychological readiness to leave care [27]. The Social Care Institute for Excellence report was written with substantial input from YP leaving care. The YP were clear that they wanted a holistic approach to their support network, support to develop self-care strategies, and a clear process for how to access mental health and emotional wellbeing support [4]. Currently, pathways to mental health support in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are precarious. For example, relying on YP being able to answer the phone to access support. There are no clearly defined pathways through which YP can reach the mental health support they need. Providing support to YP in out-of-county placements is particularly difficult due to a lack of communication between councils. Ensuring the YP are surrounded by strong support networks may increase trust and uptake of support services.

Prevention of mental health issues and early intervention are more effective strategies than risk-based management. Support networks can play an important role in early intervention. For example, the Neighbourhood Cares Pilot, based on the Buurtzorg model of care, was recently tested in Cambridgeshire [30]. Early intervention in the community is at the centre of the Buurtzorg model of care. The pilot was tested in Soham and St Ives on a combined population of 10,000 people. The pilot helped prevent the escalation of needs and

contributed to an improved quality of life for participants. Extending this model to mental health in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough could lead to beneficial outcomes such as improved mental health of YP leaving care, greater engagement in EET, and better support networks in the community.

Mental health support networks are vital for ensuring that YP leaving care are able to cope with and receive help for pre-existing mental health conditions as well as boosting aspirations and quality of life. Yet the present lack of mental health support means that the first decade of adult life for YP leaving care is often disrupted, unstable, and troubled. While effort has been made to increase signposting to mental health services as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, this is insufficient for many YP leaving care.

4. Recommendations

A refocusing of priorities is needed. Without mental health support, the implementation of other recommendations will fail. We suggest the following recommendations, covering systems, training, expertise and support, to improve the psychological aspects of the transition from care into independent living.

4.1. Priority Recommendations

- 1) Create a clear and well-advertised guide to accessing available mental health services including charity-based support.
 - a. Update the council website to improve access to relevant information.
 - b. Create a downloadable app or a PDF file that can be sent to all YP in/leaving care with all the relevant details from the Local Offer and clickable links to support services/other initiatives. At the very least a leaflet should be given to YP in/leaving care with signposting to local and national mental health services.
 - c. Create a defined pathway through which YP can access mental health support depending on their age/stage within care. This should include clarity around the transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services.
- 2) Develop a comprehensive training programme covering mental health first aid and up-to-date research on childhood adversity and mental health for the Leaving Care Team, PAs and foster/residential carers.
 - a. Develop a programme in collaboration with MHFA England and local NHS clinicians and/or university researchers.
 - b. Ensure members of the leaving care team complete mental health first aid training as a requirement of their role.
 - c. Offer refresher training sessions.
 - d. Intensify mental health training for foster and residential carers (current training is too basic).

- 3) Employ a senior, designated mental health professional with expertise in the diagnosis/treatment of mental health conditions and awareness of broader risk factors common in YP in/leaving care.
 - a. Embed mental health workers within Leaving Care Team to deliver a range of emotional wellbeing and self-development interventions.

4.2. Secondary Recommendations

- 1) Adult Social Care should assess YP in care before they leave to identify the support the YP will need once they are living independently. Adult Social Care can then make recommendations and put support in place or refer them for more advanced support before the YP leaves care.
- 2) Change the language that is used to describe these YP. "Care leavers" is somewhat dehumanising and should be replaced with more person-centred language such as "YP with care experience" or "YP leaving care".
- 3) Encourage communication between councils regarding mental health support for YP in out-of-county placements.
 - a. Relevant councils along with YP should create a plan for how to provide mental health provisions to YP in an out-of-county placements.
 - b. Discussions or developments outlined by the Eastern Region Leaving Care Network should be included in the guide issued to YP in care so if they look to move out-of-county they know what to expect and how to access services
- 4) Where it is safe to do so, regulated visits with family members may be beneficial for the mental health of YP in/leaving care. For example, set up Family Group Conferencing with the local charity Break.
- 5) Establish feedback sessions with YP to give them space to express their concerns and for the council to learn how to improve from their experiences of the care system. For example, bring councillors from the Corporate Parenting Committee to YP Participation Forums.
- 6) Lobby at the national level to increase mental health of YP leaving care as a priority.
 - a. Development of YP leaving care-specific services aimed at those who slip through the gap of CAMHS and IAPT mental health services.
 - b. Ability to allow YP to remain in care past age 18 if this is the most appropriate solution for the individual in an effort to accommodate personal readiness to leave care.

5. Implementation of Priority Recommendations

A summary of the recommendations can be found in Table 4. Mental health training and employing mental health professionals have the large potential for high impact, and while they are higher cost and slower to implement than other recommendations, they are examples of spend-to-save interventions.

Table 4. Summary of recommendations. More ticks indicate cheaper/quicker/higher impact.

Recommendation	Low cost	Quick to implement	High impact
Guide to mental health services	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Mental health training	✓	✓	✓✓✓
Employ mental health professionals	✓	✓	✓✓✓
Assessment before leaving care	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Change language describing YP	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Communication between councils	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Regulated visits with family	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Feedback sessions	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Lobby at national level	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓

5.1. Creating a Clear Guide to Accessing Mental Health Services

Creating a clear guide on how to access mental health services is a low-cost and important step towards better support for YP leaving care. A clear and easily accessible guide mitigates the issue of PAs being expected to pass on details of existing services to YP as well as relieving pressure on YP to discuss their mental health needs with their PA. The guide should be made available online and as a physical copy and should be kept up-to-date at all times.

After consultation with YP who have left care, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the 10 LAs (GM10) agreed on 12 guarantees that they hope to achieve in the next year [31]. The Greater Manchester Care Leaver Trust Board will oversee implementation of the guarantees. One of these guarantees was to consider the use of a Local Offer app such as Focus.Gov app [31]. The council should therefore consider creating an app version of the mental health guide, which can be easily accessed on mobile devices. Ideally, flow diagrams showing the procedure through which appropriate support can be accessed would be included for various levels of need.

THRIVE is a conceptual framework for child and adolescent mental health that complements the Think Communities initiative and could inform the design of the mental health services guide [32]. The London Borough of Haringey and NHS Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group are developing integrated mental health provisions in line with THRIVE Framework [32].

The THRIVE framework requires everyone involved in the delivery of care to work together, such as members of health, education, social care, and voluntary sectors. The framework stresses the importance of drawing on the evidence base, being transparent about the limitations of treatment, and explicitly engaging YP in shared decision-making about the type of help or support they need. It states that decisions on how best to support the mental health of a YP cannot be purely based on diagnoses or presenting symptoms. This is particularly pertinent given the complex needs of YP in/leaving care. Instead, the approach to delivering care should be based on five categories: (i) Thriving, (ii) Getting Advice, (iii) Getting Help, (iv) Getting More Help, and (v) Getting Risk Support (Figure 1) [32].

Figure 1. THRIVE framework for system change.



An individual may fall into any one of these categories. The mental health needs and support differs according to the category. For example, a person in the “Getting Advice” category would need signposting to relevant online resources or short-term support in their local community whereas someone in the “Getting More Help” category may need direct long-term support from a trained mental health professional. Table 5 shows key factors to consider when implementing this recommendation.

Table 5. Considerations for implementing a clear guide to accessing mental health services.

Considerations	
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be responsible for putting together and updating the guide within the Social Care Team? • How will district and county councils collaborate to keep the guide up-to-date? • What challenges are there to service coordination?
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the cost of making the guide come out of the Social Care budget? • Who will pay to print physical copies of the guide?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the guide be made available in other languages or accessible formats?
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will check that the most up-to-date guide is available on the council websites? • Use BetterConnected+ to test the useability of the information once it is on the website?
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the environmental impact of printing and distributing physical copies of the guide each year?
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any services that cannot be advertised on the council website?

5.2. Developing a Comprehensive Training Programme

The Children’s Commissioner for England recommends that all PAs should be required to have mental health training and knowledge of mental health problems: “Although guidance is clear that personal advisors should know about mental health services in their area, there should be increased emphasis on, and training for, them to be able to identify emerging mental health difficulties. If a mental health concern is identified, YP with care experience must then be able to access professional help. Many of the calls to our Help at Hand advice service are from YP with care experience struggling to get this help” [33].

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England is the largest provider of mental health first aid training in UK and Europe. They offer a two day course which qualifies people as Youth Mental Health First Aiders [34]. This course is for people who support YP aged 8 to 18 years old. There are three levels of training available which qualify an attendee for different responsibilities: Youth MHFA, Youth MHFA Champion and Youth Mental Health Aware (Table 6). For PAs and social workers, the most appropriate course to take is the Youth MHFA training. The other training programmes may be more relevant to extended parts of the care system.

Table 6. MHFA England training levels.

Training level	Course length / Cost per person / Class size	Skills
Youth MHFA	Two days £300 16 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth understanding of YP mental health and factors affecting wellbeing • Practical skills to spot triggers and signs of mental health issues • Confidence to reassure and support YP in distress • Enhanced interpersonal skills e.g. non-judgemental listening • Knowledge to help YP recover health by guiding them to further support and engaging with parents, carers, and external agencies where appropriate • Ability to support YP with long-term mental health issue or disability to thrive • Tools to look after your own mental wellbeing
Youth MHFA Champion	One day £200 16 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of common mental health issues and how they can affect YP • Ability to spot signs of mental ill health in YP and guide them to a place of support • Knowledge and confidence to advocate for mental health awareness • Skills to support positive wellbeing
Youth Mental Health Aware	Half day £125 25 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers some common mental health issues affecting YP • Skills to work more effectively with YP living with mental health issues • Ways to support YP with mental health issues and relate to their experiences

The Youth MHFA training usually costs £300 per attendee but other councils, such as Cornwall Council have managed to secure funding from Public Health England to subsidise this price [35]. Although this course is not specific to YP in/leaving care it provides a general level of understanding of mental health. Given that the new national curriculum became statutory in September 2020 and now mental health education, it is important for corporate parents to develop an equivalent level of understanding of mental health. Considerations for implementing the mental health training programme are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Considerations for implementing a comprehensive mental health training programme.

Considerations	
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At what time in the year will training be carried out? • For whom will the training be compulsory? • Will other people in the council be able to attend training? • What level of training will PAs/social workers be expected to meet?
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will pay for the training/search for sustainable funding? • If travel is required, will travel costs be covered by funding?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will the training initially be offered to? • How often will refresher training courses be done? • What will happen if someone cannot attend the course for a valid reason?
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the people receiving training have access to laptops/computers and a stable internet connection if online training is undertaken?
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will shared transport be considered if face-to-face training is undertaken?
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will attendees be able to feedback their learning to non-attendees?

5.3. Employing Mental Health Professionals

The Children's Commissioner for England also recommends that all LA Leaving Care Teams should have a dedicated mental health professional within their team [33]. Employing designated mental health professionals within the Leaving Care Team is potentially the most expensive mental health recommendation, but it is a spend-to-save approach. Improved mental health may lead to more YP engaging in EET. A well-supported YP is less likely to need emergency payments, Universal Credit subsidies, access to their Setting-Up Home Allowance, or even require council services. If the YP is happy and engaging in EET past the age of 21, the service tends to be closed to the YP if both parties agree, resulting in substantial financial savings for the LA.

In Middleborough, there is already a dedicated mental health professional in their Leaving Care Team. This therapeutic practitioner supports YP up to age 25 and has a range of function and purposes, which are shown in Box 2 [31]. Feedback from YP who received this service indicates positive outcomes. For example, one YP said "I have stopped self-harming and reduced my anger." Another YP felt the support would "make [them] more prepared for work." The therapeutic practitioner is funded by Middleborough Council Children's Services, costing £40,000 per annum, but remains an NHS Trust employee [31]. The internal Transformation Fund funds new initiatives to demonstrate a spend-to-save approach and could be used to fund a mental health professional. At the very least, the council should be aiming to use this fund to trial this proposal.

- Promoting effective links between Pathways Leaving Care Service, CAMHS and Adult Services
- Increasing support for looked after children and YP with care experience regarding their emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Providing a flexible and immediate response to YP in crisis
- Providing guidance to social workers and Personal Advisers to ensure they are appropriately supporting YP, taking into consideration their early life trauma and attachment issues
- Delivering Tier 2 therapeutic interventions to support YP to better understand their emotional wellbeing and develop coping strategies
- Working with YP aged from 16 to 25 open to the Pathways Leaving Care Service
- Delivering Attachment Training to Residential Staff, Foster Carers and Supported Lodgings Providers
- Monitoring Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire completion scores to ensure YP receive appropriate support in relation to their emotional well-being
- Delivering Kickstart group, which consists of four sessions covering any topics that the YP requested including obsessive-compulsive disorder and psychosis delivering Fresh Start, which offers taster sessions to YP with care experience with the aim of promoting emotional health and well-being.

Box 2. Responsibilities of the therapeutic practitioner in Middlesbrough.

In Slough, there are two clinicians embedded within the Looked After Children Team and Care Leaver Team [31]. The advantage of this is that clinicians will have had contact with YP in care and this early relationship helps facilitate engagement with YP who have left care. The role of the clinicians is similar to that of the therapeutic practitioner in Middlesbrough. The clinicians model and work with practitioners to assess mental health issues and to implement systemic approaches to mental health. For example, clinicians may assess where relationships can be re-established, ensure a range of social support and activities for the YP, and enable those working with YP leaving care to understand their relationships and to use these relationships to address problem patterns. Clinicians are therefore able to offer a responsive intervention, particularly where the YP leaving care is initially not willing to engage in formal services.

The GM10 guarantees, designed after consultation with YP who have left care, included (i) implementing priority pathways to mental health provision; and (ii) ensuring Clinical Commissioning Groups work with PAs to access health services [31]. Creating specialist pathways to access mental health support, such as those in Middleborough and Slough, may become increasingly necessary for YP leaving care as we exit out of lockdown [31]. Considerations for employing mental health professionals within relevant care teams are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Considerations for employing mental health professionals.

Considerations	
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be staffing or capacity issues? • How will the gap be bridged between work hours and out-of-hours support (24/7 support cannot be provided)? • How will the volume of need be dealt with?
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will pay the salary of the mental health professionals? • Will the service be free? • Will there be financial support for YP to access this service (e.g. transport or service cost)?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will contact be maintained with YP after they leave care? • Will the emotional challenge of accessing support be considered? • How will it be ensured that the mental health professionals have adequate experience to deal with the complex needs of YP in/leaving care?
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will these services be advertised to YP? • Will services be offered online for out-of-county individuals?
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the mental health professionals be expected to drive to meet YP?
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the registration procedure work? • Will personal data be stored and if so for how long? • Where will the mental health professionals meet YP and what are the potential safeguarding issues associated with the location/type of meeting?

6. Cost of Ignoring Recommendations

The cost of not improving the mental health of children in care is significant. According to the Youth Voice Census, YP felt that mental health was one of the largest barriers to accessing EET [36]. For those that are NEET, 52% said mental health or anxiety was the main barrier [36]. In 2009, it was estimated that a YP who is NEET would cost an average of £56,000 of public finance costs before reaching retirement age [37]. Taking into account inflation, this is equivalent to around £76,000 today. This is in addition to the estimated £104,000 (2020: £140,500) in lost opportunity costs to each individual [37]. Per individual, that is a total loss of £216,500. Moreover, up to age 28, the cost of each individual who had conduct disorder at age 10 is £100,000 more in services than those without conduct disorder [38]. While data on the direct cost of mental health is difficult to find, it is clear that even the indirect costs of mental health are considerable (Section 4). Mental health has long been overlooked and is fast becoming the next pandemic. It is time for CCC to take action to enhance its protection of some of the most vulnerable people in its care.

7. Summary

Mental health is the greatest overlooked problem for all YP at the national and local level. The issue, however, is getting more and more difficult to ignore. Mental health is intrinsically linked to all aspects of a person's life, including employment ([Section 6](#)), education ([Section 7](#)), physical health, and aspirations. A lack of mental health support for YP in/leaving care leads to higher costs for the council further down the line. Investing in the mental health of YP in/leaving care is a chance to improve the lives of these individuals as well as for Cambridgeshire to become a leader in mental health support.

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Section Nine. Outcomes

This report has outlined a series of recommendations that aim to improve the transition of CCC's YP from care to independence. Please see the [Appendix](#) for a summary of all the recommendations. In this section we focus on the possible outcomes that CCC can expect from adopting the recommendations as well as how they correspond with CCC's vision and responsibilities.

1. Outcomes for CCC's YP

We identified what the evidence showed about the type of support that would have the most impact on ensuring YP with care experience make a successful transition from care into independence, including the transition from education to work. We focused on accommodation, finance, and mental health needs during this transition.

Table 1. Recommendations and outcomes for CCC's YP.

Focus area	Recommendation	Outcomes
Accommodation	1. Accommodation Officer/Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete support system and processes for housing allocation • Centralised data collection • Clear point of contact for YP/District Councils etc. regarding housing issues • Cohesive entity when tackling more complex accommodation issues e.g. housing for UASC
	2. Guarantor provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to helping YP enter the private rental sector • Promote pursuit of aspirations / careers via apprenticeship uptake
	3. Remove homelessness intentionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce possibility that YP fall through net and end up homeless
	4. Emergency accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety net for YP at risk of homelessness • Create safe space for vulnerable YP who have nowhere else to go
	5. Council Tax relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove unnecessary financial pressure on YP with care experience • Remove disadvantage compared to other YP
Finance	1. Internal work opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve chance of YP entering paid employment • Equipping YP with necessary skills to enter employment
	2. Money and budgeting page in Local Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to improve financial literacy

	3. Financial education training for PAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent future financial hardship resulting from lack of familial support networks
Mental health	1. Mental health professional 2. Mental health training for PAs 3. Guide to access mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic mental health support • Reduce future costs arising from lack of mental health support • Support YPs mental health needs • Improve all aspects of YP's life including education, employment, physical health, and self-esteem

2. Alignment with CCC's Strategic Priorities

CCC's Strategic Framework (2021–2025) outlines five strategic priorities that direct the activities and ambitions of the organisation. Adopting the recommendations in this report will produce outcomes that will help CCC reach its strategic priorities (Table 2).

Table 2. Alignment with CCC's Strategic Priorities.

Strategic Priorities	Impact of Recommendations
1. Communities at the heart of everything we do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and deliver services to meet the unique challenges faced by YP leaving care • Joint-working alongside District and City Councils and partner organisations to ensure YP are supported • Ensure YP leaving care are valued and respected • Facilitate YP to engage with the community
2. A good quality of life for everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve YP's quality of life • Build a ground on which they can live stable and independent lives • Ensure that YP's quality of life is not impeded by their care experience and address inequalities that exist for this group • 'Level up' this group to encourage social mobility
3. Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on initiatives taken before YP leave care • Provide support for those YP who have specific vulnerabilities or are facing difficulties in their transition into independence • Ensure CCC's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities are met
4. Cambridgeshire: A well-connected, safe, clean, green environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No negative impacts on CCC's environmental goals

5. Protecting and caring for those who need us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure YP are safe and remove acute vulnerabilities surrounding finances, accommodation / homelessness, and mental health • YP leaving care will continue to receive support to prepare for independence • Ensure YP leaving care have the same opportunities as their peers • Ensure a basis of support so that YP can improve their own wellbeing
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3. Alignment with Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Throughout this report we have emphasised how CCC can support its YP and fulfil its Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Table 3 outlines how our recommendations will do contribute to this responsibility.

Table 3. Alignment with CCC's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.

Corporate Parenting Principles	Impact of Recommendations
1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and YP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report addressed three overarching areas where CCC can act to promote the health of its YP: 1) Accommodation; 2) Finances; 3) Mental Health. • Improving CCCs approach to these issues will improve physical and mental health outcomes for YP.
2. To encourage those children and YP to express their views, wishes and feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project provided mechanisms through which YP could express their views about how CCC supports them.
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and YP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through surveys, focus groups, and secondary research, the team used the views of YP to inform the report.
4. To help those children and YP gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report outlines ways in which CCC can improve the support it offers to its YP and bring its own services into line with other successful LAs.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and YP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report provides recommendations which are designed to improve YPs access to employment and opportunities and provide YP with support to realise their aspirations.

<p>6. For those children and YP to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report provides recommendations aimed at supporting YP and improving safety provisions for things like accommodation & homelessness, finances and financial management, mental health support. • Recommendations focusing on guarantor provision, financial literacy and improving access to employment opportunities promote stability and create opportunities for YP to succeed.
<p>7. To prepare those children and YP for adulthood and independent living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistically, the report addresses issues which act as barriers for YP transitioning into independent adulthood.

4. Alignment with Think Communities

The recommendations in this report are framed in terms of Think Communities. The three pillars of the Think Communities initiative are (i) People; (ii) Places; and (iii) Systems (Section 1 Figure 5). The recommendations will require LA-led interventions to allow YP to engage with community-led activity. In this way, Think Communities aim to stimulate community-led action will be achieved in the long-term. The three overarching themes of this report (accommodation, finances, and mental health) are key issues affecting YP leaving care. By tackling these issues, not only is CCC helping create a more resilient community of YP, but it is setting them up to engage with community-led action. The following sections consider the recommendations in light of the three pillars of the Think Communities initiative.

4.1. People

The “People” pillar focuses on specific vulnerable groups and aims to recognise individual strengths. This aim is broadly achieved by all of the recommendations. By implementing YP-specific policies on issues such as homelessness (Recommendation 4 and 5) and Council Tax relief (Recommendation 6), CCC will address issues that disproportionately affect YP with care experience. The same can be said for improving delivery of accommodation (Recommendation 1 and 2) and mental health support (Recommendation 10-17). Moreover, by offering specific work opportunities to its YP (Recommendation 7) demonstrates that CCC recognises the strengths of its YP and gives them opportunities to succeed. Acting as a rent guarantor for private accommodation (Recommendation 3) and providing financial education (Recommendation 8-10) will empower CCC’s YP to live independently and to engage with the community. Finally, this project draws on the views of YP with care experience. Implementing the recommendations in this report shows that CCC is listening to the local community. CCC can continue to listen to the voices of its YP by establishing regular feedback sessions (Recommendation 18).

4.2. Places

The recommendations in this report raise awareness of a hidden community (i.e. CCC’s YP). The recommendations help to build community resilience with the aim of increasing engagement between CCC and the community. Therefore, supporting YP leaving care will provide a basis for new community networks. Securing emergency accommodation

(Recommendation 5) focuses on physical facilities in the community to help protect YP who may face homelessness.

4.3. Systems

This report took a broad view of the issues facing YP with care experience. We outlined three main themes: accommodation (Recommendation 1-5); finances and employment (Recommendation 6–9); and mental health (Recommendation 10-19). These issues are linked, and only an ambitious approach which acknowledges the interrelated nature of issues facing YP will lead to service improvement.

The recommendations require proactive collaboration with District and City Councils on issues such as accommodation (Recommendation 2), homelessness (Recommendation 4), Council Tax (Recommendation 6), and with other LAs for CCC's YP living out-of-county (Recommendation 6 and 16). CCC should be willing to learn from other LAs and create new roles to deal with accommodation (Recommendation 1) and mental health (Recommendation 13). By improving services based upon evidence and best practice, CCC will show commitment to building/sustaining trust with its YP as well as supporting the delivery of its YP's priorities.

Section Ten. Conclusions

This report aimed to identify ways that CCC can help it's YP to successfully transition from care into independent adulthood. YP leaving care often face a more challenging transition into independence than their peers and the demands of sudden independence can be difficult to overcome. Accommodation, financial concerns, employment, and mental health are key barriers to a successful transition. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these issues as well as other existing inequalities such as digital poverty and social isolation. All of these issues are interconnected and sustainable improvement requires systemic change.

In this report, we have outlined barriers and potential interventions to these issues. Our recommendations are summarised below. The recommendations focus on changes after YP have left care. Unfortunately, the entire care journey was beyond the scope of this report. Further research should be commissioned to consider how CCC can support individuals when they are still in care as well as beyond age 25. CCC is dedicated to it's YP and to its role as a Corporate Parent. Implementing the recommendations in this report will confirm CCC's determination to change the lives of its YP for the better.

Appendix. List of Recommendations

- 1. Have a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team.**
- 2. The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on improving the current accommodation process by:**
 - a. Extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25;
 - b. Removing the reduction of allowances for carers when YP join the Staying Put scheme;
 - c. Ensuring more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments for foster placements;
 - d. Allowing priority social housing applications any time before age 25;
 - e. Granting access to all housing options and increasing housing allowance costs for YP waiting for asylum.
- 3. Act as a rent guarantor for YP with care experience, with a particular focus on helping those engaged with low-income employment and apprenticeships.**
- 4. Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for YP with care experience.**
- 5. Secure emergency accommodation for YP who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown.**
- 6. Provide Council Tax relief to YP with care experience until age 25:**
 - a. Council Tax relief should extend to CCC's YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire and out-of-county;
 - b. CCC should determine the possibility of extending this policy to external YP with care experience living in Cambridgeshire, if they do not already receive this support from their associated LA;
 - c. Council Tax relief should be offered as an exemption not a refund and it should not be subject to means testing;
 - d. In the long-term, CCC should apply automatic relief for its local YP with care experience. If an application process is necessary in the short-term, it should be clear, accessible, and include multiple formats e.g. online and via telephone;
 - e. The Council Tax relief rate should be 100% when YP with care experience lives alone or with other care-experienced individuals. The rate should be applied proportionally if the YP with care experience is living with non-eligible individuals.
- 6. The following recommendations / considerations should be taken into account in relation to the Council Tax support for YP passed by CCC in February 2022:**
 - a. Avoid a refund model of relief (for example, by paying billing authorities directly);
 - b. Ensure that steps are taken to inform potential beneficiaries of the policy;
 - c. Commit to reviewing the eligibility criteria for the policy in the future.

- 7. Increase provision of internal work opportunities and work experience at CCC for YP leaving care by:**
 - a. Guaranteeing interviews for those who meet the minimum criteria for a council vacancy;
 - b. Ring-fencing specific opportunities.
- 8. Create a designated money and budgeting page in CCC's Local Offer which guides YP in/leaving care to financial services and courses as well as charity/private support.**
 - a. CCC's website should be updated to include available services and courses designated for money management and debt information;
 - b. A PDF or mobile application should be created which provides information on all the financial benefits available to YP leaving care.
- 9. PAs and care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance on how to provide financial education.**
 - a. Training should be focused on how to effectively provide advice on money management, budgeting, saving and spending to YP leaving care;
 - b. Clear guidance should be given to these workers to follow when providing financial education to YP leaving care.
- 10. Pathway Plans for YP in care should have a specific section dedicated to the development of knowledge and skills required for independent living.**
- 11. Create a clear and well-advertised guide to accessing available mental health services including charity-based support.**
 - a. Update the Council website to improve access to relevant information;
 - b. Create a downloadable app or a PDF file that can be sent to all YP in/leaving care with all the relevant details from the Local Offer and clickable links to support services/other initiatives (as a minimum a leaflet should be provided with signposting for local and national mental health services);
 - c. Create a defined pathway through which YP can access mental health support depending on their age and stage within care. This should include clarity around the transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services.
- 12. Develop a comprehensive training programme covering mental health first aid and up-to-date research on childhood adversity and mental health for the Leaving Care Team, PAs, and foster/residential carers.**
 - a. Develop a programme in collaboration with MHFA England and local NHS clinicians and/or university researchers;
 - b. Ensure members of the leaving care team complete mental health first aid training as a requirement of their role;
 - c. Offer refresher training sessions;
 - d. Intensify mental health training for foster and residential carers (current training is too basic).

13. Employ a senior, designated mental health professional with expertise in the diagnosis/treatment of mental health conditions and awareness of broader risk factors common in YP in/leaving care.

- a. Embed mental health workers within the Leaving Care Team to deliver range of emotional wellbeing and self-development interventions.

Adult Social Care should assess YP in care before they leave to identify the support the YP will need once they are living independently. Adult Social Care can then make recommendations and put support in place or refer them for more advanced support before the YP leaves care.

15. Change the language that is used to describe these YP. “Care leaver” is somewhat dehumanising and should be replaced with more person-centred language such as “YP with care experience” or “YP leaving care”.

16. Encourage communication between Councils regarding mental health support for YP in out-of-county placements.

- a. Relevant councils along with YP should create a plan for how to provide mental health provisions to YP in an out-of-county placements;
- b. Discussions or developments outlined by the Eastern Region Leaving Care Network should be included in the guide issued to YP in care so if they look to move out-of-county they know what to expect and how to access services.

17. Where it is safe to do so, regulated visits with family members may be beneficial for the mental health of YP in/leaving care.

- a. For example, set up Family Group Conferencing with the local charity Break.

18. Establish feedback sessions with YP to give them space to express their concerns and for the council to learn how to improve from their experiences of the care system.

- a. For example, bring Councillors from the Corporate Parenting Committee to YP Participation Forums.

19. Lobby at the national level to increase mental health of YP leaving care as a priority.

- a. Development of YP leaving care-specific services aimed at those who slip through the gap of CAMHS and IAPT mental health services;
- b. Ability to allow YP to remain in care past age 18 if this is the most appropriate solution for the individual in an effort to accommodate personal readiness to leave care.

Response to the Government's SEND Review Green Paper and Update on SEND Provision and Placements

To: CYP Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Service Director Education

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: The report provides an overview to the Committee on the SEND Green Paper and the basis for the Council submitting a response to the Government consultation on 1st July 2022. The report also outlines the current position on managing demand for SEND provision and placements.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the report.
- b) Agree that Officers should circulate the final draft response to Committee members for review.
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Education to submit the Council's consultation response, following consultation with CYP Spokes, in order to meet the deadline of 1 July 2022.

Voting: Co-opted members of the committee are eligible to vote on this item.

Officer contact:

Name: Jonathan Lewis
Post: Service Director Education
Email: Jonathan.lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 507165

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Goodliffe and King
Post: Chair/Vice-Chair
Email: Bryony.Goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Maria.King@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the recently published SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper. The report covers the questions within the consultation and provides an early LA view of these proposals as a basis for an expected response.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on the current situation with managing SEND placement provision in Cambridgeshire.

2. SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time Green Paper

- 2.1 The Government's SEND and alternative provision green paper, published on 29 March 2022, sets out its vision for a single, national SEND and alternative provision (AP) system that will introduce new standards in the quality of support given to children across education, health and care.
- 2.2 The ambitious green paper is the result of the SEND Review (Appendix 1), commissioned to improve an inconsistent, process-heavy and increasingly adversarial system that too often leaves parents facing difficulties and delays accessing the right support for their child.
- 2.3 The plans to reform the system will be open for a 13-week public [consultation](#), giving families and professionals the opportunity to shape how a new system will work in the future.
- 2.4 The consultation will run for 13 weeks and closes on the 1st July 2022.
- 2.5 The key proposals are –
 - Setting new national standards across education, health and care to build on the foundations created through the Children and Families Act 2014, for a higher performing SEND system;
 - A simplified Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through digitising plans to make them more flexible, reducing bureaucracy and supporting parents to make informed choices via a list of appropriate placements tailored to their child's needs, meaning less time spent researching the right school;
 - A new legal requirement for councils to introduce 'local inclusion plans' that bring together early years, schools and post-16 education with health and care services, giving system partners more certainty on who is responsible and when;
 - Improving oversight and transparency through the publication of new 'local inclusion dashboards' to make roles and responsibilities of all partners within the system clearer for parents and young people, helping to drive better outcomes;
 - A new national framework for councils for banding and tariffs of High Needs, to match the national standards and offer clarity on the level of support expected, and put the system on a financially sustainable footing in the future;
 - Changing the culture and practice in mainstream education to be more inclusive and better at identifying and supporting needs, including through earlier intervention and improved targeted support;

- Improving workforce training through the introduction of a new SENCo National Professional Qualification for school SENCos and increasing the number of staff with an accredited level 3 qualification in early years settings;
- A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision (AP), with a new delivery model in every local area focused on early intervention. AP will form an integral part of local SEND systems with improvements to settings and more funding stability.
- Different services involved in providing support for children with SEND, from schools and councils to healthcare providers, to work more closely together increasing accountability and scrutiny;
- Mandatory mediation on EHCP disputes - under the plans, families and councils will have to engage in mediation on disputes over EHCPs before registering an appeal to the sometimes costly first-tier tribunal;
- There will be a review of the National SEND funding formula and the £6k threshold – “notional” special educational needs budgets would move to be standardised, with central government setting budget allocations for mainstream schools “through a single, national formula”. They will consider whether the current amount of £6,000 remains the “right threshold”. The appropriate threshold “will be considered in context of the responsibilities that sit with mainstream schools under the new national standards, and we will consult before taking decisions on any changes to the level of the threshold”. The government are intending to ensure the SEND system is financially sustainable by making sure funding is targeted where it makes the most difference;
- A performance measures league table will be reviewed to allow for “contextual SEND information” about a school alongside its results data. This will make it easier to recognise schools and colleges that are doing well for children with SEND;
- The Government will look to approve up to 40 new special and AP free schools in regions where they are most needed;
- Low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children will be further supported through investment of £27.3 million next year. This funding will help pay for equipment, goods or services - from washing machines and fridges to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford;
- Over £10 million will also be invested to train over 200 more educational psychologists from September, to give advice and input into EHCP assessments, advise schools on how to support pupils with SEND and offer wider wellbeing support to them, their families and teachers;
- The Government will work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to strengthen ability to hold local areas to account against these standards;
- Vulnerable children in care or with a social worker will also continue to be supported through continued Virtual School Head (VSH) funding, backed by £16.6 million for the next financial year, to keep championing the needs of looked-after children and support them with their attainment.

2.6 Officers are currently working with our partners to consider a full response to the 22 consultation questions. The consultation is open to local authority staff, healthcare professionals, schools, settings, colleges, alternative provision providers, voluntary sector organisations, children, young people, families, parents and carers. Briefings are planned for school leaders to ensure there is a full understanding of the proposals.

2.7 The Education service will also ensure the consultation link is promoted throughout the

SEND system to ensure all key stakeholders are aware of the consultation and the deadline so individuals can submit their own views. The system will also offer support to complete the consultation for those that need it.

- 2.8 Officers initial thoughts are detailed in section 3. We would like to propose the final responses be collated into a briefing and presented to Spokes after the consultation deadline.
- 2.9 The following responses provide a starting point for discussion following initial consideration of the SEND Review : Right support, Right Place, Right time. The culture of co-production and consultation is a key element of how Cambridgeshire and Peterborough works so these views and starting points may change through the natural process, in time for the consultation deadline in July 2022.

3. Initial Response to the Consultation.

- 3.1 *Q1 What key factors should be considered when developing national standards to ensure they deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families? This includes how the standards apply across education, health and care in a 0-25 system.*

We welcome the proposal to create new national standards but would like more clarity on how and when legislation will be created to support the implementation of the standards in a meaningful way. There is some contradiction with regards to local discretion. The review outlines there is too much local discretion (p27) and then goes on to say local discretion is required and necessary (p29). It is important that local context is considered.

The LA supports the notion that there should be standardised processes for reviewing the support needed and welcomes the ideal that there will be clarity in settings, particularly mainstream settings about what should be ordinarily available.

Equally, we welcome the notion that standards for co-production and transitions should be consistent, but again there is no clarity about how this will be implemented and on what timeline.

- 3.2 *Q2 How should we develop the proposal for new local SEND partnerships to oversee the effective development of local inclusion plans whilst avoiding placing unnecessary burdens or duplicating current partnerships?*

The LA is encouraged by the proposal to set up Local SEND partnerships that are supported by robust legislation and that will include partners from all aspects of the EHCP process.

It is positive that the LA will retain the responsibility for the high needs block, but legislation will need to be clear about how the LA can utilise this responsibility to ensure all partners take on their responsibilities for example with Multi Academy Trusts and health partners. It would be concerning for LAs to retain a responsibility for local inclusion plans if there was no clear guidance and statutory framework in place to ensure all partners provide services in line with the agreed national standards.

3.3 *Q3 What factors would enable local authorities to successfully commission provision for low-incidence high cost need, and further education, across local authority boundaries?*

The ability for Local Authorities to work together strategically to meet the needs of interconnecting communities and for national standards to remove the discrepancies created by authority borders would hugely transform the outcomes for young people who need the most specialist provision. It may be that some regional / sub regional groups are needed to ensure there is effective commissioning to meet these needs and provide better outcomes alongside value for money.

3.4 *Q4 What components of the EHCP should we consider reviewing or amending as we move to a standardised and digitised version?*

A standardised EHCP format that is digitalised and easier to administer would be an excellent idea. It is hoped that the design and outline for this standardised format is constructed under consultation with practitioners and case work officers who will have to manage the new format. It would be good to find a format that was shorter in length and that had a focus on abilities and strengths rather than a deficit model.

The introduction of a system that includes pictures and film is a very positive aspect, however, the cost of the new system and in the maintenance of a system that incorporates these aspects must be provided to LAs to enable them to implement this proposal.

The proposal to create a multi-agency panel to increase confidence for parents and carers is innovative and rooted in positive theory. There will need to be a great deal of structure and robust legislation and guidance to ensure that a panel that reviews needs assessments can include school, colleges, health, social care and parents and it will need to be very clear about who is responsible for such assessment needs.

3.5 *Q5 How can parents and local authorities most effectively work together to produce a tailored list of placements that is appropriate for their child, and gives parents confidence in the EHCP process?*

The outline of available provision for parents to choose from will allow LAs to effectively manage the placement of children and keep provision local and appropriate to needs. The right for a mainstream placement is correct but there needs to be clarity on who makes the decision when it may not be compatible with the provision of efficient education of others and who will be assessing the quality assurance of new national standards.

The continued focus on working closely with parent / carer forums will enable a framework for creating tailored lists to be co-produced. This should be factored into the proposal for national standards relating to co-production.

The change to shift the right to direct placement into schools by the LA and then move the prerogative for the school / trust to challenge this decision is much more child centred and will lead to more children being included rather than awaiting placements.

3.6 *Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our overall approach to strengthen redress, including through national standards and mandatory mediation?*

Mandatory mediation could potentially reduce the need for tribunals, but without a clear review of the process it could lead to a much less efficient route to redress. Mediation can be a long process and can involve a lot of different services. If the national standards outline a streamlined and consistent method to support efficient mediation, this could be positive. If it is not, this could add additional stress onto an already struggling system.

3.7 *Q7 Do you consider the current remedies available to the SEND Tribunal for disabled children who have been discriminated against by schools effective in putting children and young people's education back on track? Please give a reason for your answer with examples, if possible.*

Additional review of the tribunal process is welcome. It would be useful if the national standards included the requirement for tribunal judges or decision makers to have a background / speciality in SEND and the new national standards. It would also be useful if decisions at tribunal were considerate towards the needs of all children at any given education provision. Some decisions which may be deemed appropriate for the individual are not always conducive to the effective education of the rest of the school roll.

3.8 *Q8 What steps should be taken to strengthen early years practice with regard to conducting the two-year-old progress check and integration with the Healthy Child Programme review?*

We feel this question places early years in a difficult position, suggesting that the steps required to strengthen the integrated review lay solely with the early years. We strongly suggest that what should be developed is a model of shared understanding of the process from both the perspectives of HCP and Early Years. Some of the ways in which this could be achieved are:

- Joint Healthy Child Programme / Early Years training opportunities
- Job Shadowing
- Undertaking joint observations of children in the home and if applicable also in settings.

In terms of specific steps to strengthen the role of early years in the Integrated review (IR) process we suggest:

- more emphasis placed on teaching child development on our qualification courses.
- statutory standardised resources to support the two-year-old progress check as the sector relies on non-statutory guidance and practitioners current knowledge of child development.
- observation and assessment training is viewed as a minimum requirement for all early years practitioners and that this is revisited on a regular basis.
- upskilling early years practitioners to understand the content of the ASQ:SE (a set of questionnaires about behaviour and social-emotional development in young children) and the process involved in it's completion, placing an emphasis on how to use knowledge gained from the 24-36 month progress check to inform the outcomes.

In terms of developing the understanding of health professionals about the IR process we suggest:

- opportunities for joint observation and assessment of children in home or setting using both 24-36 month statutory review and ASQ documentation.

- workforce development cross discipline that supports a more consistent approach to early identification of need.
- upskilling health colleagues to develop more understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage and how ongoing teaching and assessment contributes to a holistic long-term view of child development.
- a stronger emphasis on the views of parents.
- early Years practitioners and HCP staff should work as one team so one staff member can conduct a holistic assessment of health and education needs at the 24-36 month check. It will avoid duplication and improve efficiency. Data sharing processes should be set up to enable this.

3.9 *Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a new mandatory SENCo NPQ (National Professional Qualification) to replace the NASENCo?*

We welcome the expectation for early years providers to identify a SENCo and ensure that they have a minimum level of qualification. This increase in skills at the earliest stage will enable better outcomes earlier.

3.10 *Q10 To what extent do you agree that we should strengthen the mandatory SENCo training requirement by requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?*

The development of a new National Professional Qualification for SENCOs brings the standard of qualification in line with other leadership roles and is a positive move. There should be a mandatory requirement of the SENCO to be a part of the leadership structure of schools, so that this is a clear requirement rather than just a recommendation. This will ensure that SEND needs are consistently advocated for across the strategic themes for all settings.

More protected time for SENCOs is also a positive move, but there is no thought shared on how to support smaller schools to achieve this, when administrative time may not be feasible due to the wide responsibilities taken on by teachers and leaders in smaller schools. Recognition and additional financial support should be made available for smaller schools to enable no child with SEND to be lost in the system.

3.11 *Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree that both specialist and mixed multi academy trusts (MATs) should be allowed to coexist in the fully trust-led future? This would allow current local authority maintained special schools and alternative provision settings to join either type of MAT.*

It is not always the case that mixed trusts result in better outcomes. Specialist trusts can provide additional support for the community through the specialist nature of their experience. However, when mixed trusts work well, they have a balanced approach and can effectively hold the needs of all children within the same trust and this has huge benefits, especially if the designation of the school can be one and the same allowing the child to move to the most appropriate provision element at any time. This approach could have far reaching implications for inclusion and the development of skills across a community. Where mixed MATs operate in a close geographical locality e.g. town / city, any specialist provision must be open to all and effectively commissioned externally to the MAT to ensure fair access to all.

- 3.12 *Q12 What more can be done by employers, providers and government to ensure that those young people with SEND can access, participate in and be supported to achieve an apprenticeship, including through access routes like traineeships?*

Increased careers support is a welcome proposal as is the development of careers hubs and careers leaders, which could be seen as a return to the Connexions approach, which could be a very valid and positive return.

There is a need to provide a bespoke focus for both education provisions and employers that is outside of the school environment so that young people feel a tangible transition experience as part of the support network.

The additional funding is welcome, but more clarity regarding how this will be delivered is needed.

The proposal to introduce adjustment passports needs to be reviewed. 'Passport' is an extremely sensitive term for many pupils, especially those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- 3.13 *Q13 To what extent do you agree or disagree that this new vision for alternative provision will result in improved outcomes for children and young people?*

A new national standard that incorporates a clear focus on keeping children and young people on roll at mainstream school is welcome and appreciated.

The development of an intent to support mainstream schools by sharing expertise from alternative provisions will lead to greater ability to support inclusion. If this is structured correctly it will remove the creation of interim part time settings that do not meet the needs of young people, but it will need clear guidance and robust funding mechanisms that allow both alternative / appropriate provisions and mainstream provisions to access the support required at an equal level and as part of a single approach.

- 3.14 *Q14 What needs to be in place in order to distribute existing funding more effectively to alternative provision schools, to ensure they have the financial stability required to deliver our vision for more early intervention and re-integration?*

The continued focus on equalising the funding across both alternative / appropriate and mainstream provision is a positive step.

The development of a Local Alternative Provision strategy that will lead to statutory partnerships is a positive ideal but will need robust legislation to enable the implementation to be worthwhile and have impact. There will also need to be funded capacity to ensure this happens.

The idea that the same funding can be attached to a medium-term plan for a young person is positive if it can be implemented fairly and the focus for maintaining a mainstream placement is based on the ability to access the curriculum rather than the ability to excel in examinations, which has been a barrier to reintegration and inclusion.

A progress score to demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusion would be a good additional support mechanism for school settings alongside recognition in performance tables for those schools that are inclusive for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools.

- 3.15 *Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that introducing a bespoke alternative provision performance framework, based on these 5 outcomes, will improve the quality of alternative provision?*

Performance tables do not lead to good outcomes for all children and often lead to settings designing their delivery based on the requirements set by these measures. This is not child centred.

A progress guide for mainstream settings may be more valuable at supporting inclusive practice, although national standards for alternative / appropriate provision would be hugely beneficial.

The 5 key outcomes do not show an understanding for the curriculum needed to evolve alternative education. There needs to be an element of communication and emotional intelligence and a focus on vocational skills for young people who need to express themselves in different more creative ways as well as an increased focus on the arts and physical exercise to increase the therapeutic intervention needed through avenues that can be extended in mainstream environments.

- 3.16 *Q16 To what extent do you agree or disagree that a statutory framework for pupil movements will improve oversight and transparency of placements into and out of alternative provision?*

The development of a statutory framework for pupil movements is an excellent idea and a much-needed improvement. The implementation of this must be undertaken by education settings with young people remaining on roll ensuring an unbroken line of responsibility without any question.

- 3.17 *Q17 What are the key metrics we should capture and use to measure local and national performance? Please explain why you have selected these.*

Key data would be attendance, exclusions, destination and progress. Additionally for young people with SEND, timeliness of annual review functions and the ability to track how EHCP's have reduced in terms of needs (i.e. how the SEND needs have been minimised to increase inclusion).

- 3.18 *Q18 How can we best develop a national framework for funding bands and tariffs to achieve our objectives and mitigate unintended consequences and risks?*

A national banding framework can only work if there is a national funding framework that works to support the same needs being provided at the same rate and quality irrespective of postcode. The notion that it costs less to provide high quality SEND services in any part of the UK due to its vicinity to London is both outdated and seeks to undermine the values of individual children and their right to high quality care and support.

A national framework is best developed by practitioners and leaders in the system who are skilled at understanding what quality provision looks like and actually costs.

3.19 *Q19 How can the National SEND Delivery Board work most effectively with local partnerships to ensure the proposals are implemented successfully?*

The development of a National SEND Delivery Board is a positive proposal and will help to develop the national standards outlined. The key to making it work will be how the National Board integrates with the regional DfE groups.

There will need to be clear links to ensure that both regional and national agendas are valued and acted upon.

There will need to be robust legislation in place to keep responsibilities and accountability clear and the support mechanisms of any delivery board must be easy to identify – settings have enough measurement without support in the system.

3.20 *Q20 What will make the biggest difference to successful implementation of these proposals? What do you see as the barriers to and enablers of success?*

The development of consistent national standards will be a huge enabler but will only be effective if there is robust legislation to ensure accountability is supported across all partners.

The current system has too many recommendations without mandatory instructions that leave some partner services with the power to interpret they do not have to act.

Legislation has to remove any doubt from the questions and responsibilities in hand so that there is a clear playing field for all services to work together with no room for interpretation, which only leads to barriers and incongruent approaches that create gaps for young people, particularly those with SEND to fall through.

3.21 *Q21 What support do local systems and delivery partners need to successfully transition and deliver the new national system?*

We need adequate funding, time and expertise to implement the change. This must recognise the current pressure that Local Authorities are under.

3.31 *Q22 Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposals in the green paper*

This is currently being considered by Officers and will be part of the final response. We will work with key partners to ensure there is a single voice for Cambridgeshire in this section.

4. Managing demand for SEND provision and placements

4.1 Members approved the strategic approach on meeting demand for Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability at the Children and Young People Committee on 1 March 2022. A detailed review of all potential opportunities has been undertaken, and two project plans developed, one for Area Special Schools and one for Enhanced Resource Bases/Units. Meetings with Headteachers/Trusts are underway to confirm phase 1 of the

projects to meet immediate demand.

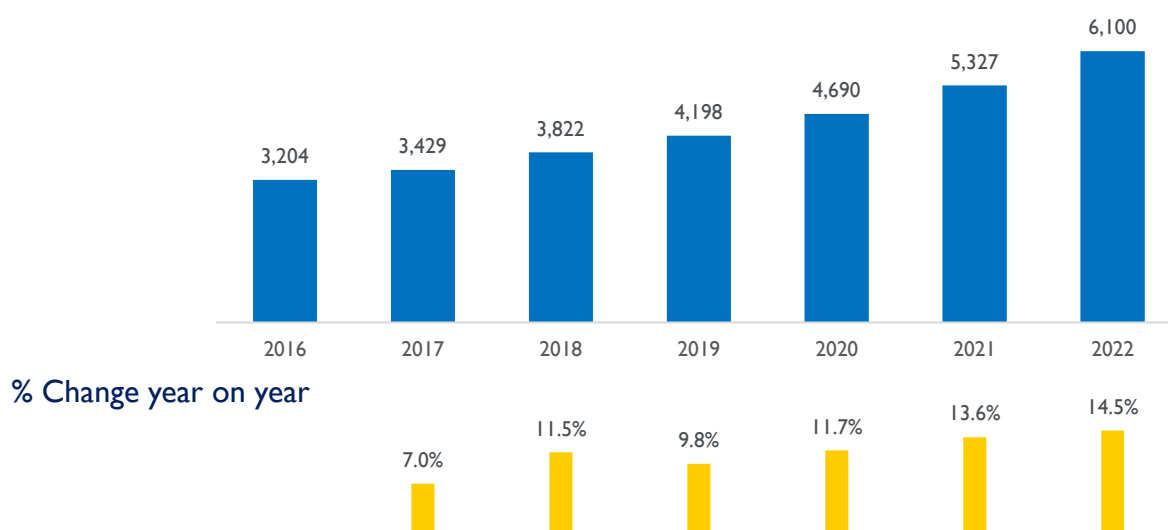
4.2 Since the previous report to Committee in March 2022:

- 10 additional places have been identified at Cavendish Special Academy (Impington)
- Work with post-16 providers to create places at satellite locations, thus freeing up space at special schools for younger children, has met with interest and support such that it may be a viable model to roll out in other parts of Cambridgeshire

4.3 With regard to increasing capacity at Meadowgate Special Academy, officers have commissioned a feasibility study for the proposed additional 60 places and a consultant has been appointed to work on the design. Due to the need for swift progress, it has been agreed to progress directly to contractor appointment. This gives greater surety on design and costs, details of which are expected to be available by September 2022. In the meantime, the headteacher is in discussions with officers about developing short-term satellite provision whilst the expansion project is undertaken. We have also started a feasibility study into an additional special school in the south of the Fenland area to serve this area and the North of the Huntingdonshire area.

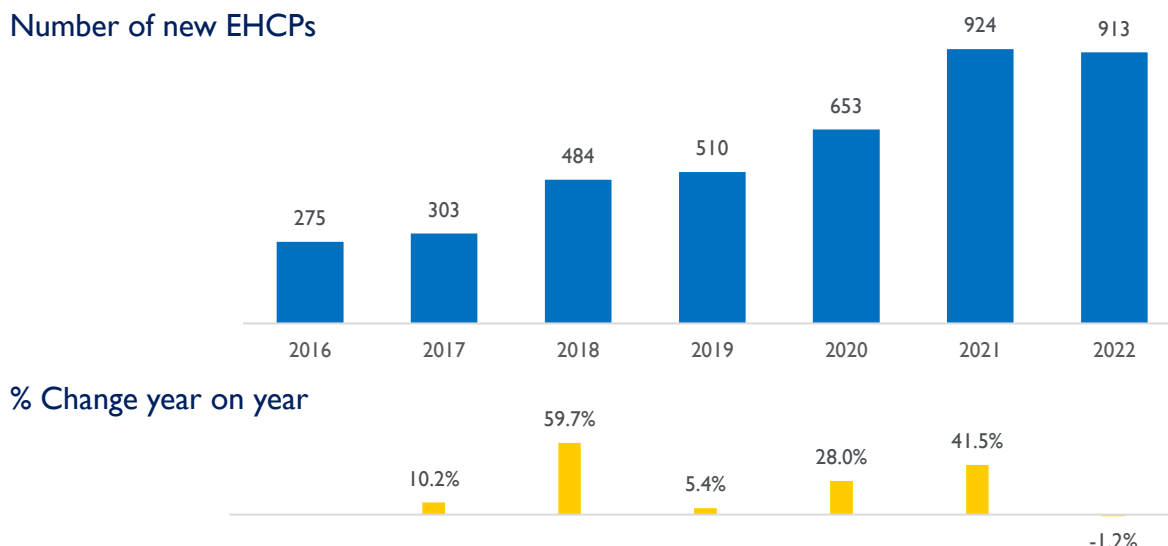
4.4 From our latest DfE submission on pupil information (based upon January), new demand for specialist placements continues to grow in line with the number of EHCPs (see figure 1)

Number of EHCPs



4.5 Our transformation programme has however meant that growth has not continued to increase at previous levels.

Number of new EHCPs



- 4.6 As of 14 April 2022, data gathered by the Statutory Assessment Team (SAT) indicated there were a total of 195 children in Cambridgeshire with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), setting out their assessed and identified SEND and requiring placement in a special school or specialist provision attached to a mainstream school in the near future. This includes pupils who have moved into the County. These pupils are either currently on roll in a mainstream school or receiving tuition packages or alternative provision. We are currently awaiting new provision to become available with the new special school at Alconbury Weald adding 150 places in September 2023 and there will be additional space at Samuel Pepys (up to 65 places) and Meadowgate (60 places) to support this increased demand coming out of Covid-19.

District	Total numbers awaiting placement	Total requiring area special school placement	Total requiring provision specialising in social emotional mental health (SEMH) needs
Cambridge City	42	21	12
East Cambridgeshire	22	12	4
Fenland	62	37	21
Huntingdonshire	32	12	14
South Cambridgeshire	37	19	10

- 4.7 Details of all the current proposals for growth can be found in appendix 2 of the report.
- 4.8 In addition to the above, a new SEND Outreach model has been developed in close collaboration between special schools in Cambridgeshire and the SEND District Teams. The model was launched on 11 February 2022. The anticipated impact is that children and young people supported by the outreach model will remain in mainstream settings, keeping children local and reducing the need for specialist placements.
- 4.9 In March, the DfE published the High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) for financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. This funding is for academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25 and is to support local authorities deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or

who require alternative provision. The grant funding amounts to £690m for Financial Year 2022-23 and £750m for Financial Year 2023-24. Of these amounts:

- 75% of the available funding is distributed in proportion to LAs' estimated growth in demand for High Needs provision (the 'growth' component); and
- 25% of the available funding is distributed in proportion to LAs' estimated population of CYP who need High Needs provision (the 'size' component).

4.10 Cambridgeshire has received an allocation of £6.7m in 2022/23 and £7.8m in 2023/24. The current capital programme includes £38.2m of spend (with council borrowing accounting for £37.5m) for increased SEND provision across the county. For the latest projects (outlined in appendix 2), there is a provisional budget of £2.5m for additional places but the expected cost of delivery of all schemes will be significantly higher and will require this funding. We are also seeing prices increase due to inflation across all projects. These challenges will be considered in future meetings.

5. Safety Valve

- 5.1 The Department for Education (DfE) introduced the safety valve intervention programme in 2020-21 in recognition of the increasing pressures on high needs, targeting local authorities with the highest Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits. A total of 14 local authorities have now signed up to agreements, further details of which can be viewed at: [Dedicated schools grant: very high deficit intervention - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dedicated-schools-grant-very-high-deficit-intervention)
- 5.2 The programme is being expanded to a further 20 local authorities in 2022-23 and based on the latest cumulative DSG deficit of £39.26m to the end of the 2021-22 financial year, Cambridgeshire has been selected to participate in the next round.
- 5.3 The programme requires local authorities to develop substantial plans for reform to their high needs systems, with support and challenge from the DfE, to rapidly place them on a sustainable footing. If the authorities can demonstrate sufficiently that their DSG management plans create lasting sustainability and are effective for children and young people, including reaching an in-year balance as quickly as possible, then the DfE will enter into an agreement with the authority, subject to Ministerial approval.
- 5.4 If an agreement is reached, local authorities will be held to account for the delivery of their plans and hitting the milestones in the plans via quarterly reporting to the DfE. If adequate progress is being made, authorities will receive incremental funding to eliminate their historic deficits, generally spread over five financial years. If the conditions of the agreement are not being met, payments will be withheld.
- 5.6 Senior Officers have been invited to an initial meeting with the DfE in May to discuss the current situation and plans, and as such updates will be provided in due course.

6. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 6.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do
- Schools and early years settings are at the heart of communities. Our SEND strategy aims to keep children locally with the right specialist provision wherever possible.

- 6.2 A good quality of life for everyone
- Providing a high quality SEND offer support families and children to transition successful into adulthood.
- 6.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full
- Ensuring the education system meets all these needs is critical for everyone.
- 6.4 Protecting and caring for those who need us
- Education is the major universal service the council provides as all children are required to access education. School and early years settings play a critical role in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and families.

7. Significant Implications

- 7.1 Resource Implications
The need to ensure sufficient capacity for the SEND statutory process will be considered as a capacity bid. The funding requirement is currently being considered. Capital schemes are included in the current medium term financial plan. The recently announced capital funding will also provide further resources to meet this need.
- 7.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 7.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 7.4 Equality and Diversity Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 7.5 Engagement and Communications Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 7.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 7.7 Public Health Implications
It will be important to work with the emerging Children and Maternity Collaborative of the Integrated Care system to deliver on this agenda. Public Health commission the Healthy Child programme and we would need to work together to deliver on the integrated 2-2.5 year review (Q8, point 3.8)
- 7.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:
There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?
Name of Procurement Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

No implications.

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 [DfE consultation](#)



HM Government

SEND Review:

Right support

Right place

Right time





SEND Review:

**Right support, right place, right time
Government consultation on the SEND and
alternative provision system in England**

**Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Education
by Command of Her Majesty**

March 2022



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Ministerial foreword



This government is determined to level up opportunities for all children and young people – without exception. We are just as ambitious for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as for every other child. This green paper sets out our proposals for a system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.

The 2014 reforms to the SEND system brought many positive changes: increased co-production with children, young people and their families, an expectation of greater joint working between education, health and care, and a focus on a child's journey from birth to 25.

But we know that, too often, children and young people with SEND, and those educated in alternative provision, feel unsupported, and their outcomes fall behind those of their peers. Too many parents are navigating an adversarial system, and face difficulty and delay in accessing support for their child. And we know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted children and young people with SEND, exacerbating the challenges that already existed within the system.

We commissioned the SEND Review to understand these challenges better and determine what it would take to establish a system that consistently delivers for children and young people with SEND. We have listened carefully to children, young people and their families. We have listened to those working in education across early years, schools and further education; those working across health, care, local government; and the many voluntary and community sector organisations that support children and young people with SEND. We thank them all for their time, input and for their patience.

This green paper sets out proposals to ensure that every child and young person has their needs identified quickly and met more consistently, with support determined by their needs, not by where they live. Our proposals respond to the need to restore families' trust and confidence in an inclusive education system with excellent mainstream provision that puts children and young people first; and the need to create a system that is financially sustainable and built for long-term success. We know that there are places where this is already the case, and we want to make this a reality across the whole country.

We are proposing to establish a single national SEND and alternative provision system that sets clear standards for the provision that children and young people should expect to receive, and the processes that should be in place to access it, no matter what their need or where they live. We are setting out proposals for strengthened accountabilities and investment that will help to deliver real change for children, young people and their families.

Creating a single national system that has high aspirations and ambitions for children and young people with SEND and those in alternative provision, which is financially sustainable, is not a straightforward task. However, the reward for getting this right is huge: children and young people supported to succeed and thrive for generations to come.

We are committed to continuing to listen to children, young people, parents, carers, and those who advocate for and work with them, as well as system leaders, to achieve this ambition. We encourage you to reflect on the proposals set out in this green paper and respond to our consultation. Together, we can ensure every child and young person with SEND, and all those in alternative provision, can thrive and be well prepared for adult life.



Nadhim Zahawi
Secretary of State for Education



Sajid Javid
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Key Facts: the SEND and alternative provision system in numbers

As of 2020/21 in the state-funded education system in England

15.8% of all school pupils – 1.4 million – were identified with Special Educational Needs (SEN)¹.

In 2021, 36% of pupils in year 11 had been identified with SEN at some point in their educational journey². 82% of pupils with SEN were in state-funded mainstream schools, 10% in state-funded special schools, 7% in independent schools, and 1% in state place-funded alternative provision³.

12.2% of pupils were identified as requiring SEN Support

This is an increase on recent years, from 11.6% in 2016, prior to which the rate had been decreasing⁴.

Amongst pupils on SEN Support in state-funded primary schools, the most common primary type of need in 2021 was Speech, Language and Communication Needs (34%). In secondary schools, this was Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) (22%)⁵.

A further 3.7% of all pupils had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), receiving more support than available through SEN Support

This is an increase on recent years, from 2.8% in 2016⁶.

Amongst pupils with an EHCP, the most common primary type of need in 2021 was Autistic Spectrum Disorder (30%)⁷.

50% of pupils with EHCPs were in state-funded mainstream schools, 41% in state-funded special schools, 7% in independent schools, and 1% in state place-funded alternative provision⁸.

Of all children and young people with an EHCP, 77% are in schools or alternative provision

Of the remaining 23%, 1% are in early years, 17% are in further education, and 6% are educated elsewhere or Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)⁹.

The proportion of 3- and 4-year-olds in receipt of funded early education with SEN fell from 6.6% in 2020 to 6.3% in 2021¹⁰.

82.7% of children and young people in alternative provision were identified with SEN

In state place-funded alternative provision in January 2021, 24.0% of pupils had an EHCP and 58.7% received SEN Support¹¹. The most common primary type of need was SEMH (78.3%)¹².

The high needs budget has risen by more than 40% over three years

The high needs budget, which will total £9.1 billion in 2022-23 (over £8 billion in 2021-22), enables local authorities and institutions to better meet their statutory duties for those with SEND, including children and young people in alternative provision¹³.

Many parts of the SEN system aren't working as well as they should

For parents and carers:

In 2021 during the pandemic, 68% of parents reported that their child's needs were 'not met at all' or only 'somewhat met' in accordance with their EHCP¹⁴, during the pandemic.

For teachers:

In 2019, 41% of teachers reported that there is appropriate training in place for all teachers in supporting pupils receiving SEN Support¹⁵.

For local areas:

Of the 141 local area inspections published by 21 March 2022, 76 resulted in a written statement of action, which indicates significant weaknesses in SEND arrangements¹⁶.

Outcomes for those with SEN, or in alternative provision, on average are low

In the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile¹⁷:

In 2018/19, 76% of children identified with SEN did not achieve at least the expected level across all early learning goals, compared with 24% for those with no identified SEN¹⁸.

In key stage 2:

22% of pupils with SEN reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018/19, compared to 74% of those with no identified SEN¹⁹.

In key stage 4:

In 2020/21, there were 87,210 pupils identified with SEN at the end of key stage 4, with an average attainment 8 score of 31.1. This compares to pupils with no identified SEN with an average attainment 8 score of 54.5²⁰.

In state place-funded alternative provision:

55% of pupils from state place-funded alternative provision sustained an education, training, or employment destination after key stage 4 in 2019/20, compared with 89% and 94% from state-funded special and mainstream schools respectively²¹.

Executive summary

1. The reforms to the SEND system introduced in 2014 had the right aspirations: an integrated 0-25 system spanning education, health and care, driven by high ambition and preparation for adulthood. Since 2014, there is much to celebrate: 90% of state funded special schools are graded outstanding or good by Ofsted²² and 2,200 young people were successfully placed on a supported internship in 2021²³. As we have seen, particularly over the course of the pandemic, the system is driven by a hard-working and dedicated workforce who are committed to delivering excellent support for children and young people with SEND.
2. But despite examples of good practice in implementing the 2014 reforms, this is not the norm and too often the experiences and outcomes of children and young people are poor. There are growing pressures across the system that is increasingly characterised by delays in accessing support for children and young people, frustration for parents, carers, and providers alike, and increasing financial pressure for local government.
3. The government commissioned the SEND Review in September 2019 as a response to the widespread recognition that the system was failing to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people, that parental and provider confidence was in decline, and, that despite substantial additional investment, the system had become financially unsustainable. The Review has sought to understand what was creating these challenges and set out a plan to deliver improved outcomes, restore parents' and carers' confidence and secure financial sustainability.
4. Over the course of the Review, we have listened to a wide range of people from across the SEND system, including children, young people and their families; early years providers, schools and colleges; local authorities; health and care providers; and voluntary organisations. We have considered a child's journey through the SEND system - from early years through to further education.
5. As the Review progressed it became clear that alternative provision is increasingly being used to supplement the SEND system; to provide SEN Support; as a temporary placement while children and young people wait for their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment; or because there is insufficient capacity in special schools. We have therefore looked at the specific challenges facing the alternative provision sector as part of this Review.
6. We have also considered how this Review can be best implemented alongside reforms to health and social care. This includes the introduction of Integrated Care Systems and wider reforms to adult social care, as well as the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care. There is significant overlap between the cohort with SEND and those who interact with the care system. It is therefore important that the education, health and care systems work together effectively to

support children, young people and their families. We will consider the response to this consultation in parallel to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care to ensure the cumulative implications of reform deliver for children with the most complex needs.

There are three key challenges facing the SEND system

Challenge 1: outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision are poor

7. Children and young people with SEN have consistently worse outcomes than their peers across every measure. They have poorer attendance²⁴, make up over 80% of children and young people in state place-funded alternative provision²⁵ and just 22% reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths²⁶. In a 2017 study, special educational needs were more common in children with a mental health disorder (35.6%) than in those without a disorder (6.1%)²⁷. Young people with SEN often have fewer opportunities in later life: by age 27 they are less likely than their peers to be in sustained employment²⁸ and are at greater risk of exposure to a number of harms, including becoming a victim of crime²⁹.

Challenge 2: navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families

8. We have heard that for too many families their experience of the SEND system is bureaucratic and adversarial, rather than collaborative. Too many parents and carers do not feel confident that local mainstream schools can meet their child's needs. Parent and carers are subsequently frustrated with the difficulties and delays they face in securing support for their child. The system relies on families engaging with multiple services and assessments, making it difficult to navigate, especially for the families of children and young people with the most complex needs. Some families with disabled children tell us they are put off seeking support from children's social care because of fear they will be blamed for challenges their children face and treated as a safeguarding concern rather than receive the support they need. The difficulty faced in navigating children's social care assessments, and the lack of consistency in the offer among local authorities, can mean that support is often only provided once families reach crisis point.
9. The system is not equally accessible: parents and carers with access to financial and social resources are often better placed to navigate the system and secure support for their child. Parents and carers of children in alternative provision often have little choice over whether their child ends up in these specialist settings, or whether the support and education being provided meets their child's needs.

10. Despite the heavy emotional - and sometimes financial - costs associated with tribunals, since 2015 the appeal rate to First-tier SEND Tribunals has increased year on year, demonstrating parents' and carers' increasing frustration with the system. In the academic year 2020/21, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service recorded 8,600 registered SEN appeals, an increase of 8% when compared with the previous year. Of the cases the tribunal upheld, 96% were at least partly in favour of the parent or carer, an increase of two percentage points on 2019/20³⁰.

Challenge 3: despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families

11. The government is making an unprecedented level of investment in high needs, with revenue funding increasing by more than 40% between 2019-20 and 2022-23. However, spending is still outstripping funding. Two thirds of local authorities have deficits in their dedicated schools grant (DSG) budgets as a result of high needs cost pressures. By the end of 2020-21, the national total deficit was over £1 billion³¹.
12. Forecasts show total high needs spending continuing to increase year on year, with recent increases driven predominantly by an increase in the proportion of children and young people with an EHCP, over and above general population change. The government has already announced additional investment of £1 billion in 2022-23. Whilst future funding will need to take account of the increasing prevalence of children and young people with the most complex needs, this needs to be balanced with targeting spending more at strengthening early intervention. Investment cannot continue to rise at the current rate, particularly since this is not matched by improved outcomes or experiences for children, young people and their families.
13. Although only making up a small part of total high needs spending, early years, further education and alternative provision can be heavily impacted by local funding decisions, over which they can feel they have minimal influence. High needs spending on alternative provision is also increasing, having remained relatively stable in recent years. Inconsistency in placements leads to unpredictable funding from year to year, or even within the same year, limiting the ability of alternative provision settings to plan and invest in services.

A vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence and inefficient resource allocation is driving these challenges

14. For children, young people, families and providers, there remains significant inconsistency in how children and young people's needs are met, with a lack of clarity around what services can be expected and who provides them. Too often, decisions are made based on where a child or young person lives or is educated, rather than their needs. This is most prominent at school level, with the school that a child or

young person attends accounting for more than half the chance of a child being identified with special educational needs³².

15. The current SEND system does not prescribe in detail exactly who should provide and pay for local services, leaving it to local agreement and First-tier SEND Tribunals. Similarly, delivery of alternative provision is inconsistent across areas and schools. In some places, alternative provision schools have a strong role in accommodating children and young people with significant needs and in providing support and services to help children and young people stay in mainstream schools. Elsewhere, provision is mixed, and children and young people may be placed in inappropriate settings that do not support their needs.
16. The Review has consistently heard that these challenges are driven by a vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence from parents, carers and providers, and inefficient allocation of support which is driving the spiralling costs in the system. This cycle begins in early years and mainstream schools where, despite the best endeavours of the workforce, settings are frequently ill-equipped to identify and effectively support children and young people's needs³³. Children and young people's needs are identified late, then escalate and become entrenched. In some cases, a child or young person may be incorrectly identified as having SEN when in fact they have not had sufficient access to high-quality teaching, particularly in reading and language³⁴.
17. Inconsistent practice across the system exacerbates the challenges caused by late or misidentification: parents, carers and providers alike do not know what is reasonable to expect from their local settings and so lose confidence that mainstream settings will be able to meet the needs of their children and young people effectively. As a result, parents, carers, and providers feel they have no choice but to seek EHCPs and, in some cases, specialist provision, as a means of legally guaranteeing the right and appropriate support for children and young people.
18. Increased numbers of requests for EHCPs and specialist provision means that children and young people often face significant delays in accessing support as they need to go through a long and bureaucratic process to access provision. They do not always end up with the right support, in the most appropriate setting, with some children and young people placed in specialist settings even when their needs could be met effectively in mainstream settings with high-quality targeted support.
19. In some cases, children and young people are placed in alternative provision due to lengthy delays in securing an EHCP assessment, seriously disrupting an already challenging educational journey. By the time they arrive there, they may have fallen behind to an extent that it is hard for them to fully catch up before they reach the end of key stage 4. Too often they remain there regardless of whether that setting is the most appropriate to meet their needs.
20. Increased numbers of placements in specialist provision also restricts capacity. Some children and young people have to be educated outside of their local area or face long

journeys to and from school taking them away from their local community and resulting in increase transport costs. More children and young people are also placed in independent specialist provision, even when this may not be best for them. Too often the costs of such provision represents poor value for money.

21. As more children and young people receive EHCPs and attend specialist settings, more financial resource and workforce capacity is pulled to the specialist end of the system, meaning that there is less available to deliver early intervention and effective, timely support in mainstream settings. As a result, the vicious cycle continues with outcomes and experiences for children and young people continuing to suffer, and cost pressures increasing.

We need to turn this vicious cycle into a virtuous one

22. We are clear that in an effective and sustainable SEND system that delivers great outcomes for children and young people, the vast majority of children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive without the need for an EHCP or a specialist or alternative provision place. This is because their needs would be identified promptly, and appropriate support would be put in place at the earliest opportunity before needs can escalate. Those children and young people who require an EHCP or specialist placement would be able to access it with minimal bureaucracy.
23. To shift the dial, we are setting out proposals for an inclusive system, starting with improved mainstream provision that is built on early and accurate identification of needs, high-quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum, and prompt access to targeted support where it is needed. Alongside that, we need a strong specialist sector that has a clear purpose to support those children and young people with more complex needs who require specialist or alternative provision.
24. We need to deliver greater national consistency in the support that should be made available, how it should be accessed and how it should be funded. We need a system where decision-making is based on the needs of children and young people, not on location. This must be underpinned by strong co-production and accountability at every level, and improved data collection to give a timely picture of how the system is performing so that issues can be addressed promptly. This green paper sets out an ambitious plan for how we will deliver a more inclusive SEND system.

A single national SEND and alternative provision system

25. We propose to:

- establish a **new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards** for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care
- review and update the **SEND Code of Practice** to ensure it reflects the new national standards to promote nationally consistent systems, processes and provision
- **establish new local SEND partnerships**, bringing together education (including alternative provision), health and care partners with local government and other partners to produce a **local inclusion plan** setting out how each local area will meet the national standards
- **introduce a standardised and digitised EHCP process and template** to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency
- **support parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings**, drawn from the local inclusion plan, including mainstream, specialist and independent, that are appropriate to meet the child or young person's needs
- **streamline the redress process**, making it easier to resolve disputes earlier, including through mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases

Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

26. We will:

- **increase our total investment in schools' budgets by £7 billion by 2024-25, compared to 2021-22**, including an additional £1 billion in 2022-23 alone for children and young people with complex needs
- **consult on the introduction of a new SENCo National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for school SENCos**, and increase the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 SENCo qualification in early years settings to improve SEND expertise
- **commission analysis to better understand the support that children and young people with SEND need from the health workforce** so that there is a clear focus on SEND in health workforce planning

- **improve mainstream provision**, building on the ambitious Schools White Paper, through excellent teacher training and development and a ‘what works’ evidence programme to identify and share best practice, including in early intervention
- **fund more than 10,000 additional respite placements through an investment of £30 million**, alongside £82 million to create a network of family hubs, so more children, young people and their families can access wraparound support
- **invest £2.6 billion, over the next three years, to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision**. We will deliver more new special and alternative provision free schools in addition to more than 60 already in the pipeline
- **set out a clear timeline that, by 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools**, with their school, including special and alternative provision, in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT), or with plans to join or form one, sharing expertise and resources to improve outcomes
- **invest £18 million over the next three years to build capacity in the Supported Internships Programme**, and improve transitions at further education by introducing Common Transfer Files alongside piloting the roll out of adjustment passports to ensure young people with SEND are prepared for employment and higher education

A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

27. We propose to:

- **make alternative provision an integral part of local SEND systems** by requiring the new local SEND partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention
- **give alternative provision schools the funding stability to deliver a service focused on early intervention** by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision-specific budget
- **build system capacity to deliver the vision through plans for all alternative provision schools to be in a strong multi-academy trust**, or have plans to join or form one, to deliver evidence-led services based on best practice, and open new alternative provision free schools where they are most needed
- **develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision** which sets robust standards focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations
- **deliver greater oversight and transparency of pupil movements** including placements into and out of alternative provision

- **launch a call for evidence, before the summer, on the use of unregistered provision** to investigate existing practice

System roles, accountabilities and funding reform

28. We propose to:

- **deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities** with every partner across education, health, care and local government having a clear role to play, and being equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities
- **equip the Department for Education's (DfE) new Regions Group** to take responsibility for holding local authorities and MATs to account for delivering for children and young people with SEND locally through new funding agreements between local government and DfE
- **provide statutory guidance to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)** to set out clearly how statutory responsibilities for SEND should be discharged
- **introduce new inclusion dashboards for 0-25 provision**, offering a timely, transparent picture of how the system is performing at a local and national level across education, health and care
- **introduce a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding**, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the national standards
- **work with Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) on their plan to deliver an updated Local Area SEND Inspection Framework** with a focus on arrangements and experience for children and young people with SEND and in alternative provision

Delivering change for children and families

29. We will:

- **take immediate steps to stabilise local SEND systems by investing an additional £300 million through the Safety Valve Programme and £85 million in the Delivering Better Value programme**, over the next three years, to support those local authorities with the biggest deficits
- **task the SEND and Alternative Provision Directorate within DfE** to work with system leaders from across education, health and care and the Department of Health and Social Care to develop the national SEND standards

- support delivery through a **£70 million SEND and Alternative Provision change programme** to both test and refine key proposals and support local SEND systems across the country to manage local improvement
- publish a **national SEND and alternative provision delivery plan** setting out government's response to this public consultation and how change will be implemented in detail and by whom to deliver better outcomes for children and young people
- establish, for implementation of the national delivery plan, **a new National SEND Delivery Board** to bring together relevant government departments with national delivery partners including parents, carers and representatives of local government, education, health and care to hold partners to account for the timely implementation of proposals

Chapter 1: The case for change

Summary

1. The current SEND system means that too many children and young people with SEND are achieving poor outcomes. Parents and carers are facing difficulty and delay in accessing support for their child. Providers have to navigate a complex system where it is not clear what support should be provided or who should pay for it. Despite a more than 40% increase in high needs funding between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023³⁵, local government spending is outstripping funding and the system is financially unsustainable³⁶.
2. In this chapter, we set out the key findings from the SEND Review and what is driving these challenges. We set out our vision for what needs to change to ensure that more children and young people are set up to succeed in a sustainable, less bureaucratic system. And finally, we set out our plan for action for how we propose to deliver the improvements the system needs.

The SEND system since 2014

3. In 2014, the SEND system underwent significant reform, with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) being introduced as a replacement for the previous Statement of special educational needs. The fundamental principles that underpinned these reforms of co-production, joint working and a 0-25 child-centred approach were widely supported at the time and continue to be broadly supported now.
4. The Review has seen examples of mainstream early years settings, schools, academies and further education settings that have high aspirations for children and young people with SEND and provide excellent support. 90% of state funded special schools are graded outstanding or good by Ofsted³⁷ and 2,200 young people were successfully placed on a supported internship in 2021³⁸. We have seen, particularly over the course of the pandemic, that the system is driven by a hard-working and dedicated workforce who are committed to delivering excellent support for children and young people with SEND.
5. We have also seen changes in the identification of some types of need. Since 2015, there has been an increase in the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), speech and language communication needs (SLCN), or social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) and a decrease in the proportion of those with moderate learning difficulty (MLD)³⁹. See Annex Figure 2 for further details.
6. But, even accounting for these changes identified in need, it is clear that the SEND system is not operating effectively and the ambitions of the 2014 reforms have not yet

been realised fully, with too many children and young people not fulfilling their potential, parental confidence in decline and further pressure on a system already under strain.

The aims of the SEND Review

7. The SEND Review was launched in 2019 in response to growing concern about the challenges facing the SEND system in England and the future of the children and young people it supports. Successive public reports, including those from the [Education Select Committee](#), the [National Audit Office](#), and the [Public Accounts Committee](#), highlighted a range of challenges to be addressed. The SEND Review committed to examining how the system has evolved since 2014, how it can be made to work best for all families and how it can ensure the effective and sustainable use of resources.
8. Alternative provision can serve children and young people both with and without SEND. While alternative provision was not part of the 2014 reforms, it is clear it is increasingly being used as part of the SEND system, demonstrated by the incremental rise in EHCP placements and the fact that over 80% of those in state place-funded alternative provision have SEN⁴⁰. Close working with the sector during the pandemic, along with concerns about the poor outcomes for children and young people leaving alternative provision, demonstrates that reform is needed. We have therefore considered reform to alternative provision within the scope of this Review.
9. The SEND Review has looked at the full range of the SEND system, spanning early years provision through to further education and encompassing education, health and care. We have listened to hundreds of people, including children and young people, parents, the workforce within early years settings, schools, further education and alternative provision. We have listened to DfE's national young SEND advisory group, FLARE. We have spoken with health commissioners, designated clinical and medical officers, as well as social workers. We have spoken with those helping families to navigate the SEND system, as well as many charities whose focus is on supporting those with specific disabilities.
10. We have sought advice from independent advisers, key member organisations, further education commissioners, members of the government's SEND Review Steering Group and our Alternative Provision Stakeholder Group (see acknowledgements for members of these groups). We are very grateful to everyone who has taken the time to engage with us and offer their thoughtful insights and observations.
11. We conducted the SEND Review against the backdrop of the pandemic and understand how difficult the pandemic has been for so many people, including those families with children and young people with SEND. Despite the tireless work of

teachers, leaders, support staff, early years practitioners, local authorities and wider children's professionals across health and social care, children and young people with SEND missed out on learning and wider enrichment opportunities. But we recognise the challenges are not new: instead, the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing difficulties⁴¹. For too many children and young people, the SEND system is not working well enough.

Children and young people with SEND and those in alternative provision have consistently poorer outcomes than their peers

12. Research from the [Children's Commissioner's Big Ask Survey](#) shows children and young people with SEND have the same aspirations as their peers. They value their education and want good friends, a social life, and good mental health. They desire independence, and the prospect of a good job or career in the future⁴². We believe that, with the right support, all children and young people with SEND can achieve their potential, with most achieving in line with their peers.
13. Despite these aspirations, children and young people with SEN fall behind their peers at every stage of education, regardless of their prior attainment. Children and young people with SEN are also more likely to be disengaged from education, pushing them further behind. They have poorer attendance⁴³ and are more likely to be excluded⁴⁴.
14. Key stage 4 outcomes for children and young people in alternative provision are poor, with 4.5% achieving grades 9-4 in GCSE English and maths in 2018/19⁴⁵ and only 55% sustaining their post-16 destination after six months in 2019/20⁴⁶. This is often a reflection of the fact that over three quarters of children and young people in state place-funded alternative provision are in year groups 9-11⁴⁷, many having already fallen a long way behind in their education.
15. Children and young people with SEN face poor outcomes beyond education. Whilst the likelihood of children with SEN being involved in crime is low – just 8% of children who had ever had SEN Support had also ever offended and 14% of children who had ever had an EHCP had also ever offended - those who are identified with SEN at some point are more likely to have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence, including serious violence offences. Children who had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence were more likely to be recorded as having SEN (both with SEN Support and with an EHCP) than the all-pupil cohort. Of children who had been cautioned or sentenced for an offence, 67% had ever had SEN Support and 13% had ever had an EHCP⁴⁸. Young people with SEND are also overrepresented in the justice system: one in four children and young people in young offender institutions have SEND⁴⁹.

16. As young people with SEN move into adulthood they find it more difficult to secure employment; at age 27 young people with SEN are 25% less likely to be in sustained employment than their peers with no identified SEN⁵⁰.

Experiences of the SEND and alternative provision system are negative

‘Even once you manage to get an EHCP then a whole new fight with the local authority starts - it's such a massive ordeal to make sure it's written correctly so the child gets the actual support - ultimately parents (like me) end up forced to appeal and go through tribunal’ – Parent, focus group 2021

17. Parents and carers want accurate information from their first contact with professionals and want to be partners in determining arrangements for supporting their child. However, this does not always happen. Parents and carers are not always made aware of the support that their child is accessing. Many parents and carers also find their child has been directed to alternative provision by their school and have little or no say in this decision.
18. Research from the [Children's Commissioner's Big Ask Survey](#)⁵¹ showed many children and young people felt they had not received enough understanding or tailored support for their needs. When children and young people did not get the support they wanted, they often felt excluded, unable to form relationships with children their own age, and in some cases bullied. In the parents and pupils survey (2019)⁵² and panel (2021)⁵³ commissioned by DfE, pupils with SEND were more likely to report experiencing bullying.
19. Families of children with SEND have spoken about the impact that trying to secure SEND provision has on them, including the financial costs and mental health impact⁵⁴. We have heard the system is not always equally accessible parents and carers with access to financial and social resources are often better placed to secure support for their children. In a 2021 survey of 483 responses, conducted during the pandemic, 68% of parents reported that their child's needs were ‘not met at all’ or only ‘somewhat met’ in accordance with their EHCP⁵⁵.
20. The growing number of tribunal cases reflects this dissatisfaction. In the academic year 2020/21, there was an 8% increase in registered appeals in relation to SEND, with 96% of decided cases found at least part in favour of families⁵⁶. Despite this high success rate, going to tribunal is not an easy decision for families as it carries a huge emotional, and sometimes financial, burden.
21. The financial and administrative burden of preparing for and responding to tribunal cases is also felt significantly by local authorities and diverts resources away from providing direct support, which in turn affects children and young people waiting to receive the support they need.

The SEND and alternative provision system is financially unsustainable

22. The government has made significant investment in the SEND system: by the 2024-25 financial year, the core schools' budget will have increased by more than £7 billion compared to its 2021-22 level. Within this overall budget, high needs funding for children and young people aged 0-25 with more complex needs has increased by £1.5 billion over the last two years and will increase by a further £1 billion in the next financial year to reach a total of £9.1 billion: an increase of more than 40% over three years. We will sustain and build on these increases through the rest of the current Spending Review period.
23. Despite this significant investment, the system is not delivering value for money and outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND are not improving. Instead, the system has become financially unsustainable, with investment being outstripped by spending which has left two thirds of local authorities with growing deficits. By the end of 2020-21, the total national deficit was over £1 billion.
24. Between 2014-15 and 2020-21, the largest contributor to the increases in high needs spend was the rising proportion of children and young people with an EHCP, over and above general population change, which accounted for roughly half of the more than £2 billion increase. See Annex Figure 3 for further details.
25. There is a lack of consistency in the costs of different types of specialist provision for children and young people with SEND, with the average cost of a placement in an independent special school costing more than double that of a placement in a maintained or academy special school (£54,000 compared with £22,000⁵⁷). However, independent special schools often cater for children and young people with very complex needs which increases the average cost. Spending on this more expensive provision is taking up a greater proportion of local authorities spending – from 2014-15 to 2020-21, local authority spending on independent special and non-maintained special school places increased by 126%, compared with a 38% increase in spending on other special school provision; spending on alternative provision increased by 18% over the same period⁵⁸.

There is too much inconsistency across the SEND system in how and where needs are assessed and met

26. The 2014 reforms introduced, and placed significant emphasis on, local discretion with expectations based on the local authority working closely with local education, health and care partners, parents and carers.
27. However, this local discretion has resulted in significant inconsistencies in how SEND provision is delivered in practice across the country. This begins with inconsistency in how needs are identified and assessed: research by the [Education Policy Institute](#)

found that the school a child or young person attends is the greatest factor in whether they are identified as having SEN, and whether they access support, accounting for 67 to 69% of the inconsistency in identification⁵⁹.

28. A lack of consistent guidance as to the type of settings where needs should most effectively be met means that there is significant inconsistency across the country in whether children and young people with the same types of needs receive an EHCP and where they are educated. A child or young person may be effectively supported in a mainstream school in one area of the country, but would be placed in a specialist setting if they were living in another area. See Annex Figure 4 for further details. Rates of EHCPs also vary significantly: 5.5% of all pupils in Torbay have an EHCP compared with 1.7% in Nottinghamshire⁶⁰.

A vicious cycle is driving these challenges

29. These challenges are driven by a vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence across the system, and inefficient resource allocation.



Figure 1: A vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence and inefficient resource allocation is driving these challenges

30. This begins in early years and mainstream schools where, despite the best endeavours of the workforce, settings are frequently ill-equipped to identify and effectively support needs⁶¹. This results in children and young people's needs being identified late, or incorrectly, with needs escalating and becoming more entrenched. In some cases, poor quality teaching, particularly in reading, may cause a child or young person to fall behind their peers and be incorrectly identified as having special educational needs.
31. Inconsistency across the system, around the identification and support of needs, means that there is inconsistent practice: parents, carers and providers do not know what to reasonably expect from their local settings. This results in low confidence amongst parents, carers, and providers in the ability of mainstream settings to effectively meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
32. As a result of this low confidence, parents, carers, and providers feel they need to secure EHCPs and, in some cases, specialist provision as a means of guaranteeing appropriate support for their child. This increased need for EHCPs and specialist provision creates further challenges across the system:
- **children and young people face delays in accessing support** as they need to go through a time-intensive and bureaucratic process to access provision, even when what might be required is high-quality teaching to catch-up or time-bound access to a particular service.
 - **children and young people are not always placed in the most appropriate setting**. Not every child or young person with SEND requires a specialist placement, but a lack of clarity on when specialist provision is appropriate means that some children and young people end up in these settings even when their needs could be met effectively in mainstream, with some high-quality targeted support.
 - **increased requests for placements in specialist provision means that capacity is restricted**. Some children and young people, including those with more complex needs, face long journeys to school or have to attend out of area placements, resulting in increased costs for school transport. In some areas, alternative provision appears to be increasingly used to supplement special school places. Pressures on the capacity of specialist provision also mean that more children are placed in independent specialist provision, even when this may not be the most effective setting for them, resulting in poor value for money.
33. As more children and young people receive EHCPs and attend specialist settings, more resource and capacity is pulled to the specialist end of the system, meaning that there is less resource available to deliver early intervention and effective, timely support in mainstream settings. As a result, the vicious cycle continues with outcomes and experiences continuing to suffer, and costs pressures increasing.

A system where every child and young person can access the right support in the right place at the right time

34. Addressing these challenges, and delivering better outcomes, improved experiences and financial sustainability, requires a whole system response. Far more children and young people should be able to access the support they need in their local mainstream setting, without the need for an EHCP or specialist provision. That begins with clear and common standards across the SEND and alternative provision system so that needs are identified, assessed and supported fairly and consistently, no matter where a child or young person lives or is educated. Consistent standards will facilitate a more inclusive system, with more children and young people able to have their needs met in high-quality mainstream provision with high aspirations, a confident and expert workforce and access to high-quality targeted support as needed.
35. We also need a strong specialist sector that supports those children and young people with more complex needs, and a clear vision for an improved alternative provision system that offers upstream support as well as placements. We need funding reform and strengthened accountability across the system so that everyone knows the role they play, is incentivised and held to account for doing so. We need a strong focus on delivery, supporting the move to a more inclusive system that starts to deliver now, and in the long-term for children, young people and their families. This green paper sets out how we intend to deliver these changes in England so that every child and young person can achieve their potential.

Chapter 2: A single national SEND and alternative provision system

Summary

1. The Review has concluded that there is a need for much greater consistency in how needs are identified and supported, so that decisions about support and provision are made based on a child or young person's needs, in co-production with families, not where they live or the setting they attend. The Review has heard that parents and carers want greater confidence that their local early years setting, school and college will be able to effectively support their child's needs.
2. We propose to establish a new national SEND and alternative provision system that will set new standards for how needs are identified and met across education, health and care. This will include standards on what support should be made available universally in mainstream settings, as well as guidance on when an EHCP is required, and when specialist provision, including alternative provision, is most appropriate for meeting a child or young person's needs.
3. In this chapter, we set out what the new national standards would cover, and how they would be delivered in a local area. In Chapter 3, we expand on how we propose to improve provision across the system, starting with excellent teaching in mainstream settings and improved workforce expertise across early years, schools and further education. In Chapter 4, we set out how this system will operate specifically for alternative provision settings. In Chapter 5, we set out our proposals for ensuring there are clear roles and responsibilities, alongside funding reform and robust accountability across processes and procedures in the system. Finally, in Chapter 6, we set out our plans for delivering the proposals set out in this green paper.

We propose to:

- establish a **new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards** for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care
- review and update the **SEND Code of Practice** to ensure it reflects the new national standards to promote nationally consistent systems, processes and provision
- **establish new local SEND partnerships**, bringing together education (including alternative provision), health and care partners with local government and other partners to produce a **local inclusion plan** setting out how each local area will meet the national standards

- **introduce a standardised and digitised EHCP process and template** to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency
- **support parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings**, drawn from the local inclusion plan, including mainstream, specialist and independent, that are appropriate to meet the child or young person's needs
- **streamline the redress process**, making it easier to resolve disputes earlier, including through mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases

What this means for:

Children and young people: will be able to access the support they need, without bureaucracy and delay, and will be able to attend the setting that is right for them so that they can be supported to achieve improved outcomes.

Parents and carers: can be confident that their child's needs will be met effectively in the most appropriate local setting, without having to fight to secure the appropriate support for their child's needs. They can be clear about what support their child is receiving and are engaged in decision-making at every stage.

Education settings: can be clear about the support that they are expected to ordinarily deliver for children and young people with SEND. They can be engaged in strategic decision-making in their local area so that they can access the right targeted support for children and young people quickly and effectively.

Health and care providers: will be clear about their responsibilities in meeting children and young people's needs. Consistent processes and strategic planning will mean services can be jointly commissioned and delivered across regions to meet the needs of children and young people across their local area.

Local government: is clear on roles and responsibilities with the levers to fulfil their statutory duties. They can deliver the right, appropriate support to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in their local area.

We propose to legislate for new national SEND standards

4. The 2014 reforms placed a strong emphasis on local decision-making. However, it is clear that there is too much local discretion, to the extent that there are now, in effect, 152 local SEND and alternative provision systems operating across the country. This is difficult for parents and carers navigating the system and for education settings, particularly MATs and further education providers across regions, who have to deal with different systems, processes and funding regimes across multiple local authorities.

5. We propose to create new national SEND standards spanning early years settings through to further education. These standards would make consistent the provision, processes and systems that should be made available across the country for every child and young person with SEND, acting as a common point of reference for every partner within the SEND and alternative provision system. We intend for these to apply across education, health and care. We propose to bring forward legislation to place the standards on a statutory footing within the early years and education sectors and revise the SEND Code of Practice to reflect these standards. Recognising the different legal framework for health and adult social care (for ages 18-25), we will work with relevant bodies to ensure the new national SEND standards are appropriate for health and adult social care, reflecting this in the relevant health commissioning guidance and in line with the Care Act 2014. The application of the national standards to children's social care will be informed by the government's response to the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The proposed national standards will include:

- **How needs should be identified and assessed:** the standards will set consistent processes for decision-making on how a child or young person's needs are identified and recorded and instruct on how and when an assessment should take place, who should be involved in the assessment process, and how the information and evidence collected should be recorded and monitored. This will include standards on how and when a child or young person should be identified as requiring SEN Support, and best practice in reasonable adjustments for disabled children, such as those children with a sensory impairment. These standards should improve consistency of identification, reducing the likelihood of misidentification driven by place, setting or other factors such as race or disadvantage.
- **The appropriate provision that should be made available for different types of need:** the national standards will set out the full range of appropriate types of support and placements for meeting different needs. This will include setting out when needs can and should be met effectively in mainstream provision, and the support that should be made ordinarily available in mainstream settings to facilitate this. It will also bring clarity to the circumstances in which a child or young person needs an EHCP, and additionally whether their needs should be met in a specialist setting (including alternative provision). For those parents and carers with children with complex needs, there will be greater clarity too in when a special school is appropriate. There will be greater clarity about which partners should fund specific forms of support and provision.
- **Standardised processes for accessing and reviewing support:** the standards will set out clear processes for accessing and reviewing the support that is put in place in mainstream settings, including consistent standards on co-production with children, young people, parents and carers. It will also set clear standards for how

and when EHCPs should be effectively reviewed, with a much greater emphasis on effective time-bound support and achieving individual outcomes.

- **Standards for co-producing and communicating with children, young people, parents and carers:** co-production with children, young people and families is a fundamental principle of the SEND system and enables children, young people, parents and carers to be valued partners in decision-making⁶². We will introduce consistent standards for co-production and communication with children, young people and their families so that they are engaged in the decision-making process around the support that they receive and the progress they are making.
- **Standards for transitions:** transitions standards will ensure there are consistently deliverable arrangements in place as children and young people move to their next phase, particularly into further education, employment, and adulthood. The standards will have the preparation for adulthood goals at their heart, and will provide consistency on the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of transitions for children and young people in both mainstream and specialist settings.

Consultation Question 1: What key factors should be considered when developing national standards to ensure they deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families? This includes how the standards apply across education, health and care in a 0-25 system.

We propose to introduce new local SEND partnerships to ensure effective local delivery

6. National standards will ensure that there is greater fairness and consistency in decision-making across the country in how needs are identified, assessed and supported. However, we recognise that some local discretion will be required and necessary, taking into account differing prevalence of need, geographical contexts, and patterns of provision to enable effective local delivery. We want to create a system that promotes a collaborative approach to supporting children and young people with SEND, built on common understanding of needs and provision, with effective joint working, mutual trust and accountability between all system partners.
7. We propose to legislate to enable statutory local SEND partnership arrangements that bring together representatives across early years, schools, further education, alternative and specialist provision, in addition to health and care partners and other partners, including youth justice. The partnerships will be convened by local authorities who will continue to hold responsibility for high needs funding and coordinate the local system to deliver statutory responsibilities including duties for vulnerable children. We want to establish these new partnership arrangements, mindful of current local partnerships and not wanting to duplicate other partnership

arrangements including Integrated Care Partnerships. Statutory guidance will be clear on what is expected of every partner involved to enable these partnerships to be successful.

8. This local partnership will be responsible for working with parents and carers to carry out an assessment of need and existing provision across their local area, capturing the prevalence of different types of need locally, and the range of provision that will need to be available locally to effectively meet those needs. For alternative provision, this must include the provision necessary across a continuum of support, with a strong focus on targeted support in mainstream settings (further detail in Chapter 4). This partnership arrangement will enable local authorities to work collaboratively with health and care partners as well as local education settings, including MATs, to meet their statutory responsibilities for children and young people with SEND. We therefore propose to review the current co-operation duties and requirement to keep education and care provision under review.
9. Following the needs assessment, the local partnership will work with parents and carers to produce a local inclusion plan. The local inclusion plan should be a strategic plan for delivery including setting out the provision and services that should be commissioned in line with the national standards and based on the results of the joint needs assessment. Local partnerships will be expected to consider local issues, such as transport arrangements, when determining the provision that is included within the local inclusion plan. The local inclusion plan will inform the local offer, with the national standards being clear on what should be included within the local offer. We will undertake a local authority new burdens assessment as part of this proposal, including consideration of the capacity required to manage delivery of this change, such as the training and development needs of local authority SEN officer teams. In Chapter 5 we expand on how inclusion plans will be quality assured.
10. Whilst we would expect most planning and commissioning for provision to take place at a local authority level, for some types of provision a regional approach may be more appropriate. We propose that the national system encourages more commissioning at a regional level. This is likely to be the case for further education settings, whose footprint often spans across multiple local authorities⁶³ and for specialist provision to meet the most complex needs which tend to be less prevalent.
11. The local partnership will need to work alongside multi-agency safeguarding partnerships and Integrated Care Systems, with the joint needs assessment and local inclusion plan informing health and care commissioning to ensure integrated delivery of services across education, health and care.

Consultation Question 2: How should we develop the proposal for new local SEND partnerships to oversee the effective development of local inclusion plans whilst avoiding placing unnecessary burdens or duplicating current partnerships?

Consultation Question 3: What factors would enable local authorities to successfully commission provision for low-incidence high cost need, and further education, across local authority boundaries?

We propose mandating the use of local multi-agency panels to improve parental confidence in the Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment process

12. We have heard from parents that improving the impartiality of the needs assessment process will improve their overall confidence in EHC needs assessments and local authority decision-making. Some areas have already taken steps to address this through the use of multi-agency panels. We propose introducing statutory local multi-agency panels to review and make recommendations on requests for EHC needs assessments, the needs assessments themselves and the consequent placement and funding decisions.
13. This panel would include representation from schools and colleges, health, social care, parents and carers to take a holistic view of the child or young person. They would make recommendations to the local authority on whether (following the decision-making processes set out in law) an EHC needs assessment must be carried out, whether or not an EHCP is required, and that the provision specified in a plan is in accordance with the national model. The local authority must then take these recommendations into account when making their final decisions.

We propose to standardise EHCPs to ensure consistent access to specialist provision

14. The component sections and information that must be included within an EHCP are defined in law, and local areas have the discretion to create their own versions of the EHCP template and the process of inputting into them. However, recent analysis⁶⁴ by the Children's Commissioner highlights a lack of consistency in the specificity of information included within EHCPs, and how outcomes are defined, including the timeframe in which a child or young person is expected to achieve them by. There were inconsistencies too in the structure, length and formatting of EHCP forms, with the samples included in the analysis ranging from a maximum of 40 pages in one local authority to between 8 and 23 in another. The EHCPs produced by the local authorities in the sample would take approximately 50 minutes on average to read aloud to a child. This lack of consistency means that partners who work across multiple local authorities must navigate multiple processes and templates, reducing their capacity to deliver support and adding to their administrative burden.
15. We therefore propose to introduce standardised EHCP templates and processes. This will place greater focus on the support that is being put in place, including whether

support should be classed as education, health and care interventions, and therefore funded by the appropriate service. Documentation must be co-produced with parents, carers, children and young people to ensure the templates produced are user-friendly and accessible.

16. We know that families can feel overwhelmed and overburdened by multiple assessments. The national standards will make clear the input required from different services, including health and social care, to contribute to an EHC needs assessment. We will more clearly define the statutory requirement for social care input into EHC assessments, so that at a minimum children and young people with SEND are signposted to appropriate advice and guidance when more formal social care support may not be necessary.
17. We will explore opportunities for streamlining EHC and social care assessments following publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. We will also review whether the distinction between sections H1 (provision under Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970) and H2 (any other social care provision reasonably required by the young person's learning difficulties or disabilities) of EHCPs remain helpful and necessary.
18. We will standardise the annual review process for reviewing EHCPs, with new standards on documenting and celebrating progress achieved towards milestones and outcomes. We will introduce a requirement to discuss and record whether a step down to targeted support, and cessation of an EHCP, is more appropriate for meeting the child or young person's needs. This will ensure that when an EHCP is no longer necessary it can be ended whilst also ensuring that children and young people continue to access appropriate levels of support.
19. We propose to change the timescale for the issuing of draft plans following annual reviews. In light of a recent High Court judgment⁶⁵, local authorities must now issue proposed amendments to the plan within four weeks of a review meeting. We are concerned that this deadline does not strike a balance between timeliness and certainty for families and enabling local authorities to gather and consider all the information and advice they need to draft quality amendments to an EHCP. We will therefore consult shortly on a proposal for a timescale that will enable a quality EHCP to be produced.

We propose to digitise EHCPs to reduce bureaucracy

20. We will also digitise the EHCP process with a new digital EHCP template and a secure central location for parents, carers and professionals to upload key information, reducing the bureaucracy of the current process. We will work with parents, carers and professionals to make sure that they can submit and access all

the relevant information for producing, maintaining and reviewing the plan in a streamlined way that is easy to navigate and access.

21. We will make sure that the new system takes full advantage of the potential of technology and can give a holistic picture of the child or young person, for example, by including photos and videos. We will ensure there are appropriate controls in place so that the plan cannot be changed without parent or carer input and that it will provide an audit trail of previous decisions and amendments. The process will take account of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) considerations and information sharing protocols.
22. A digital EHCP process will also allow for better data collection including anonymous tracking of progress made towards outcomes and analysis of trends in the prevalence of need, and the support and provision that is made available. This data will be used by DfE to review and update the national standards so that they remain relevant and issues can be addressed proactively.
23. These changes will particularly support those children and young people who move school in the middle of an academic year. We will also consider how we can better support those who return to England following deployment abroad or in other parts of the UK, such as families in the Armed Forces or Crown Servants.

Consultation Question 4: What components of the EHCP should we consider reviewing or amending as we move to a standardised and digitised version?

We propose to amend the process for naming a place within an EHCP

24. In instances where it has been identified that a child or young person's needs require a placement in specialist provision, the local inclusion plan will set out the provision that is available within the local area, including units within mainstream, alternative and specialist provision.
25. In order to support parents and carers to express an informed preference of a suitable placement, they will be provided with a tailored list of settings based on the local inclusion plan, including mainstream, specialist and independent, that are appropriate to meet the child or young person's needs. These settings may be outside of the boundary of the local authority where this is appropriate. The local authority will allocate the first available place in order of the parent's or carer's preference and this school will be named in the child's EHCP.
26. Parents will continue to have the right to request a mainstream setting for their child, even when they are eligible for a specialist setting. Local authorities must name the mainstream setting where this is the parental preference, unless it is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others. These changes will not impact children

or young people already in a specialist setting and will apply to future decisions about school places. This change will not come into effect until the local inclusion plan for an area has been quality assured and signed off as being in accordance with the national standards.

27. For children and young people with an EHCP, the setting named on the plan has a legal duty to admit the child or young person. We are aware of instances of alleged inappropriate or unlawful practices: 94% of local authorities said that “resistance from some schools to admit or retain pupils with additional needs or vulnerabilities” happened occasionally or regularly⁶⁶.

28. There are processes to allow local authorities to direct admissions in maintained schools. Although academies are required to admit a child or young person with an EHCP, the power to direct admissions for academies remains with the Secretary of State for Education. We will consider changing this process, so that, as a final safety net to cover rare circumstances where collaborative working breaks down, local authorities have a backstop power to direct trusts to admit children, with a right for the trust to appeal to the Schools Adjudicator. This is important to ensure that children and young people with SEND are not left without a school place for unreasonable lengths of time. It will also support the wider pupil movements process, including placements into and out of alternative provision, with further detail on this set out in Chapter 4.

Consultation Question 5: How can parents and local authorities most effectively work together to produce a tailored list of placements that is appropriate for their child, and gives parents’ confidence in the EHCP process?

We propose to strengthen earlier redress through clear national standards and the introduction of mandatory mediation

29. The new national system will be designed to minimise uncertainty and disagreements throughout the system and improve parental confidence. We recognise, however, that disputes around decision-making may still occur, but these should be addressed and resolved promptly where possible.

30. Through the national system, we will set standards for how complaints related to SEND processes and provision should be dealt with and who is responsible for resolving concerns. This will include improved quality assurance and greater clarity on the local authority commissioned dispute resolution and mediation services, alongside greater clarity on the role of local SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) who provide impartial support to families and help them navigate processes including their options for redress.

31. Mediation helps to maintain and improve relationships between providers, local authorities and families which is important for long-term collaborative working and supports better outcomes for children and young people. In the current system, families must secure a mediation certificate before registering an appeal with the tribunal⁶⁷, but they do not have to go through mediation itself. We propose to change this so that families and local authorities must engage in mediation prior to registering an appeal to the tribunal. The national standards will set clear expectations of how different parties should engage in mediation, including timescales for mediation to take place and ensuring that local authority decision-makers attend meetings. We will make sure there is appropriate support available to parents to help them understand the mediation process and how best to engage with it.
32. We propose to keep the impact of mandatory mediation under review as we start to deliver these changes. If the national standards and mandatory mediation does not prove effective in strengthening earlier redress, we will consider whether it is necessary to introduce an additional redress measure in the form of an independent review mechanism. This could be the same multi-agency panel proposed in paragraph 13 that reviews evidence at the EHC needs assessment stage to ensure consistency. In these circumstances, the panel would be responsible for reviewing the evidence in any dispute cases that are eligible for tribunal appeal, including refusal to assess need, refusal to offer an EHCP and the content of a plan. Cases would need to go through mediation first and then be reviewed by the independent local panel prior to a tribunal appeal being registered. We would need to consider whether this panel could make the binding legal judgements required to overturn previous local authority decisions and how this would apply across education, health and care.

Consultation Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our overall approach to strengthen redress, including through national standards and mandatory mediation?

33. The First-tier SEND Tribunal plays an important role in resolving disputes between parents, carers, young people and local authorities over a range of decisions. Appeals to the tribunal should only need to be made in cases where parents feel that their child's needs or proposed provision arrangements are not in line with the new national SEND standards, and mediation has not resolved the dispute. Tribunal decisions would be made in line with the new statutory national SEND and alternative provision standards. The extended powers, tested under the National Trial, given to the SEND Tribunal to hear appeals and make non-binding recommendations about health and social care aspects of EHCPs, provided those appeals also include education elements, will continue. This enables parents and carers to access a single route of redress across education, health and care.
34. The Equality Act 2010 makes clear that schools must operate inclusively and ensure that children and young people who are disabled can access and participate in education and other activities schools provide. However, where this is not the case

and practices may have been discriminatory, families and young people are able to bring a claim to the First-tier SEND Tribunal, which has the power to award a range of remedies to redress the wrong with the aim of putting a child or young person's education back on track. These remedies can include training of school staff and ordering a change to school policies. The government proposes to explore how well this arrangement is working in practice.

Consultation Question 7: Do you consider the current remedies available to the SEND Tribunal for disabled children who have been discriminated against by schools effective in putting children and young people's education back on track?

Chapter 3: Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

Summary

1. The Review has heard that we need a more inclusive system in order to ensure that children and young people with SEND are set up to thrive and are prepared for adulthood. The national standards introduced in Chapter 2 will provide consistency on where needs should be met, and how. This will give parents and carers increased confidence that their child can be supported effectively in their local mainstream setting and will offer providers greater clarity on the range of needs that can be met within a mainstream setting. An inclusive system will also ensure that children and young people have timely access to specialist services and support, including specialist placements where this is appropriate.
2. In this chapter, we set out our ambition for a continuum of support where needs are identified early and accurately so that the right support is delivered in the right setting at the right time. We will deliver improved mainstream provision, through a highly skilled and confident workforce across early years, schools and further education. Children and young people will access the support needed for effective transitions, especially as they move into further education, higher education, employment or adult social care services. There will be improved access to wraparound services for families, and more timely access to specialist support from health and social care partners where a child or young person requires this. We will invest in new specialist places, ensuring that those children and young people with more complex needs can access the support they need quickly and closer to home.

We will:

- **increase our total investment in schools' budgets by £7 billion by 2024-25, compared to 2021-22**, including an additional £1 billion in 2022-23 alone for children and young people with complex needs
- **consult on the introduction of a new SENCo National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for school SENCos** and increase the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 SENCo qualification in early years settings to improve SEND expertise
- **commission analysis to better understand the support that children and young people with SEND need from the health workforce** so that there is a clear focus on SEND in health workforce planning
- **improve mainstream provision**, building on the ambitious Schools White Paper, through excellent teacher training and development and a 'what works' evidence programme to identify and share best practice, including in early intervention

- **fund more than 10,000 additional respite placements through an investment of £30 million**, alongside £82 million to create a network of family hubs, so more children, young people and their families can access wraparound support
- **invest £2.6 billion, over the next three years, to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision**. We will deliver more new special and alternative provision free schools in addition to more than 60 already in the pipeline
- **set out a clear timeline that, by 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools**, with their school, including special and alternative provision, in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT), or with plans to join or form one, sharing expertise and resources to improve outcomes
- **invest £18 million over the next three years to build capacity in the Supported Internships Programme**, and improve transitions at further education by introducing Common Transfer Files alongside piloting the roll out of adjustment passports to ensure young people with SEND are prepared for higher education and employment

What this means for:

Children and young people: can have their needs met effectively in the setting that is most appropriate for them, with far more children and young people able to attend their local mainstream setting. Children and young people will receive excellent teaching and can get access to the support they need quickly and easily.

Parents and carers: can be confident that their child's needs will be met in the most appropriate local setting, with clarity about what support will be made available. Families can access wraparound support so that they can thrive.

Education settings: have clarity on the provision that they should be making available as standard. The workforce has access to training and development at every stage of their career giving them confidence and expertise to effectively identify and support needs.

Health and care providers: can work with education settings to identify and support needs early. Improved strategic SEND leadership and greater clarity on the specialist support they need to make available will allow them to ensure the right resources are in place in each local area.

Local government: will have access to local specialist services and places that they can commission to support children and young people locally where appropriate. Improved clarity about where needs should be met, alongside increased investment in wraparound support and services, will allow needs to be met earlier, reducing budgetary pressures on specialist services.

We will identify need at the earliest opportunity in high-quality early years provision

3. Excellent early years provision can play a key role by identifying needs early and putting the right support in place so that children can progress. Research has found that high-quality early years provision for children significantly decreased the likelihood of a child being identified with SEN in later years⁶⁸.
4. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) two-year old progress check and the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) development review offer two valuable opportunities to identify additional needs for children aged 2 to 3 and put the right support in place for the children who need it in partnership with parents, carers and any relevant professionals. These are important interventions in assessing a child's progress and optimise children's development, which includes a focus on communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, as well as on children's physical development milestones. We will explore ways to upskill early years practitioners in undertaking the EYFS two-year-old progress check and encourage further integration to join-up across education and health services.
5. We have heard that early years practitioners can struggle to accurately identify where a child may have SEND. Although group-based early years providers are expected to identify a SENCo, early years SENCos are not subject to a minimum statutory requirement regarding the level of qualification. We will increase specialist SEND expertise by increasing the number of trained and qualified SENCos in early years settings, with a view for training to be delivered to up to 5,000 SENCos. We will also conduct a review of the Level 3 early years educator qualification and increase the number of SEND-qualified Level 3 practitioners in early years settings.

Consultation Question 8: What steps should be taken to strengthen early years practice with regard to conducting the two-year-old progress check and integration with the Healthy Child Programme review?

The example of Daniella shows how the system will feel for children and young people following the proposed changes



Daniella is 4 and educated at her local mainstream nursery. The new SEND system means her needs are identified early and Daniella and her mum receive wraparound support.

Current experience and trajectory

In the early part of the pandemic, despite Daniella's nursery staying open, she missed out on some aspects of support and valuable time with her peers.

The nursery suspect that Daniella might have moderate learning difficulties, which have been compounded by the implications of the pandemic on her learning.

The nursery staff are not sure how best to identify her needs to provide the right support for her and do not know what extra support might be available.

Daniella continues to fall behind.

When Daniella arrives in reception, her needs are not clear and there is little record of the previous support she has had. Therefore, provision is not in place – Daniella's needs become more significant and challenging as she gets older.

Future experience

The staff at Daniella's nursery received SEND specific CPD with a focus on child development.

They utilise these skills to identify children who have been significantly impacted by a lack of interaction and services as a result of the pandemic.

The nursery staff exercise best practice and conduct a 2 ½ year integrated check with a health visitor. The health visitor uses the Early Language and Identification Measure Framework to identify the emerging need that explains why Daniella is beginning to fall behind her peers.

The local family hub model supports integrated working between professionals. The nursery staff and health visitor speak to the family and work together as a team around Daniella to identify what support can be put in place, supported by an effective local data sharing agreement so everyone in the multidisciplinary team has the information to make a good decision quickly.

On transition, the information about the support Daniella has received is passed from her nursery to her primary school. The school has access to a speech and language therapist (SaLT) if Daniella needs access to time-bound support.

We will support families at every stage of their child's journey

6. To improve the availability of early support for families, we will invest £82 million in family hubs across 75 local authorities in England, as part of a wider £300 million package to transform services for parents, carers, babies, and children. These hubs will offer improved access to services, with better connections between families, professional services and providers. Hubs will be expected to help families who have a child with SEND to navigate support by signposting and referring them to appropriate services within the hub network and incorporate evidence-based support for children with SEND into their provision where appropriate. Local authorities receiving funding to develop family hubs through the £12 million Transformation Fund will be expected to integrate SEND provision into their 0–2-year-old offer, offering children the best start in life.
7. We will expand the reach of the Supporting Families Programme through a £695 million investment over the coming three years to secure better outcomes for up to 300,000 families. This will ensure more families are able to access quality, multi-agency support across a wide range of needs, including SEND.
8. Families take on many additional roles to support their children practically and emotionally, without any break. Access to respite, short breaks and opportunities to take part in activities in the local community can reduce stress and increase wellbeing. However, many families struggle to access the additional support they need. A survey carried out by the Disabled Children's Partnership (DCP) showed 53% of parents and carers had been forced to give up a paid job to care for their disabled child⁶⁹.
9. Councils will be able to bid for projects to be funded from a new £30 million investment over the next three years, to set up more than 10,000 additional respite places. This small-scale project will enable innovative approaches to providing support to be evaluated over the course of the three-year programme, with best practice learning being shared across the system so that more families can benefit.
10. We recognise that even with this additional investment there is more that could be done to provide support for those children and young people with the most complex needs. We know that the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care has looked closely at early help and we await the report with its final recommendations in the spring.

We will deliver excellent teaching and high standards of curriculum in every mainstream school

11. Excellent mainstream provision serves as the foundation for a strong SEND system that delivers for all children and young people and allows them to have their needs met effectively in their local setting. That is why we are investing an additional £7

billion in the core schools' budget by 2024-25, including a further £1 billion in 2022-23 alone for all those aged 0-25 with more complex needs, to ensure that the system has sufficient resource in the years to come.

12. But we are clear that there is further to go in delivering a mainstream system that can support children and young people with SEND effectively. This government's Levelling Up mission for schools is that, by 2030, 90% of primary school children will have achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. But in 2019, only 22% of pupils with SEN met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2⁷⁰. We will not achieve our mission for 90% of children to reach the expected standard by 2030 in reading, writing and mathematics if we do not better support children and young people with additional needs or in alternative provision, many of whom do not have needs that, in and of themselves, should prevent them from achieving in line with their peers.
13. The Schools White Paper sets out a vision of the school system in which every child and young person can fulfil their potential, supported by an excellent teacher, high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance, backed by high-quality targeted support for those that need it. This includes a Parent Pledge from government to parents that wherever they live, and wherever they go to school, the school will provide evidence-based support if their child falls behind. We believe that, with excellent teaching and improved identification of need in inclusive educational settings, fewer children and young people will need additional interventions as they will be getting the support they need as part of high-quality teaching within the classroom.
14. Thanks to bodies such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and its international comparators, we have considerable knowledge and understanding about what works in improving children and young people's attainment and educational outcomes. To deepen our understanding, we will invest in new research on SEND classroom-based practice, exploring options to build this evidence base with a range of partners, including the EEF. This research will build on 'what works' initiatives currently underway in the SEND system to identify and share best practice, seeking to include trials on screening approaches to support early identification of special educational needs.
15. Excellent teaching is the bedrock of strong mainstream provision and is especially important for children and young people with SEND: research from the EEF found that teacher strategies, additional teaching, and positive interactions with teachers are important factors for improving the outcomes of children and young people with SEND⁷¹.
16. However, the level of confidence amongst teachers in supporting children with SEND is low. In 2019, 41% of teachers reported that there is appropriate training in place for

all teachers in supporting pupils receiving SEN support. This is a significant decrease since summer 2018 when 59% of teachers agreed with this statement⁷².

17. We have already begun to deliver a transformed professional development pathway for teachers, with high-quality training at every step of their career. We will invest up to £36 million in Initial Teacher Training and deliver 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities across Initial Teacher Training, the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications by the end of this parliament:

- **the mandatory Initial Teacher Training (ITT) core content framework**, published in November 2019, sets out a minimum mandatory entitlement for all trainee teachers. This includes receiving clear, consistent and effective mentoring in supporting pupils with a range of additional needs
- **the Early Career Framework**, introduced in September 2021, entitles early career teachers to a further 2 years of development. This framework was designed in consultation with the education sector, including SEND specialists, and includes training on identifying pupils who need new content further broken down
- **a reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)** for teachers and leaders, introduced in September 2021, have been designed to help the teaching profession hone and develop the skills they already have and to ensure they support all pupils to succeed in both mainstream and specialist settings
- we will establish an **Institute of Teaching** which will become England's flagship teacher development provider, working closely with the Education Endowment Foundation. It will provide cutting edge training and build the evidence base on effective teacher development driving standards of teacher training even higher

18. In February 2022, we announced more than £45 million of continued targeted support for children and young people with SEND; this includes funding for programmes that will directly support schools and colleges to effectively work with children and young people with SEND, for example through training on specific needs like autism.

19. During the pandemic, we offered training to teachers for the first time in using assistive technology that can reduce or remove barriers to learning for children with SEND. We are currently testing how training can increase school staffs' skills and confidence in using assistive technology, which is more widely available following investment in remote education and accessibility features.

20. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting children and young people with SEND to access learning in the classroom. We will set out clear guidance on the effective use and deployment of teaching assistants to support children and young people with SEND as part of the national standards.

We propose to introduce a new SENCo qualification

'I work with all our local mainstream schools. Having a good SENCo is beyond vital, but almost impossible to find.' Head, Special School, Provider Fieldwork, DfE Delivery Unit (2019)

21. All mainstream schools must have a qualified teacher or headteacher designated as the SENCo. SENCos' play a critical role in sharing SEND expertise within schools, providing specialist guidance to the wider school workforce, setting the strategic direction, and making day-to-day provisions to support children and young people with SEND, including those with EHCPs. Currently training is available via the NASENCo qualification. We recognise that there is variability in terms of SENCos' experience of the NASENCo and whether it provides the knowledge and skills needed for the role. The government also recognises that the NASENCo currently sits outside of wider teacher development reforms.
22. To improve the level of expertise and leadership amongst SENCos, we are proposing to introduce a new Leadership SENCo NPQ. The NPQ would replace the current NASENCo, bringing the SENCo qualification in line with other teaching training. The NPQ would help improve SENCos' leadership expertise, making them well-placed to sit on a senior leadership team and inform the strategic direction of a setting. As the mandatory qualification for SENCos, all SENCos who have not previously completed the NASENCo would be required to complete the SENCo NPQ.
23. We also recognise that the 3-year window within which SENCos must complete their mandatory qualification creates an inherent risk of variation of when SENCos complete their qualification. We therefore propose to strengthen the statutory timeframe so that in addition to requiring training to be completed within 3 years, headteachers must also be satisfied that a SENCo is in the process of obtaining the qualification when taking on the role. We believe that this approach will ensure that SENCos have the knowledge and skills needed for the role at the earliest opportunity, enabling them to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, their families and the school workforce.
24. Too often, SENCos' time is spent on completing bureaucratic administrative tasks instead of working with teachers to support children and young people with SEND: 74% of SENCos say that administrative work takes up the majority of their allocated SENCo time, with only 23% of SENCos reporting they have enough time to ensure that children and young people with EHCPs can access the provision they need⁷³. We therefore recommend that SENCos are given sufficient protected time to carry out their role and are provided with dedicated administrative support to reduce the time they spend on administrative work.

Consultation Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a new mandatory SENCo NPQ to replace the NASENCo?

Consultation Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should strengthen the mandatory SENCo training requirement by requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?

Governance

25. As set out in the SEND Code of Practice, schools are expected to identify a member of the governing body with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND. This role is important in supporting the work of the SENCo, headteacher and the governing body in determining the strategic development of SEND policy and provision, and ensuring the school meets its responsibilities for reasonable adjustments. Through the revised Code of Practice, we will be looking to strengthen the relationship between the SEND governor and the SENCo.

Case study – Autism Education Trust

The Autism Education Trust (AET) is a national partnership that operates across England and is supported by DfE. The AET creates and delivers a national professional development programme to enhance knowledge, understanding and skills in the workforce across early years, schools and post-16 settings to meet the needs of autistic children and young people.

The partnership consists of a range of organisations, including local authorities, the voluntary sector, universities and schools. These organisations apply to become AET programme partners, appointed and licenced by the AET to deliver the AET programme.

The AET provides a framework that can be used to change culture within education settings. Embedding the AET Programme creates a mainstream workforce who are skilled and confident to educate their local population of autistic children and young people, thus reducing the pressure on specialist services, preventing exclusions, and increasing the positive experiences of education for autistic children and young people.

The AET programme promotes whole-school development which is consistently applied through both the AET training and the implementation of the AET standards and competency frameworks. AET programme partners use these frameworks to benchmark how 'autism friendly' education settings are, and it enables them to assist education leaders to reflect and identify ways to improve their good autism practice by making reasonable adjustments as a whole setting.

The AET refer to this as a mainstream plus approach and it ties directly to their Good Autism Practice Principles (enabling environments, positive and effective relationships, understanding the individual, learning and development) that are evidence and research-based.

We will improve timely access to specialist support

26. Children and young people with SEND frequently require access to additional support from a broad specialist workforce across education, health and care to enable them to effectively access the mainstream curriculum.
27. During the pandemic, there were reports of delays or challenges in accessing support, resulting in children's needs escalating⁷⁴. This challenge was particularly acute for children's community health services with some key professions in high demand but lacking the capacity to deliver to all children that needed them. Data from the Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) showed that between April 2019 and June 2021, only 16% of under 18-year-olds received a first appointment following an autism referral within the 13 week deadline recommended by NICE, while 17% of under 18-year-olds waited over half a year for an appointment following referral⁷⁵.
28. Furthermore, 75% of families reported delays to routine health appointments for their disabled child in the first lock down⁷⁶. The [Ask, Listen, Act study](#) reported that during the first national lockdown, 77% of health and social care professionals reported that the quality of care they were able to provide for children with SEND was 'much worse' or 'slightly worse' than prior to the pandemic⁷⁷.
29. We are taking steps to increase the capacity of the specialist workforce. Since 2020, we have increased the number of educational psychologist trainees that we fund, to over 200, from 160 per annum, and have invested £30 million to train three more cohorts for academic years 2020, 2021, and 2022⁷⁸.
30. We have put a clear focus on mental health and wellbeing, working in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), NHS England and NHS Improvement to implement the proposals in the 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' green paper. We have committed to offer senior mental health lead training to every state-funded school and college by 2025, developing the knowledge and skills to implement and sustain a holistic approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing. In addition to this, NHS-funded Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are in the process of being rolled out with an estimated 35% of the school population expected to have access to an MHST by 2023.
31. We are taking action across government to invest in health services and tackle waiting times for access to diagnosis and therapies. We are investing £2.5 million per year to support autism diagnosis for children and young people in line with the NHS Long-Term Plan. The NHS England-funded Realist Evaluation of Autism Service Delivery will continue work to support local areas to develop effective autism diagnostic pathways that will work well for children and young people.
32. Data and evidence on the precise demand for therapy from children and young people with SEND is limited. In order to ensure that the needs of children and young people with SEND are supported through effective workforce planning, the

Department of Health and Social Care will work with Health Education England, NHS England and DfE to build on existing evidence and build a clearer picture of demand for support for children and young people with SEND from the therapy and diagnostic workforce. This will allow workforce planning to focus on the areas of the health workforce which are a priority for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. We will also ensure that the joint needs assessment and local inclusion plans introduced in Chapter 2 support better joined-up workforce planning across education, health and care to enable schools and colleges to access specialist workforce on a targeted basis.

33. We want to build on the existing functions of Designated Clinical Officers (DCOs) and Designated Medical Officers (DMOs) in supporting health commissioners to fulfil their statutory obligations around SEND, and in driving improvements within the health system. To ensure there is consistency in the functions across all local areas, and to reflect learning from current models and inspection outcomes, we propose to clarify the strategic and operational functions that these officers should have at both place-based and Integrated Care System level. This would be reflected in the revised SEND Code of Practice. To better reflect the functions for health, we propose that it be entitled 'Designated Health Officer'.
34. There is currently no provision for an equivalent Designated Officer in social care. To improve strategic leadership and engagement with the SEND system among social workers, the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) has been piloting the role of Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) across 30 local authorities. This is a senior position within the local authority's children's social care function, with responsibility for supporting better engagement between social care and SEND teams. It has the potential to deliver better join-up between social care and other partners, such as the Virtual School Head, and in developing a quality support offer for families of children with SEND. We therefore propose to revise the Code of Practice to strongly encourage the adoption of DSCOs and use findings from the CDC work to establish what a high-quality standardised DSCO role would look like.
35. For adult social care, resources are being invested by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to improve the workforce capability and practice and will include learning and development to augment existing best practice on social work for children with SEND and broader care needs to transition to support from adult social care services.
36. We will test the value of embedding multi-disciplinary teams of specialists in alternative provision, through a £15 million, 2 year pilot in alternative provision settings. The Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces went live on 1 November 2021 and are already working in 22 serious violence hotspots across England. As part of the pilot, professionals from across health, education, social care, youth justice and youth services are co-located in alternative provision settings to provide intensive wraparound support to vulnerable children and young people.

37. The pilot is built on the understanding that by having localised teams of specialists (such as mental health workers, speech and language therapists and family support workers) embedded within alternative provision settings, the outcomes of children and young people will improve, including reducing serious violence. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), a What Works Centre for serious violence, are working with the Department for Education (DfE) on the evaluation of the pilot which will help build crucial evidence of what works in alternative provision settings.

We will invest in high-quality specialist placements where needed

38. We understand that for some children and young people, specialist provision will be the most appropriate placement for them to be able to learn and succeed. The proportion of pupils in specialist provision increased by 19% from 2016 to 2021⁷⁹. Some children and young people have to be educated outside of their local area and face long journeys to and from school and college with a resulting additional cost pressure for local authorities on SEN transport in the region of £800 million. This limits their opportunities to be active members of their local community. More children and young people are also attending independent specialist provision, even when this may not be the most appropriate setting for a child or young person, because there are no other state specialist settings nearby.

39. We will invest £2.6 billion over the next three years to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision and will support local authorities to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings. It can also be used to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

40. As part of our new special and alternative provision free schools wave, we will prioritise local authorities in need of further specialist provision, identifying local authorities where a new local special free school will help local authorities reduce their dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficits, enabling the local authority to provide more effective and efficient SEND provision that will achieve better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We will set out a timeline so, by 2030, every specialist setting can benefit from being part of a strong trust

41. We are clear on the benefits for schools, parents, carers and pupils of having a well-regulated trust-led system. The Schools White Paper set out plans to work with the sector to complete the journey towards a system where all schools are in a strong

trust, including special schools and alternative provision, of which 766 settings are not yet in trusts⁸⁰.

42. As the specialist sector evolves into a fully trust-based system, it is important to ensure that there is still alignment and sharing of expertise between mainstream and specialist settings, with strong peer networks promoting both support and challenge, and upstream training opportunities from the specialist into the mainstream sector. We recognise that this best practice is found within strong trusts, whether they are specialist-only or mixed (where mainstream and specialist sectors are combined). We therefore propose that both types of trusts are encouraged to coexist in the trust-led future and that currently local authority maintained special schools and alternative provision are given the choice as to which type of trust to join based on their individual and local circumstances, unless the school is becoming a sponsored academy due to underperformance in which case the regional director will determine the most appropriate trust to secure improvement.

Consultation Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that both specialist and mixed MATs should coexist in the fully trust-led future? This would allow current local authority maintained special schools and alternative provision settings to join either type of MAT.

Dixons Academy Trust

Dixons is a multi-academy trust consisting of 15 schools serving the communities in West Yorkshire and the North West. Dixons' success stems from the high aspirations it shares across the trust for all its pupils, with the aim of maximising achievements. The trust is committed to high-quality teaching for all pupils, including those with SEN, by ensuring teachers have the knowledge and resource to meet the wider needs of all in the classroom. There is an emphasis on continuing professional development for all staff, and pupils are encouraged to share their opinions with student voice activities conducted throughout the year. Parents and carers are actively engaged with the school: strong communication allows for up-to-date feedback on progress, so families feel confident in the support being provided.

The trust also has a strong focus on wellbeing, and pupils can access social communication sessions, with teaching of basic skills like turn-taking and self-regulation. For those pupils who need targeted social and emotional support, the academy provides small pastoral groupings for registration, DEAR (reading) programmes, and Personal Development Studies. The trust has a rigorous system for identifying, reporting and following up alleged bullying incidents and has incorporated anti-bullying themes into the curriculum to ensure an open culture. The basis on which all this support rests is true inclusion: equal quality of education and experience for all pupils irrespective of need, increasing confidence amongst parents and carers that mainstream school can meet their child's needs.

The example of Sophie shows how the system will feel for children and young people following the proposed changes



Sophie is 5, she has an EHCP and is educated in a special school. The new SEND system means her family and health and care partners can contribute easily to her EHCP and she is educated in her local special school.

Current experience and trajectory

Sophie has profound and multiple learning disabilities as well as complex health needs which require daily management and specialist support.

The EHCP process was challenging and draining for Sophie's family. There was not an easy way for social care and health to contribute effectively to the plan.

When Sophie finally got her EHCP her parents did not feel the provision specified was properly quantified and lacked the specialist wraparound support needed to address her complex needs.

Sophie's parents felt isolated and unsupported and took the case to First-tier SEND Tribunal. The ruling went in Sophie's favour, but the local authority struggled to find Sophie a specialist placement.

Sophie is placed in a special school miles away from her local community. Sophie needs learning support and help with personal care, but the school lacks the capacity to support all her needs.

Future experience

The new standardised EHCP process means multi-agency professionals across education, health and care can work together, and with the family, to ensure Sophie's case is viewed holistically and meets her needs.

The EHCP process is efficient, and Sophie's parents feel that the system is designed to help them access the support they need.

Through the free schools programme, a new special school has opened in Sophie's local area, and she is able to get a place.

The workforce has the capacity and knowledge to support Sophie with personal care and attending appointments alongside her learning, using professionals across education, health, and care.

Sophie's parents can relax in confidence that she is receiving high-quality support. They access respite which has a positive impact on their mental health.

We will support young people in their transition to further education

43. The further education (FE) sector has a vital role to play in supporting young people with SEND: of all FE and Skills participants, 15.7% of those aged 19 and over had a self-declared learning difficulty and/or disability in 2020/21⁸¹. Through our reform on the post-16 skills system, we are driving improvements for all learners, including those with SEND. The Skills Bill places a duty on all colleges in the statutory sector to review their provision, at least once every three years, to ensure that the education and training provided meets the needs of all learners in the local area – including the needs of learners with SEND.
44. Well-planned transitions are key to setting young people up for success in further education. But too often, information about a young person's needs and required support is not shared in good time, making it challenging for colleges and other further education settings to put the right provision in place. The new national standards will include standards for transition, providing consistent, timely, high-quality transition preparation for children and young people with SEND. We also propose to expand the use of Common Transfer Files to facilitate smooth transition planning. These files would share relevant data between schools and further education settings about a child or young person's needs and ensure the right support is in place from Day 1.
45. Whilst there are examples of excellent SEND provision in the further education sector, senior leaders do not always appreciate their role fully in preparing young people with SEND for adulthood. That can lead to crucial roles, such as careers advice, or job coaching, being delivered by members of staff with no specific or additional training.
46. In January 2022, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education published a new Occupational Standard for Further Education (FE) teachers. This forms the backbone of the new Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeship which is now available for delivery. Going forward, this occupational standard will also form the basis for all publicly funded FE teacher training routes, including qualifications. Any new qualification is likely to include a specialist option in SEND for FE teachers to support learners with additional needs. We will continue to offer financial support for trainees through a range of incentives, including bursaries worth £15,000 each, tax free, that are available to support pre-service training in the academic year 2022/23 for SEND specialists in FE.
47. We will also consider how the proposed NPQ for SENCoS in schools could be aligned to support those with oversight of SEN provision in FE settings. Through our FE governance guide we will set an expectation that every governing body should have an individual with a SEND link governor role who would have a particular interest in the needs of students with SEND.

We will prepare young people with SEND for adulthood

48. With the right support, the vast majority of young people with SEND are able to secure sustained employment or go into higher education. But for too many young people, this is not the case: young people with SEN are 25% less likely to be in sustained employment at age 27 than their peers⁸² and they are more likely to become long-term not in education, employment or training (NEET)⁸³. As a result, young people miss out on the stability and satisfaction that comes with sustained employment, and the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their skills. They may remain in education settings for longer than is beneficial, because there is not a viable opportunity for them to progress to. This places financial pressure on local authorities, particularly when an EHCP is in place.
49. To give young people with SEND the best opportunity to progress into employment, we will roll out improved careers guidance, including better information about the support that is available to them as they move into work. This will be delivered via Careers Hubs and support for Careers Leaders leading the design and delivery of careers education programmes tailored to the needs of young people with SEND, and currently supported via the Careers & Enterprise Company. We will continue to work with the SEND sector in developing statutory guidance for local skills improvement plans as part of the approach to addressing the SEND employment gap and improve the employment prospects of young people with SEND.
50. We are investing up to £18 million in supported internships over the next three years, aiming to double the capacity of the supported internships programme to provide more young people with EHCPs with the skills they need to secure and sustain paid employment.
51. Alongside this, we are investing further in traineeships to deliver 72,000 traineeships between 2022/23 and 2024/25. Traineeships are open to young people with SEND to support them into an apprenticeship or a quality job. In recent years we have seen improved representation of learners who have declared a learning difficulty or disability starting apprenticeships⁸⁴. We are investing in a comprehensive package of professional development which includes upskilling providers and employers in making reasonable adjustments for apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
52. We are also consulting on the review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below, with the consultation closing on 27 April 2022. We are proposing a simplified qualifications landscape with a system which is easier to navigate with high-quality qualifications that better support students, including those with SEND, to progress to positive outcomes such as further study, employment, or adulthood and independent living. We will continue to work closely with those in the SEND community to ensure our reforms improve the life chances of both young people and adults.

53. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to pilot an adjustments passport that is owned by the young person with SEND and sets out the support that they require to succeed in higher education or in the workplace. We will use the findings from the pilot programme to consider whether adjustments passports should be expanded to all young people with SEND.

Consultation Question 12: What more can be done by employers, providers and government to ensure that those young people with SEND can access, participate in and be supported to achieve an apprenticeship, including through access routes like Traineeships?

Weston College

Weston College is an Ofsted outstanding college of further and higher education in Weston-Super-Mare, with around 30,000 learners across the country. Their whole college inclusive approach has created a sustainable, motivational SEND career structure allowing more learners to succeed and remain in their local area. The college provides individualised support programmes that are delivered by highly-qualified SEND practitioners. At the core of these is a sustained focus on preparation for adulthood. Work experience or an industry placement, digital skills development, careers information, advice, and guidance to facilitate meaningful and sustainable transitions, form integral parts of their learners' programmes. Staff are given specialist training opportunities, which are undertaken regularly, to ensure they can effectively meet the changing needs of learners and provide this level of support. In 2021, 95% of young people with high needs at Weston College progressed onto positive destinations.

The example of Naz shows how the system will feel for children and young people following the proposed changes



Naz is 18 and is transitioning from post 16 provision into employment. The new SEND system means the right support is in place for him straight away.

Current experience and trajectory

Teachers in Naz's college did not receive information on his needs before he arrived. This means the right support was not immediately in place.

The college does not have a qualified SENCo, so Naz is unsure who he can speak to about his concerns. Eventually the support Naz needs is put in place, but he has missed out on valuable learning time.

Naz has lost confidence in the college's ability to support his development.

When Naz starts thinking about his next steps post college, he considers several options such as an apprenticeship or attending higher education but is worried he won't receive the support he needs when he arrives.

Naz feels discouraged and disengaged from his learning. He struggles to progress and does not meet the expected standard.

Future experience

Naz's secondary school works with him to understand what options are available locally and to help him find the best place.

Naz decides to attend his local college. The use of a Common Transfer File helps ensure information can be shared with his new college so they are prepared for his arrival.

The college think early about preparing Naz for his next steps. Naz decides to do a traineeship, which enables him to get a place on an apprenticeship with a local employer.

Naz uses an adjustment passport which empowers him to take ownership of stating the support he needs when speaking to employers which means he is assured he will receive appropriate help when he starts his role.

Naz's employers have taken advantage of the Department for Education's package of professional development, which means they are confident in making the reasonable adjustments required to support Naz to succeed.

54. We recognise that some young people with more complex needs will require different forms of support as they move into adulthood. Where adult social care support is required, this should happen in good time so that young people are not left without support. This can cause anxiety for the young person and their family and can also result in EHCPs being retained beyond the point at which a young person can achieve

more within an education setting. There have been improvements to the practice of transition planning since the Care Act 2014 through the Care Statutory guidance and practice tools. We want to improve practice development and build on areas where this is working well already.

55. We will keep our approach to transitions to adult social care under review, considering the recommendations from the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care, as well as reforms to adult social care, including those which follow from the Department of Health and Social Care's Integration White Paper which was published in February 2021. In this White Paper the Department of Health and Social Care committed to responding to recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care which may be relevant to adult social care.

Chapter 4: A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

Summary

1. The Review has heard about the positive role alternative provision can play in supporting a small number of children and young people facing multiple challenges. At their best, alternative provision schools are experts in dealing with behavioural or other needs which present a barrier to learning, including support for health needs in medical and hospital schools. They deploy their specialist skills in both mainstream and alternative provision settings to help children and young people get back on track. But a high-quality alternative provision offer does not exist everywhere. Structural barriers to effective delivery of alternative provision mean that, too often, its role is unclear and it is used too late or in a way that is not best focused on a child or young persons needs.
2. To address these barriers, we propose to create a national vision for alternative provision, enabling local areas to ensure that children and young people with challenging behaviour or with health needs get targeted support in mainstream settings, or access to time-limited or transitional places in alternative provision schools. This vision will be delivered by an integrated SEND and alternative provision system with clear national standards. We will drive improvement in the sector and enable all alternative provision schools to benefit from joining a trust. This will transform the sector, giving alternative provision a key role in improving outcomes for children and young people.

We propose to :

- **make alternative provision an integral part of local SEND systems** by requiring the new local SEND partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention
- **give alternative provision schools the funding stability to deliver a service focused on early intervention** by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision-specific budget
- **build system capacity to deliver the vision through plans for all alternative provision schools to be in a strong multi-academy trust**, or have plans to join or form one, to deliver evidence-led services based on best practice, and open new alternative provision free schools where they are most needed
- **develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision** which sets robust standards focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations

- **deliver greater oversight and transparency of pupil movements** including placements into and out of alternative provision
- **launch a call for evidence, before the summer, on the use of unregistered provision** to investigate existing practice

What this means for:

Children and young people: will receive quality support, such as coaching and self-regulation skills, as soon as they need it from skilled practitioners they can trust. They will know that no-one has given up on them and that they will be supported to reach their full potential.

Parents and carers: will have confidence that, if their child is placed in or supported by alternative provision, it is a way of helping their child succeed by providing quality education and support. Decisions about support and placements will be clear and collaborative, always in the child or young person's best interest, and communicated to families.

Education settings: mainstream primary and secondary schools will have a clear, tiered package of support from alternative provision settings to build capacity to address behavioural or other needs that present a barrier to learning. This will include targeted support in mainstream schools and time-limited placements in alternative provision. There will also be longer-term, transitional placements in alternative provision, but only when that is in the best interests of the child or young person. Alternative provision schools will be given the resources to deliver this.

Health and care providers: will understand the types of medical alternative provision and how they will support those children and young people who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school, or college because of health needs. This will include expectations of how schools, local authorities and health and care providers will work together to address these health needs whilst delivering high-quality education.

Local government: will be set clear expectations for arranging and funding alternative provision through local partnerships and inclusion plans. They will be held to account for this through local area inspections. Their commissioning decisions will be guided by performance data that reflects the challenges faced by alternative provision schools and the outcomes they seek to achieve. They will be given the resources to ensure these expectations will be met.

The needs met by alternative provision

3. Alternative provision supports a broad range of needs and consists of a wide provider base, including Pupil Referral Units (PRU), alternative provision academies and free schools, independent schools and unregistered providers. Alternative provision schools also include a small number of medical and hospital schools. These play an

important specialist role in supporting children and young people whose health prevents them from attending a mainstream school, re-engaging them in education as much as their health allows, and providing a supported transition back to mainstream school when appropriate.

4. The number of children and young people in alternative provision is small⁸⁵, with the majority (75%) not having been permanently excluded before arriving at alternative provision⁸⁶. Most of these children and young people do not achieve the same levels of attainment, or sustained post-16 destinations, as their peers. They are also often vulnerable, including to criminal exploitation. A majority (70%⁸⁷) of children and young people in state place-funded alternative provision have been classed as a Child in Need in the past 6 years. Of the pupil cohort which had ever been registered at a state or non-state place-funded alternative provision setting, 41% had ever been cautioned or sentenced for an offence (this rises to 45% for those that were registered at state place-funded alternative provision)⁸⁸. These challenges often coincide with SEN, with around 80% of children and young people in state place-funded alternative provision having some need⁸⁹, primarily Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs⁹⁰. Alternative provision has the potential to play a transformative role within an integrated SEND system for this group, who need specific, specialist support to address individual needs.

What prevents these needs being met?

5. Where good practice occurs, local leaders make a determined effort to collaborate and overcome disincentives in the current system. Where this does not happen, alternative provision lacks the leadership, quality, capacity, and stable funding to deliver a targeted outreach offer that has the confidence of mainstream schools.
6. There is no coherent, agreed purpose for alternative provision, and it is rare for local areas to have a shared strategic plan for how and when alternative provision can best support children and young people. Commissioning practices, including sometimes low-quality unregistered provision, can lead to children and young people missing out on the high-quality education they need. Funding is unpredictable due to the inherent volatility of demand, with a significant proportion of alternative provision's annual income dependent on whether places are used⁹¹. This makes it hard for alternative provision schools to invest in improving quality, recruit a skilled and stable workforce, or develop a consistent outreach service. Providers are small and often operate in isolation, hindering their capacity to improve and drive-up outcomes. There are gaps in how the system is held to account, including ensuring placement decisions are always in the best interest of the child or young person.
7. This results in a system where children and young people arrive in alternative provision too late and go on to achieve poor outcomes, with only 4.5% of children in

alternative provision nationally achieving grades 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs in 2018/19⁹².

We propose to create a new national vision for alternative provision

8. Alternative provision will offer timely, world class support to children and young people whose behaviour or needs present a barrier to learning. All alternative provision schools will be ambitious in supporting children and young people to stay in, or return to, mainstream schools or colleges whenever appropriate. Decisions about support and placements will always be in the best interest of the child or young person. Alternative provision schools will provide the leadership and expertise to develop capacity in mainstream schools, building on strong behaviour cultures. Children and young people will have the confidence and skills to succeed in whatever they choose to do next.
9. This vision will be delivered by an integrated SEND and alternative provision system with clear national standards. Although the majority of children and young people in alternative provision have some form of SEND, it serves a distinct purpose that is different to special schools, primarily supporting children and young people to stay in or re-integrate back into mainstream education. Alternative provision addresses behaviour that presents a barrier to learning and supports children and young people whose physical or mental health needs prevent them attending school. It should not be used simply because a child or young person is identified with SEND, or they are waiting for an EHCP assessment, or because there is no capacity in special schools.
10. To deliver this vision, alternative provision schools will offer interventions and education across a continuum of support, rather than focusing exclusively on expensive long-term placements. We propose to establish a new delivery model based on a three-tier system of support:
 - **targeted support in mainstream schools** for children and young people whose needs lead to behaviour that disrupts theirs or others' learning, but for whom a strong school behaviour culture is alone not sufficient. For example, through 'on call' advice for mainstream schools, coaching, delivering self-regulation classes for small groups, or one-to-one support
 - **time-limited placements in alternative provision** for those who need more intensive support to address behaviour or anxiety and re-engage in learning. Schools should use their powers of off-site direction, ensuring that children and young people are dual registered and are supported to return to their original school as soon as is appropriate
 - **transitional placements** for those children and young people who will not return to their previous school but will be supported to make the transition to a different

school when they are ready, or to a suitable post-16 destination. Alternative provision schools will support these children and young people to recover as much academic progress as possible and have the skills and confidence to thrive in what they do next

11. This vision builds on the ambition in the Schools White Paper for all children and young people to be taught in a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school, and links to the revision of the Behaviour in Schools guidance and the statutory Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance. For those children and young people for whom a strong behaviour culture alone is not sufficient, high-quality alternative provision will deploy evidence-led strategies to re-engage them in education, improving their attendance and behaviour. This will provide a coherent, national vision for alternative provision and establish a delivery model for achieving it in every area. Over time, this new system will reduce the number of preventable exclusions and expensive long-term placements, as needs will be identified and supported early. More children and young people will remain in mainstream schools, improving their experience, wellbeing, and outcomes.

Consultation Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this new vision for alternative provision will result in improved outcomes for children and young people?

Case study: Chessbrook Education Support Centre, Hertfordshire

Chessbrook is an Ofsted outstanding PRU that supports over a thousand pupils each year through a tiered intervention service with the core aim to keep children in mainstream education. Chessbrook's team of professionals are on call daily to provide outreach services to local primary and secondary schools so that pupil needs are addressed before they escalate. Approximately 15 pupils with the greatest needs receive onsite provision and Chessbrook set high expectations around behaviour which is reinforced in a calm and consistent environment. This approach is matched with high attainment standards. The core curriculum is supplemented by vocational courses to create bespoke pathways so every pupil can achieve meaningful qualifications. Chessbrook's collaborative and transparent relationships with other schools and track record of keeping pupils in mainstream schools has seen them gain recognition as a trusted partner in the region turning around the lives of vulnerable children.

We will embed this vision in the local delivery of alternative provision

12. We know a coherent, strategic approach to alternative provision does not exist everywhere. Currently, some local areas struggle to plan and deliver alternative provision, reacting only once needs have escalated. Without a clear strategy and plan for alternative provision, schools do not recognise its potential to address behavioural and medical needs when they are first identified. We will introduce new statutory

partnerships to address this by bringing all relevant local partners together to assess need and plan alternative provision. The results of this will be set out in each partnership's local inclusion plan.

13. There are structural barriers preventing alternative provision schools delivering a targeted support offer for mainstream settings. Alternative provision schools are subject to volatile funding, which fluctuates within and across years. Unlike mainstream or specialist SEND schools, where the numbers of children and young people are relatively stable, a large proportion of alternative provision funding is linked to unpredictable pupil movements, attached to every child or young person who has been permanently excluded or who requires a long-term placement⁹³. This creates an incentive to support children and young people only once needs have escalated, rather than providing early intervention. This leads to children and young people being in alternative provision for longer than may be necessary, which is the exact opposite of what we want alternative provision to achieve. The unpredictable funding also makes it difficult to attract and retain high-quality staff, with many schools only able to offer short-term contracts. Addressing this problem will make alternative provision schools less of a financial risk for multi-academy trusts, helping to realise the vision set out in the Schools White Paper of a clear time that, by 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools.
14. We also know that the current reliance on long-term placements is expensive, and if needs were identified earlier, the same amount of funding could be used to support more children and young people to thrive in mainstream school. Shifting the focus of alternative provision towards early intervention and embedding this in every local area will ensure children and young people get back on track quickly and have the skills to reach their full potential.
15. To ensure alternative provision schools have the funding security and stability they need to deliver a support service focused on early intervention, we will break the link between individual pupil movements and funding. Based on best practice, we propose that local partnerships agree a multi-year budget to be spent on alternative provision (ideally for a minimum of 3 years). In their inclusion plans, partnerships will then detail the number of targeted mainstream support places, time-limited placements, and transitional placements necessary to meet expected needs each year. Local partnerships will agree the cost of each service or placement type that they will provide, and how changes in demand will be managed within the alternative provision budget. We will expect local authorities to distribute full funding in line with the plan, in a way that gives alternative provision schools security – with funding no longer following the movement of each individual child or young person. We will consider the best way to embed these changes for all alternative provision schools as part of wider funding consultations.

Consultation Question 14: What needs to be in place in order to distribute existing funding more effectively to alternative provision schools to ensure they have the financial stability required to deliver our vision for more early intervention and re-integration?

We will build capacity to create world class support in every area

16. During the Review, we heard that many school leaders feel unable to access consistent, high-quality alternative provision. As set out in the Schools White Paper, by 2030 all schools, including alternative provision schools, will benefit from being part of a strong trust, which will address the small, often isolated, nature of alternative provision schools, and help drive up standards.
17. Alongside this, 7 new alternative provision free schools are already approved to open, run by strong multi-academy trusts in areas where new provision is most needed. This will form part of the £2.6 billion investment, over the next three years, to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision. Alternative provision settings are also eligible for the new School Rebuilding Programme, which is transforming buildings in poor condition at 500 schools. 100 projects, including 2 at alternative provision schools, have already been announced. This is on top of our £11.3 billion investment since 2015 in improving the condition of the estate. From financial year 2021-22, the weighting for special and alternative provision schools in these funding allocations has also been increased by 50% to better reflect their needs.
18. To underpin our planned improvements, we will work with the sector to develop and disseminate an understanding of effective alternative provision practice. This will build on the £15 million Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce programme which has embedded multi-agency teams in 22 alternative provision schools to support young people in those areas with the highest rates of serious violence. The government also funded two years of an Alternative Provision Transition Fund to support Year 11 pupils affected by the pandemic make sustained post-16 transitions. We will use the learning from both programmes to inform the delivery of our reforms and ensure we make effective practice resources available to all alternative provision providers looking to improve for example through building better relationships with local partners like youth offending teams.

We will ensure the system is set up for success

19. To support improvement in alternative provision, and to help commissioners identify good provision, we will develop a bespoke national alternative provision performance framework. The information we currently publish in [Compare School and College](#)

Performance does not include alternative provision schools and existing measures of performance do not account for the progress which can be made in a short time by this fluid cohort or the success of providers in reintegrating the children and young people back into mainstream schools. We will therefore develop a new performance table for alternative provision schools. This will recognise that most children and young people arrive in alternative provision at a late stage in their education⁹⁴, having already fallen a long way behind their peers. The children and young people who remain in alternative provision until the end of key stage 4 will, therefore, attain better outcomes by focusing on the skills and qualifications that enable them to make a successful transition to post-16.

20. We propose a new national performance framework based on five key outcomes:

- effective outreach support
- improved attendance
- reintegration
- academic attainment, with a focus on English and maths
- successful post-16 transitions

21. We propose to establish an expert working group to assist and advise us in developing this framework. The new performance framework will complement recent changes made by Ofsted to the Education Inspection Framework to strengthen alternative provision school inspections, and the planned inclusion of Local Area commissioning of alternative provision in the new joint Ofsted/Care Quality Commission Local Area SEND framework (set out in Chapter 5).

Consultation Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that introducing a bespoke alternative provision performance framework, based on these five outcomes, will improve the quality of alternative provision?

We propose to improve oversight of alternative provision placements

22. While early intervention support provided by alternative provision schools should reduce the number of children and young people requiring a placement in alternative provision, some children and young people will continue to benefit from the expertise and support which placements provide. Currently, there is no comprehensive statutory framework for pupil movements, including placements into and out of alternative provision. Children and young people can enter and leave alternative provision through multiple pathways, each with different levels of regulation, including unlawful off-rolling practices. This results in poor oversight, inconsistency across local authorities, and complex processes for children, young people and families to

navigate. Children and young people also told us that movements between schools are disruptive and can have a negative impact on their mental health.

23. Decisions to move children and young people into and out of alternative provision should always be made in their best interest. As far as possible, placements should be made after other forms of support have been tested, and with the aim of returning the pupils to mainstream schooling as soon as is appropriate. To achieve this, we will review how children and young people move around the school system, including through off-site direction and unregulated managed moves, with a view to introducing a statutory framework for all pupil movements. We will draw on existing good practice, including Local Placement Panels and Fair Access Protocols, to inform this future policy and legislation.
24. As set out in the Schools White Paper, we will also consider a new backstop power for local authorities to direct trusts to admit children, with a right for the trust to appeal to the independent Schools Adjudicator. This will ensure that placements into and out of alternative provision are in the best interests of the child or young person, and that they are not left without a school place for unreasonable lengths of time.
25. Many mainstream, special and alternative provision schools, and local authorities, commission part of their educational offer from unregistered providers, such as one-to-one tutors or mechanics. Used well, this provides a 'hook' back into learning. Used badly, learning needs are unmet and children and young people become less visible across the system. We will strengthen protections for children and young people in unregistered alternative provision settings, so every placement is safe and has clear oversight.
26. The use of unregistered provision requires very careful planning and oversight, but current practice is too often poor. The provision is often used in the absence of sufficient local planning to ensure there are high-quality alternative provision school places, and poor oversight puts the educational attainment and safety of children and young people at risk. We are concerned that commissioners are using a combination of part-time placements to create a full-time education package for children and young people. This is not joined-up, and no single local body is currently responsible for ensuring that children and young people are attending full-time education across the week. To find the right solution, we will issue a call for evidence on the use of unregistered alternative provision before the summer. This will seek views on how unregistered provision should operate, including whether the use of unregistered settings should be limited to part-time provision only as a re-engagement tool that complements education in registered schools.

Consultation Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a statutory framework for pupil movements will improve oversight and transparency of placements into and out of alternative provision?

Chapter 5: System roles, accountabilities and funding reform

Summary

1. We have consistently heard throughout the Review the need to align system incentives and accountabilities to reduce perverse behaviours that drive poor outcomes and high costs in the current system. Where local systems work more effectively, they are often too reliant on good will and relationships and this is the exception rather than the norm. We need every partner to be clear on their responsibilities in the system, have the right incentives and levers to fulfil those responsibilities and be held accountable for their role in delivery.
2. This chapter sets out our proposals to align incentives and accountabilities that will drive this culture change and ensure effective local delivery against the national standards.

We propose to:

- **deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities** with every partner across education, health, care and local government having a clear role to play, and being equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities
- **equip the Department for Education's (DfE) new Regions Group** to take responsibility for holding local authorities and MATs to account for delivery for children and young people with SEND locally through new funding agreements between local government and DfE
- **provide statutory guidance to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)** to set out clearly how statutory responsibilities for SEND should be discharged
- **introduce new inclusion dashboards for 0-25 provision**, offering a timely, transparent picture of how the system is performing at a local and national level across education, health and care
- **introduce a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding**, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the national standards
- **work with Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) on their plan to deliver an updated Local Area SEND Inspection Framework** with a focus on arrangements and experience for children and young people with SEND and in alternative provision

We will deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities

3. Supporting children and young people with SEND depends on complex relationships between multiple bodies. Our aim is to create a system where incentives prioritise the needs of every child and young person and where effective, integrated, local delivery is achieved through collaboration, joint working and strategic leadership. Every partner will have a clear role and be equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities to achieve this.

What this means for:

Children, young people and their families: will be a partner in local decision-making with their views and wishes taken into account and reflected in the support they receive, with co-production embedded at every level of the SEND system.

Education settings:

- **early years:** will be responsible for enabling children's needs to be identified and met early from 0-5 years old
- **mainstream schools/MATs:** will be responsible for delivering high-quality teaching for all pupils, providing targeted support where needed (as set out in the recent Schools White Paper) and collaborating with local authorities to deliver for the community
- **FE providers:** will be responsible for helping young people transition into employment and adulthood equipped with the right skills to succeed

Health and Care partners: will be part of a truly integrated SEND and alternative provision system, using the opportunity presented by the creation of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to enable effective joint working and commissioning of local services. ICBs will have a duty to cooperate with local authorities and will proactively provide input and shape local strategic planning and be responsible for funding and delivery of local health provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Voluntary community sector and private sector delivery partners: we value the expertise, role and contributions of voluntary and community organisations, and that of our delivery and improvement partners across the country. We want to continue to work with them both nationally and locally to deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Independent inspectorates: Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission will continue to assure the quality of providers and local area services through provider level and Area SEND inspections. We know this is essential to giving parents and carers confidence in the system.

Local authorities: are uniquely placed to be a champion for the best interests of every child and young person in their area. They will continue to be responsible for the high

needs budgets and lead local delivery, convening the new local SEND partnerships to develop the proposed local inclusion plans. We will equip them with the right levers to match this role with the legislation for enabling local multi-agency partnerships and new backstop powers to direct admissions in schools.

The government: will set the new national SEND standards, steward and regulate the system jointly across education, health and care. DfE's new Regions Group will take responsibility for integrated delivery for schools and local authorities, including children's social care and SEND.

We propose to strengthen system accountabilities

4. The Education Select Committee⁹⁵ and the National Audit Office⁹⁶ sought wide ranging views and identified the need to strengthen accountabilities across all parts of the system. In addition, the Review has heard the need for a much better and timely understanding of how the system is performing locally and nationally, so that we can enable local system leaders to drive performance and the government to fulfil its regulatory function and steward the system effectively. We therefore propose to strengthen accountabilities, through a range of measures, ensuring the right checks and balances are in place to drive better outcomes and prevent failure in the system with every partner held accountable for every role they perform.

We propose to hold local authorities and MATs to account for local delivery

5. DfE will establish a new Regions Group by summer 2022 bringing together functions currently distributed across the DfE and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) into a single interface⁹⁷. This function will lead system regulation, holding local authorities and MATs to account for local delivery in line with the new national SEND standards.
6. DfE will support local authorities in the development and review of local inclusion plans to ensure that they are built on strong evidence, are forward-looking, have considered emerging trends and are coproduced with parents to inform effective local delivery. This extra layer of quality assurance will promote best practice and strengthen oversight of local authorities.
7. We also propose that DfE, in its role as the regulator, will enter into new funding agreements with local authorities to provide greater accountability and transparency in how high needs budgets are spent to ensure that value for money is being achieved. The new funding agreements between DfE and local authorities propose to provide clarity on spending of the high needs budget in line with the new national SEND standards and set the circumstances where DfE will intervene.

8. To ensure the conditions set out in the funding agreements are met, DfE will monitor ongoing delivery against local inclusion plans and where delivery is not in line with the national standards, DfE will take action. There will be a clear ladder of intervention that is built on DfE's existing intervention programmes such as Safety Valve and Delivering Better Value (see Chapter 6) and will focus on creating financial sustainability and improving outcomes for children and young people. Where intervention is required, this may look like an improvement plan, pairing with high performing local authorities, imposed conditions such as working with expert advisers and in extenuating circumstances, a change in leadership to control high needs budgets and manage local delivery.
9. DfE will collect timely data and create trigger points that result in an intervention. We will work with local authorities and stakeholders in developing these triggers to ensure they are fair and proportionate. These would be put in place to prevent financial failure, acting early so that the issues do not become entrenched. Sometimes those who know what is happening best are those who are most affected, such as children and young people, their families, and professionals; DfE will use reports from those on the ground to build up an understanding of what is happening.
10. As we move to a fully trust-led system, the government will adapt the regulatory and legal arrangements for trusts. DfE's new Regions Group will act as a single risk-based regulator for trusts, as well as oversight of local authorities. This includes bringing together existing requirements into a set of statutory academy standards. New statutory intervention powers will underpin the standards and provide a robust framework for ensuring we can tackle any trust which fails to achieve the expected outcomes by managing and governing their schools effectively. We have a clear vision for a more inclusive system to be embedded within these requirements and will work with stakeholders to define what we expect of MATs in relation to children and young people with SEND.
11. In the Schools White Paper we will define for the first time the qualities of a strong trust against five key principles including delivering a high-quality and inclusive education. In the longer term, we must shape a regulatory approach that is fit for a fully trust-led system. We will work with stakeholders to design an overall regulatory setup that is risk-based and proportionate through the launch of a regulatory review in May 2022, looking at accountability and regulation.

We propose to strengthen accountability within the health system for SEND

12. The NHS has put in place a system oversight framework to help the NHS manage resources to deliver high-quality, sustainable care. The framework sets out how NHS England and NHS Improvement monitor the performance of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), Clinical Commissioning Groups and trusts. It is used by NHS England and

NHS Improvement's regional teams to guide oversight of ICSs at system, place-based and organisation level, and sets out how they will work with the CQC and other partners at national, regional and local level to ensure activities are aligned. Regional NHS England and NHS improvement teams work closely alongside the SEND Improvement teams within DfE to ensure that improvement and intervention action is well aligned and has impact across the system.

13. We are working with DHSC to provide statutory guidance to ICBs, subject to the passage of the Health and Care Bill. The guidance will set out clearly how the statutory responsibilities for SEND should be discharged within the ICBs including that ICBs must identify an Executive Lead for SEND who sits on the Board. The Health and Care Bill also provides intervention powers for NHS England where ICBs are found to be failing. NICE has also recently published new guidelines around the support that disabled children and young people with severe and complex needs should receive. These guidelines will support commissioners in planning and securing appropriate services for this group.

We propose to make better use of data in the SEND system

14. Data collection in the current system is inconsistent: we do not always collect the right information, at the right time, in a way that enables local systems and leadership to respond to local needs before it is too late. Local Area SEND inspections are currently the only tangible means of assessing performance at a local level, but the current system only allows for one-off inspections of every local authority within a 5-year window, with a revisit approximately 24 months after inspection for those local authorities that have been required to produce a Written Statement of Action. As a result, poor performance can continue without timely action and improvement resulting in poor outcomes for children, young people and their families.
15. We are proposing to introduce new local and national inclusion dashboards, setting out clear performance data and metrics across education, health and care for strengthened accountability and transparency to parents. These metrics will form the basis of monitoring, planning, and delivering services by local SEND partnerships, showing changes in how the system is performing, and changing patterns of need and provision, in a more timely way. The metrics will also be used by the DfE and other departments to determine progress over time, providing a holistic picture of local area performance.
16. We will work with all those involved in the SEND system to identify the most informative and appropriate data across themes against the national SEND standards at a national and local authority level, and where data isn't currently available, we will work with partners to develop it. This will enable us to consistently capture the following key metrics to monitor and track system health nationally and locally:

- **outcomes and experiences** – examples include attainment and absence rates, tribunal appeal rates, proportion of children with SEN excluded and percentage of young people with SEN in employment, apprenticeships or higher education after 16-18 study
 - **identification of need** – examples include proportions of children with different types of needs, percentage of pupils with EHCPs, timeliness of EHCP assessments, and measures on the availability and access to community health services (such as waiting times)
 - **value for money** – examples include high needs spending, high needs budgets surplus or deficits and percentage of spend in and out of area provision
17. We will consider carefully how we best align this with the FE Performance Dashboard proposed as part of DfE's reforms to the FE funding and accountability system and the new independent body in England focused on data, transparency and robust evidence announced in the Levelling Up White Paper.
18. One important way in which DfE is committed to improving data on outcomes, experiences and value for money, is via our flagship SEND Futures programme of research and analysis. This comprises both a value-for-money study of SEND provision, and a new longitudinal cohort study focusing specifically on children and young people with SEND, and their families.
19. We have seen the benefits that can be achieved through effective data sharing in allowing families to access prompt support, including through the Supporting Families Programme, and want to promote this more widely across the system.
20. We are working with NHS England to introduce new innovative tools that will facilitate better data sharing across education and health partners. NHS England are also exploring a proof of concept to develop a new innovative family-held digital record for children and young people with SEND that will allow local partners to share relevant information about a child or young person in a timely way. The proof of concept will work with parents and carers, local authorities, and health partners to explore how data can be shared safely and effectively with relevant partners, such as healthcare practitioners and early years settings.

Consultation Question 17: What are the key metrics we should capture and use to measure local and national performance? Please explain why you have selected these.

We propose to update performance metrics for education providers

21. Whilst some mainstream schools are inclusive and support children and young people with SEND, we have heard too many examples where this does not happen. Accountability measures can be seen as a disincentive for schools to be inclusive and take on pupils. There is a perception that those that do welcome pupils with SEND become 'magnet schools' and see increasing numbers attending which becomes unsustainable over time. The issues are complex, with a range of incentives pulling in different directions. We will need to continue to strike a balance between ensuring that inspection and performance metrics for education provision adequately speak to the complexity of the SEND cohort and ensuring they offer a true picture of performance to hold schools accountable for the outcomes of children with SEND, and their role in delivering these outcomes.
22. We propose to update Compare School and College Performance (also known as performance tables) to support parents, young people and wider stakeholders to consider contextual information about a school or college alongside their results data. This will make it easier to recognise schools and colleges that are doing well for children with SEND.
23. The new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) (2019) has a greater emphasis on how schools support children and young people with SEND to succeed. To be judged outstanding, settings must show that children and young people with SEND achieve exceptionally well. Inspectors expect schools to provide all children and young people with access to the same broad and ambitious curriculum. Schools should recognise that children and young people with SEND have different needs and starting points and will need different levels of support to make progress through the school's curriculum. Under the EIF, it is not sufficient for schools to have a curriculum that is ambitious and well-designed for the majority of learners, if it leaves some behind. Ofsted's early analysis shows that schools are thinking more about individual needs and how they can be met through a well-designed curriculum and the value of high ambition for children and young people with SEND⁹⁸.
24. All schools and further education providers will be inspected at least once by the end of the summer term 2025 under the new EIF. This means families will have an up-to-date picture of the quality of education that children and young people with SEND are receiving under the new framework.

We will work with Ofsted to update the Local Area SEND and alternative provision inspection framework

25. Local Area Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspections will continue to have an important role in the system with a focus on how local delivery of services,

including health and care, impacts the experience, progress and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

26. The government is pleased with the plan for a new Local Area Joint Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection framework due to launch in 2023. This will create an ongoing cycle of inspections and visits of local authorities, monitoring aspects of the liberty protection safeguards scheme and look more closely at children under 5, those aged 16-25 and those in alternative provision. This will pave the way and help build accountability for the changes proposed through the new national SEND standards, including for alternative provision. Ofsted/CQC will review the framework following implementation to ensure that inspections consider how key reforms and legislation impact the experience, progress and outcomes for children and young people.

We propose to reform funding for a strong and sustainable system

27. We propose funding changes to help make the most effective use of our investment in high needs funding, which will total £9.1 billion in 2022-23 and will increase further over the following two years of the spending review period. We want to work with local authorities to make the best use of this investment to deliver quality support for children and young people with SEND and, through the national system, enable local authorities to balance their high needs budgets. This alongside our broader changes to the national funding system will ensure money is targeted to where it's needed most and incentivise and equip settings to provide high-quality education provision thereby improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
28. As part of the new national SEND and alternative provision system, we propose the introduction of a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for high needs funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national SEND standards. Bandings would cluster specific types of education provision (aligned to need) as set out by national standards. Tariffs would set the rules and prices that commissioners use to pay providers – for example, pricing attributed to specific elements of provision such as staffing. This tariff system would draw upon similar examples that are seen in local authorities and other services that cover broad spectrums of support, such as the NHS. Tariffs would ensure the right pricing structures are in place, helping to control high costs attributed to expensive provision. The bands and tariffs would be developed to appropriately reflect need, including the most complex needs and sufficiently meet the cost of provision. They will be designed to give providers clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive in delivering support or a service and enable commissioners to determine the cost of places or services.
29. Most local authorities make use of 'banded' funding arrangements, building on local consensus about types/levels of available provision and associated levels of funding.

A national framework of national funding bands has the potential to establish a more consistent basis for the funding of provision. This would address concerns about the inconsistency in current local authority arrangements including the added administrative burden faced by many education settings receiving pupils from several local authorities.

30. The national bands and tariffs would apply across the breadth of education provision in the SEND system, including places in independent specialist provision, providing a more consistent basis for commissioning and funding of provision. All specialist providers will need to ensure the provision they offer is in line with the national SEND standards if they are to continue receiving placements funded by the local authority.
31. We do not underestimate the challenge and complexity of developing a national framework of bands and tariffs. That is why we will work with local authorities and stakeholders, drawing on their expertise, and propose to pilot approaches on a smaller scale, prioritising high-cost provision, before carefully sequencing implementation on a national scale.
32. We propose to set guidelines for who pays for support, and how local authorities set funding levels. Working with DHSC, DfE will set out joint funding guidance across education, health and care. We will also consult further on funding tariffs for education provision, including the extent to which local flexibility is required (for example, scope to fund lower or higher than the funding tariff) whilst remaining within the national SEND standards.

Consultation Question 18: How can we best develop a national framework for funding bands and tariffs to achieve our objectives and mitigate unintended consequences and risks?

Early years funding

33. In early years, local authorities are required to establish a SEND Inclusion Fund to provide additional top up funding to providers to improve outcomes for children with SEND. Funding for the SEND Inclusion Fund can come from both the early years and high needs funding blocks of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). We will work with local authorities, providers and stakeholders to establish whether changes to the SEND Inclusion Fund or the current early years funding system more widely are needed, to support the proposed national framework for bands and tariffs and ensure funding arrangements remain appropriate and well-targeted to improve outcomes for all children and young people, including those with SEND.

Schools' notional SEN budgets

34. The notional SEN budget is an amount within each mainstream school's overall budget that the school may set aside for its pupils with SEND. This amount is calculated by the school's local authority. We will move to standardise the calculation

of schools' notional SEN budgets in the context of full implementation of the direct National Funding Formula (NFF) for mainstream schools – in which DfE, rather than local authorities, will determine budget allocations for individual mainstream schools through a single, national formula. This will help to underpin our objective to equip all mainstream schools, wherever they are in the country, with the resources they need to provide high-quality support for children and young people with SEND in their settings.

35. In the short term, we will issue guidance to local authorities on how they should calculate their notional SEN budgets within their local funding formula to bring some consistency to what is currently a very variable approach taken by different local authorities. This will give schools more confidence in the funds that they are being provided with to help them support their pupils with SEND.
36. As part of the further consultations on the direct NFF, we will also consider options for calculating notional SEN budgets within the schools NFF. This will take into account the views expressed during the SEND Review and in the 2019 call for evidence, and an updated analysis of what schools should be able, and expected, to afford to spend on SEN support. In the context of the direct NFF, we will consult on options for how DfE, rather than individual local authorities, could determine notional SEN budgets for schools and agree how schools can demonstrate what they achieve with their budgets.
37. We are clear that there should continue to be a national expectation on how much of the additional costs of supporting pupils with SEN mainstream schools should meet from their formula funding, so that schools and local authorities can plan their budgets appropriately. While we are clear that some threshold should be retained, we will consider whether £6,000 per pupil, per year remains the right threshold beyond which schools can expect to draw down additional high needs funding. The appropriate threshold will be considered in context of the responsibilities that sit with mainstream schools under the new national standards, and we will consult before taking decisions on any changes to the level of the threshold.

Chapter 6: Delivering change for children and families

Summary

1. The proposals set out in this green paper represent our commitment to supporting children and young people with SEND and lay the foundation for improvement. We will set out a well-designed delivery programme with a clear roadmap for improvement that stabilises the system in the immediate term and delivers the necessary culture change to build an inclusive system in the longer term so that more children and young people are supported to thrive and succeed.
2. Following our consultation, we will work with partners to design a delivery plan that recognises the context of the ongoing response to and recovery from the pandemic, and that different settings and areas of the country are at different stages of readiness as we introduce change. The plan will align with wider reforms around levelling up, including policy set out in the recent Schools White Paper, as well as the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care and wider reforms to the delivery landscape across health and care.
3. We will have a strong focus on evidence-based delivery, using well-designed feedback loops and processes to identify and manage unintended consequences promptly. We will learn from best practice in the system. We have seen that the best performing SEND systems are those with a consistent focus on co-production. We will therefore embed co-production with children, young people, and their families at every level in our delivery planning.

We will:

- **take immediate steps to stabilise local SEND systems by investing an additional £300 million through the Safety Valve Programme and £85 million in the Delivering Better Value programme**, over the next three years, to support those local authorities with the biggest deficits
- **task the SEND and Alternative Provision Directorate within DfE** to work with system leaders from across education, health and care and the Department of Health and Social Care to develop the national SEND standards
- support delivery through a **£70 million SEND and alternative provision change programme** to both test and refine key proposals and support local SEND systems across the country to manage local improvement
- **publish a national SEND and alternative provision delivery plan** setting out government's response to this public consultation and how change will be implemented in detail and by whom to deliver better outcomes for children and young people

- establish, for implementation of the national delivery plan, **a new National SEND Delivery Board** to bring together relevant government departments with national delivery partners including parents, carers and representatives of local government, education, health and care to hold partners to account for the timely implementation of proposals
4. We will support the system to secure immediate improvements. We are clear that there are changes all system leaders can make now to better support the system to deliver for children and young people with SEND. Through the Safety Valve programme, introduced in 2020-21, we have given local authorities with the highest percentage of dedicated school grant deficits an immediate opportunity to get on the front foot to resolve issues with the sustainability of their high needs budget. This programme has demonstrated just how quickly good leadership and genuine collaboration across education and finance can identify suitable and innovative solutions, for the benefit of children and young people with SEND. The recent Spending Review identified an additional £300 million over the next three years (2022-25) for the Safety Valve programme, and we recently wrote to a group of 20 local authorities, indicating that they would be invited to join the programme in 2022-23.
 5. In addition, we are also investing £85 million over three years in the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme to support up to 55 local authorities to reform their high needs systems, addressing the underlying issues that lead to increased pressure, and putting them on a more sustainable footing. This will help to stabilise local authorities so that they are better able to support children and young people with SEND and prepare for change.

We propose to establish a National SEND Delivery Board

6. The dedicated SEND and Alternative Provision Directorate within DfE will be responsible for overseeing the development of new national SEND standards. DfE and DHSC will work with relevant health and care bodies to align these with expectations for health and adult social care. The new national SEND standards will draw on the latest evidence, data and system expertise to ensure standards reflect best practice and are updated to reflect changing prevalence of need and available resource. This will ensure that expectations remain relevant and appropriate in delivering better outcomes for children and young people. The directorate will be aligned with DfE's new Regions Group which brings together functions that are currently distributed across the department into a single interface.
7. Alongside this, we propose to establish a National SEND Delivery Board that will bring together the relevant government departments with national delivery partners including parents, and representatives of local government, education, health and

care to hold partners to account for the timely development and improvement of the system.

Consultation Question 19: How can the National SEND Delivery Board work most effectively with local partnerships to ensure the proposals are implemented successfully?

We will align with wider reforms and changes to the delivery landscape

8. We have heard frequently that the primary reason the high aspirations of the 2014 reforms have yet to be achieved is because insufficient attention was paid to implementation. Achieving the goals for children and young people set out in this green paper will require a concerted and careful focus on delivery by all in the system. This is a complex system, and it will be vital that all working in it understand the changes, their role in them, and how this will help meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
9. It will be crucial that changes to the SEND and alternative provision system are sensitive to the different starting points of local areas and especially sympathetic and accommodating of the fact that the system is recovering from the pandemic. Equally, these proposals are not made in isolation but in the context of complementary changes to the education, social care, and health systems. We therefore want to seize this unique opportunity to deliver system-wide change for children and young people but are clear-eyed about the delivery challenges this represents. We will pay careful attention to what local areas tell us is realistic and we are clear change will only work if it happens at a pace that local areas have capacity to deliver. We will ensure delivery plans align with and take account of this wider context, in particular:
 - The pandemic has disproportionately impacted children and young people with SEND and the system that supports them⁹⁹. Plans are in place to support the system to **recover from the pandemic** to ensure those who need help receive high-quality and effective support and that all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to make up lost learning. Guidance setting expectations was published in September 2021. We also provided additional funding for those who attend specialist settings (including special units in mainstream schools) in both the catch-up premium paid in the 2020/21 academic year and the recovery premium, as well as the school-led elements of the National Tutoring Programme. Implementation plans following the green paper consultation will be sensitive to this recovery context.
 - The **Schools White Paper** set out a vision of a school system in which every child and young person can fulfil their potential, supported by an

excellent teacher, high standards for all, and targeted support for those that need it. It amplifies and supports the proposals set out in this green paper, to ensure we support all children and young people through their journey to adulthood. The proposals in this green paper will build upon the ambitious vision for an effective education system that the Schools White Paper seeks to deliver.

- The **Independent Review of Children's Social Care**, launched in March 2021, is taking a fundamental look at what is needed to make a real difference to the needs, experiences, and outcomes of those supported by children's social care. Almost half of all children in need have SEN¹⁰⁰. Together these reviews have the potential to transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and young people. The Care Review will set out its final recommendations in the spring and the government response will follow. We have taken into account the areas of focus identified in the Care Review Case for Change and considered this in our approach to this green paper. We will continue to ensure that any changes resulting from these reviews lead to a coherent system that has the best interests of families and vulnerable children at its heart.
- **Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)**, replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups, are being rolled out across the country, and will be in all parts of England subject to the passage of the Health and Care Bill. They aim to remove traditional divisions that caused too many people to experience disjointed care. They help to coordinate services across an area by forming partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs. Stronger integration between strategic partners such as physical and mental health services and between NHS and council services will help deliver better and more convenient services. The introduction of ICBs will help local areas to commission at scale, solve common issues together, share good practice and help deliver a consistent approach across larger areas to early identification and transition for children and young people with SEND.

We will deliver change for children and families

10. We are determined to create the right conditions for lasting change that delivers on our shared aspirations for children and young people with SEND. We know this will require careful and collaborative planning and clear sequencing. It will also require extensive and continued engagement and communication to enable leadership of change at every level in the system. And most of all it requires genuine and continual co-production with parents from local to national-level to ensure we implement the

changes in line with our aspiration and as children, young people, and their families need.

11. We will support delivery through a £70 million SEND and alternative provision change programme to test and refine key proposals and support local SEND systems across the country to manage local improvement.

Consultation Question 20: What will make the biggest difference to successful implementation of these proposals? What do you see as the barriers to and enablers of success?

Next Steps

12. The publication of this green paper marks the start of a 13 week consultation process, closing on 1 July 2022. Alongside this written consultation will be a series of events to gather additional views and contribute to the overall consultation. We know that engaging the sector, children, young people and parents to communicate and develop understanding of the proposals is a vital first step for successful implementation. As we do so, we will be clear that the time for change to start is now. There is a lot that local areas can begin to do to realise the vision of these changes; indeed, proposals build on practice that exists in some areas. We will therefore ask people not only to engage in shaping future plans but also to consider how they can make a difference today to support for children and young people with SEND.
13. Later this year, we will publish a national SEND delivery plan, setting out government's response to the consultation and how change will be implemented.

Consultation Question 21: What support do local systems and delivery partners need to successfully transition and deliver the new national system?

Consultation Question 22: Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposals in the green paper?

List of consultation questions

1. What key factors should be considered when developing national standards to ensure they deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families? This includes how the standards apply across education, health and care in a 0-25 system.
2. How should we develop the proposal for new local SEND partnerships to oversee the effective development of local inclusion plans whilst avoiding placing unnecessary burdens or duplicating current partnerships?
3. What factors would enable local authorities to successfully commission provision for low-incidence high cost need, and further education, across local authority boundaries?
4. What components of the EHCP should we consider reviewing or amending as we move to a standardised and digitised version?
5. How can parents and local authorities most effectively work together to produce a tailored list of placements that is appropriate for their child, and gives parents confidence in the EHCP process?
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our overall approach to strengthen redress, including through national standards and mandatory mediation?
Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why, specifying the components you disagree with and alternatives or exceptions, particularly to mandatory mediation.
7. Do you consider the current remedies available to the SEND Tribunal for disabled children who have been discriminated against by schools effective in putting children and young people's education back on track? Please give a reason for your answer with examples, if possible.
8. What steps should be taken to strengthen early years practice with regard to conducting the two-year-old progress check and integration with the Healthy Child Programme review?
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a new mandatory SENCo NPQ to replace the NASENCo?
Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why.

10. To what extent do you agree that we should strengthen the mandatory SENCo training requirement by requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that both specialist and mixed MATs should be allowed to coexist in the fully trust-led future? This would allow current local authority maintained special schools and alternative provision settings to join either type of MAT.

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

12. What more can be done by employers, providers and government to ensure that those young people with SEND can access, participate in and be supported to achieve an apprenticeship, including through access routes like traineeships?

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this new vision for alternative provision will result in improved outcomes for children and young people?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

14. What needs to be in place in order to distribute existing funding more effectively to alternative provision schools, to ensure they have the financial stability required to deliver our vision for more early intervention and re-integration?

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that introducing a bespoke alternative provision performance framework, based on these 5 outcomes, will improve the quality of alternative provision?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a statutory framework for pupil movements will improve oversight and transparency of placements into and out of alternative provision?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

17. What are the key metrics we should capture and use to measure local and national performance? Please explain why you have selected these.

18. How can we best develop a national framework for funding bands and tariffs to achieve our objectives and mitigate unintended consequences and risks?

19. How can the National SEND Delivery Board work most effectively with local partnerships to ensure the proposals are implemented successfully?
20. What will make the biggest difference to successful implementation of these proposals? What do you see as the barriers to and enablers of success?
21. What support do local systems and delivery partners need to successfully transition and deliver the new national system?
22. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposals in the green paper?

Glossary

Academy: A state-funded school in England that is directly funded by DfE, through the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Academies are self-governing and independent of local authority control.

Alternative Provision: Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education and support arranged by schools, including for pupils receiving targeted support in their mainstream school; pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour; and provision for pupils on a fixed period exclusion. When we reference state place-funded alternative provision, we mean alternative provision receiving £10,000 per place from a local authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency, comprised of all Pupil Referral Units, alternative provision academies and alternative provision free schools.

Annual review: The review of an EHCP which the local authority must make as a minimum every 12 months.

Care Quality Commission (CQC): The independent regulator of health and social care in England, responsible for registering care providers, monitoring, inspecting and rating services, and taking action to protect people who use services.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) / Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS): These services assess and treat children and young people with emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties. They range from basic pastoral care, such as identifying mental health problems, to specialist 'Tier 4' CAMHS, which provide in-patient care for those with more complex needs.

Children in need: A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of children's social care services, or the child is disabled.

Compulsory school age: A child is of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday of June in the year in which they become 16, provided that their 16th birthday falls before the start of the next school year.

Dedicated schools grant (DSG): This grant is allocated on a financial year (April to March) basis to local authorities, and consists of four funding blocks: mainstream schools funding (often referred to as the schools block), funding for services the local authority provides to all schools (the central schools services block), high needs funding for children and young people with more complex needs (the high needs block), and the early years funding block.

Disagreement resolution: This is a statutory service commissioned by local authorities to provide a quick and non-adversarial way of resolving disagreements between parents or young people and bodies responsible for

providing education, whether the child or young person has an EHCP or not, or health and social care in relation to EHC assessments and plans. Disagreement resolution services can also be used in cases of disagreement between local authorities and health commissioning bodies during EHC needs assessments, the drawing up of EHCPs or the reviewing of those plans.

Early help: Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): The EYFS covers children from birth to age five. Many children attend an early education setting soon after their third birthday. The foundation stage continues until the end of the reception year and requires settings to deliver a broad early years curriculum across seven statutory areas of learning and development. It prepares children for learning in Year 1, when programmes of study for key stage 1 are taught.

Early years provider: A provider of early education places for children under five years of age. This includes schools, pre-schools, private nurseries and childminders.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA): An arm of DfE that manages the funding for learners between the ages of 3 and 19 years and for those with SEN or disabilities between the ages of 3 and 25. The ESFA allocates funding to 152 local authorities for maintained schools and voluntary aided schools. It is also responsible for funding and monitoring academies, University Technical Colleges, studio schools and free schools, as well as building maintenance programmes for schools and sixth-form colleges.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP): An EHCP details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority, with relevant partner agencies, after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHCP is necessary.

First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability): An independent body which has jurisdiction under Section 51 of the Children and Families Act 2014 for determining appeals by parents and young people against local authority decisions on EHC needs assessments and EHCPs. The tribunal's decision is binding on both parties to the appeal. The tribunal also hears claims of disability discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Free school: A free school is a type of academy, which is free to attend, but is not controlled by the local authority. Free schools receive state funding via the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Parents, teachers, businesses or charities can submit an application to DfE to set up a free school.

Further education (FE) college: We define provision for all young people with SEND who are post 16 as FE. This includes colleges offering continuing education to young people over the compulsory school age of 16.

Healthy Child Programme: Healthy Child Programme runs from 28 weeks

pregnancy to 19/24 years of age. It provides universal, targeted and specialist interventions including screening, immunisation, health and development reviews, supplemented by advice around health, wellbeing and parenting for younger children and health advice for older children and young people.

High needs funding/budget: This funding is for children and young people aged 0 to 25 with complex needs, currently defined as those with SEND needing additional support costing more than £6,000 per annum, including the costs of special school and specialist college provision, and those requiring alternative provision. The majority of this funding is allocated to local authorities through their DSG (see above). We refer both to the national high needs budget, which DfE allocates, and to local authorities' high needs budgets.

Integrated Care System (ICS): New partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups. Subject to the passage of the Health and Care Bill, ICSs will be in all parts of England and will include the following statutory entities at system-level:

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP): The broad alliance of organisations and representatives concerned with improving care and the health and wellbeing of the population, jointly convened by local authorities and the NHS.

Integrated Care Board (ICB): Bringing the NHS together locally to improve population health and care. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) will be abolished.

Independent school: A school that is not maintained by a local authority and is registered under part 4 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. Section 347 of the Act sets out the conditions under which an independent school may be approved by the Secretary of State for Education as being suitable for the admission of children with EHCPs.

Maintained school: Schools in England that are maintained by a local authority – any community, foundation or voluntary school, community special or foundation special school.

Mediation: This is a statutory service commissioned by local authorities which is designed to help settle disagreements between parents or young people and local authorities over EHC needs assessments and plans and which parents and young people can use before deciding whether to appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal about decisions on assessment or the special educational element of a plan. Mediation can cover any one or all three elements of an EHCP and must be offered to the parent or young person when the final plan is issued.

NHS England (NHSE): NHS England is an independent body, at arm's length to the government and held to account through the NHS Mandate. Its main role is to improve health outcomes for people in England by providing national leadership for improving outcomes and driving up the quality of care; overseeing the operation of clinical commissioning groups; allocating resources to clinical

commissioning groups, and commissioning primary care and specialist services.

Non-maintained special school: Schools in England approved by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 342 of the Education Act 1996 as special schools which are not maintained by the state but charge fees on a non-profit-making basis. Most non-maintained special schools are run by major charities or charitable trusts.

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is a non-Ministerial government department established under the Education & Inspections Act 2006. It has responsibility for the inspection of schools, children's services, and local SEND provision in England.

Parent: Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, the term 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but has parental responsibility (see below) or who cares for him or her.

Parent Carer Forum: A Parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of disabled children who work with local authorities, education, health and other providers to make sure the services they plan and deliver meet the needs of disabled children and families.

Parental responsibility: Parental responsibility is defined under Section 3 (1) of the Children Act 1989 as meaning all the duties, rights, powers, responsibilities, and authority which parents have with respect to their children and their children's property. Under Section 2 of the Children Act 1989, parental responsibility falls upon:

- All mothers and fathers who were married to each other at the time of the child's birth (including those who have since separated or divorced)
- Mothers who were not married to the father at the time of the child's birth, and
- Fathers who were not married to the mother at the time of the child's birth, but who have obtained parental responsibility either by agreement with the child's mother or through a court order

Under Section 12 of the Children Act 1989, where a court makes a residence order in favour of any person who is not the parent or guardian of the child, that person has parental responsibility for the child while the residence order remains in force.

Under Section 33 (3) of the Children Act 1989, while a care order is in force with respect to a child, the social services department designated by the order will have parental responsibility for that child, and will have the power (subject to certain provisions) to determine the extent to which a parent or guardian of the child may meet his or her parental responsibility for the child. The social services department cannot have parental responsibility for a child unless that child is the subject of a care order, except for very limited purposes where an emergency protection order is in force under Section 44 of the Children Act 1989.

Pupil: A child or young person enrolled at a school, pupil referral unit or state-funded nursery, or a child who is no longer enrolled but meets one of several exemptions (for example, permanent exclusion).

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU): Any school established and maintained by a local authority under Section 19 (2) of the Education Act 1996 which is specially organised to provide education for pupils who would otherwise not receive suitable education because of illness, exclusion or any other reason.

SEND Local Offer: Local authorities in England are required to set out in their Local Offer information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have EHCPs. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain.

Special Educational Needs (SEN), Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND): A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions. 'Special educational needs' and 'disability' have different definitions in law and guidance.

In England, the Equality Act 2010 defines a person as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. As such, some pupils have disabilities that meet the Equality Act's criteria because of the effect on their day-to-day activities, but which do not call for special educational provision; and some pupils have special educational needs because of learning difficulties that do not meet the Equality Act's disability criteria. However, there is a significant overlap between children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, hence the common use of terms such as "SEND" and "SEND system".

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo): A qualified teacher (or headteacher or deputy) in a school or maintained nursery school who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision. Other early years settings in group provision arrangements are expected to identify an individual to perform the role of SENCo and childminders are encouraged to do so, possibly sharing the role between them where they are registered with an agency.

Special educational provision: Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is different from, or additional to that normally made for others the same age in mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or places at which relevant early years education is provided.

Special school: A school which is specifically organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEN. Special schools maintained by the local

authority comprise community special schools and foundation special schools, and non-maintained special schools that are approved by the Secretary of State under Section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

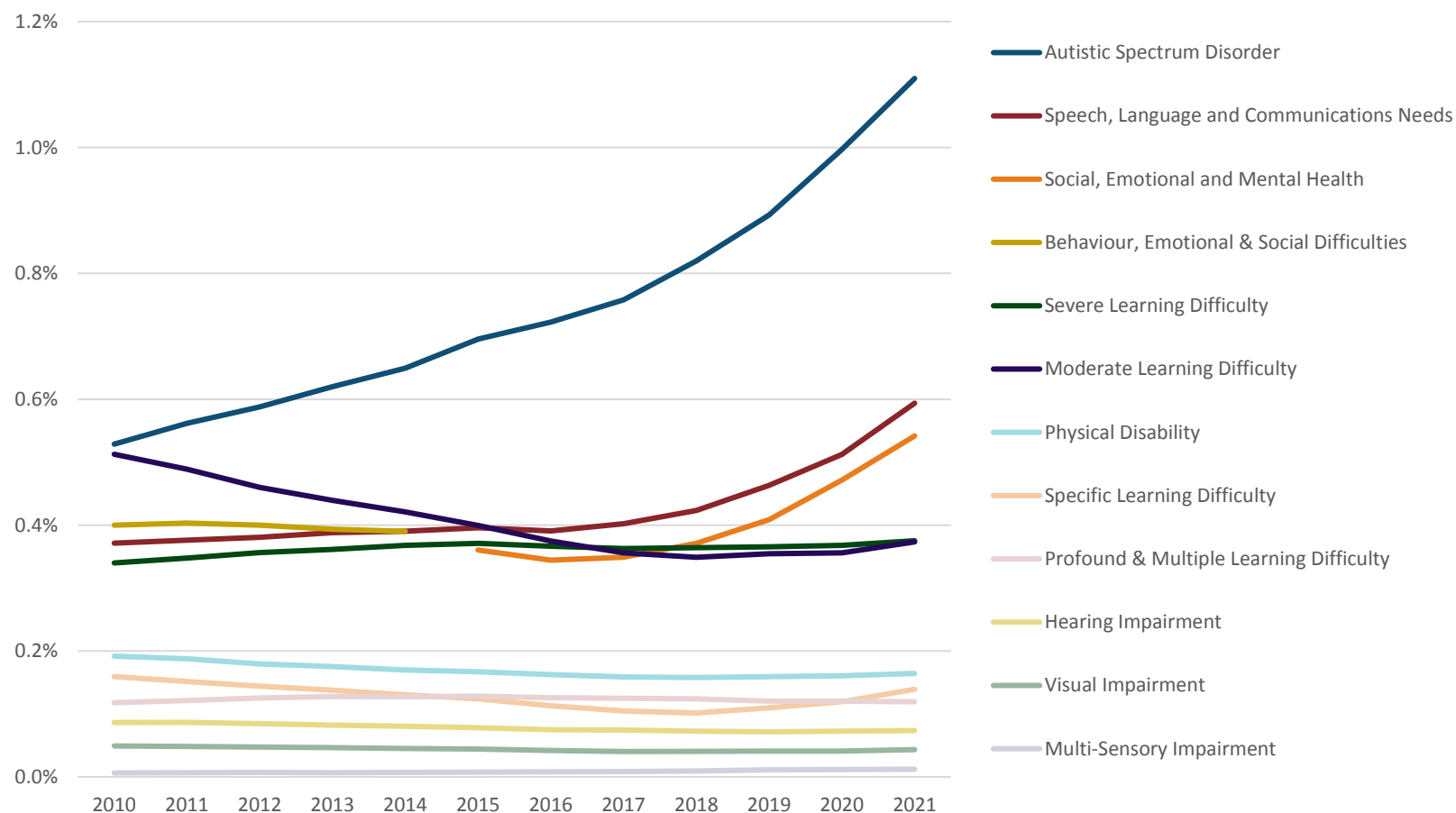
Speech and language therapy: Speech and language therapy is a health care profession, the role and aim of which is to enable children, young people and adults with speech, language and communication difficulties (and associated difficulties with eating and swallowing) to reach their maximum communication potential and achieve independence in all aspects of life.

Virtual School Head (VSH): The Virtual School Head (VSH) is an officer of a local authority who leads a virtual school team that tracks the progress of children looked after by the authority as if they attended a single school. The Children Act 1989 requires every local authority to appoint an officer who is an employee of that or another authority to discharge this duty.

Young person: A person over compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) but under 25. From this point the right to make decisions about matters covered by Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to the young person directly, rather than to their parents. An individual becomes an adult at the age of 18.

Annex: selected analysis and evidence

Figure 2: Proportion of pupils with an EHCP, by primary type of need, as at January of each year

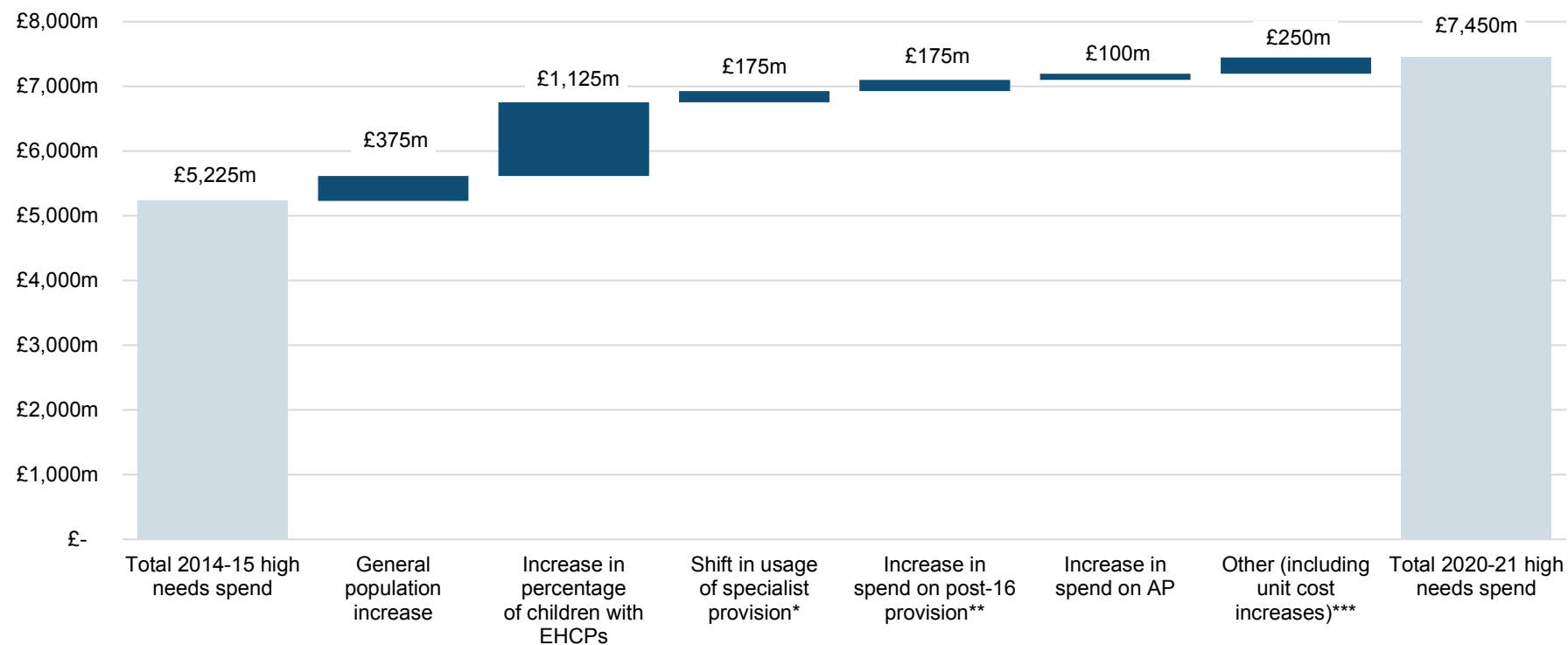


See note ¹⁰¹

Table 1: Proportion of pupils with an EHCP, by primary type of need, as at January of each year

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	0.53%	0.56%	0.59%	0.62%	0.65%	0.70%	0.72%	0.76%	0.82%	0.89%	1.00%	1.11%
Speech, Language and Communications Needs	0.37%	0.38%	0.38%	0.39%	0.39%	0.40%	0.39%	0.40%	0.42%	0.46%	0.51%	0.59%
Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.39%	0.39%							
Social, Emotional and Mental Health						0.36%	0.34%	0.35%	0.37%	0.41%	0.47%	0.54%
Severe Learning Difficulty	0.34%	0.35%	0.36%	0.36%	0.37%	0.37%	0.37%	0.36%	0.36%	0.37%	0.37%	0.38%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	0.51%	0.49%	0.46%	0.44%	0.42%	0.40%	0.37%	0.36%	0.35%	0.35%	0.36%	0.37%
Physical Disability	0.19%	0.19%	0.18%	0.18%	0.17%	0.17%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%
Specific Learning Difficulty	0.16%	0.15%	0.14%	0.14%	0.13%	0.12%	0.11%	0.10%	0.10%	0.11%	0.12%	0.14%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.12%	0.12%	0.13%	0.13%	0.13%	0.13%	0.13%	0.12%	0.12%	0.12%	0.12%	0.12%
Hearing Impairment	0.09%	0.09%	0.08%	0.08%	0.08%	0.08%	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%
Visual Impairment	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%
Multi-Sensory Impairment	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%

Figure 3: Change in high needs spend 2014-15 to 2020-21



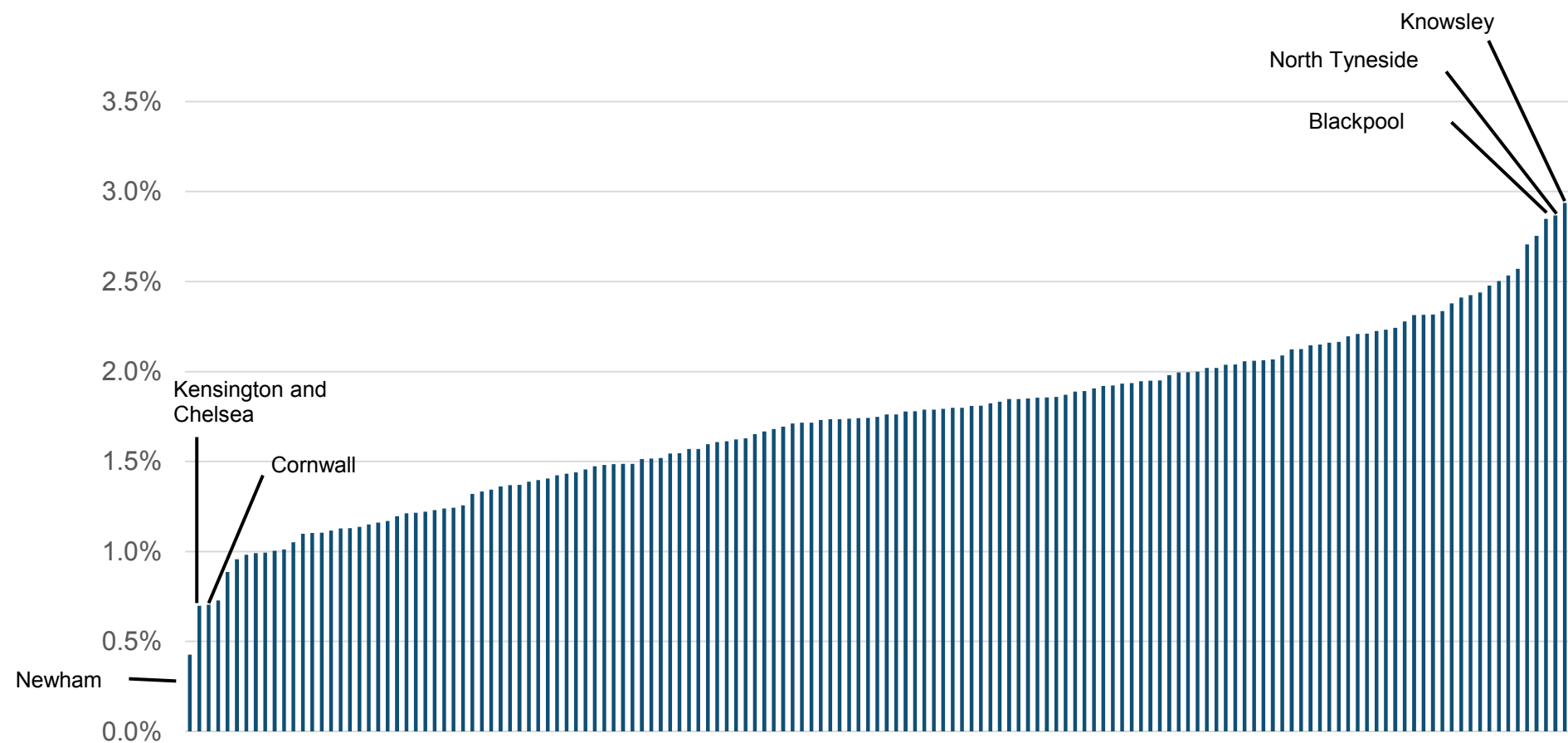
*The shift in the usage of specialist provision has led to a net increase as a result of changes in proportions of needs met in different types of provision, of which most significant is the increase in the proportion of needs met in independent specialist settings (+£245m)

**Post-16 refers to FE provision (including SPIs), and includes post-16 population growth and growth in 19-25 provision. Other post-16 provision is included in the other relevant categories. The 2014-15 baseline does not include funding for LDAs.

***Other includes changes in average unit cost (including impacts of general inflation), therapies and other health related services, SEN support services, hospital education services, personal budgets, early years, funding targeted to mainstream schools for inclusion, SEN transport, carbon reduction commitment allowances for PRUs and income.

See note ¹⁰²

Figure 4: Proportion of pupils with an EHCP and in a special school, by local authority, as at January 2021



See note [103](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to and helped shape the Review. This includes the workforces across early years, schools, and further education settings, those working in health and care services, local government, voluntary and community sector organisations, system leaders, unions, our SEND Review Steering Group and Alternative Provision Steering Group and most importantly children, young people, parents and carers who have shared their experience of the current SEND system.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for their helpful insights throughout the Review: Council for Disabled Children, National Audit Office, Ofsted, Education Policy Institute, Independent Schools Council, NHS England, Office for the Children's Commissioner, National Network of Parent Carer Forums, Education Select Committee and Association of Colleges.

Finally, thank you to the SEND Review team and officials in the Department for Education, alongside officials across the Department of Health and Social Care, Her Majesty's Treasury, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Ministry of Justice and the Department for Work and Pensions.

We are extremely grateful to everyone for their time, expertise, commitment and thoughtful support and challenge.

SEND Review Steering group members:

- Charlotte Ramsden, President, Association of Directors of Children's Services
- Chris Russell, National Director, Education, Ofsted
- Christine Lenehan, Director, Council for Disabled Children
- David Bartram, Director, Prescient Education
- David Holloway, Senior Policy Manager, SEND, Association of Colleges
- Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive, Confederation of Schools Trusts
- Mark Vickers, Chair of Alternative Provision/SEND CEO Network
- Michael Freeston, Director of Quality Improvement, Early Years Alliance
- Mrunal Sisodia, Co-chair, National Network of Parent Carer Forums
- Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner
- Sally Burlington, Head of Policy (People), Local Government Association

- Sue North, Head of Children and Young People, NHS England and Improvement, Learning Disability and Autism Programme
- Tina Emery, Co-chair, National Network of Parent Carer Forums
- Tony McArdle, Independent Adviser; Chair, SEND System Leadership Board

Alternative Provision Stakeholder Group:

- Cath Kitchen OBE, Chair of the National Association of Hospital and Home Teaching
- Christina Jones, CEO of River Tees MAT
- Emma Bradshaw OBE, Headteacher of The Limes College and Executive Principal of the Alternative Learning Trust
- Jenny Adamson, Head of the Saffron Valley Collegiate PRU
- Mark Vickers MBE. Chair of the National MAT CEO Network for Alternative Provision and SEND and CEO Olive Academies Trust
- Nic Brindle, CEO of the Youth Engagement Schools (YES) Trust
- Robert Gasson, Chief Executive, WAVE Multi-Academy Trust
- Sarah Dove, President of PRUsAP and CEO of Phoenix Education Consultancy
- Sharon Roscoe, CEO of the Education Partnership Trust
- Tim Morfin, Founder and CEO of Transforming Lives for Good

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The total population of 3- and 4-year-olds in receipt of funded early education also shrank over the same period.
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Please note that in some cases the special educational need is related to the mental health disorder itself.

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High Needs Budget in 2019-20: [Teachers' pay grant: allocations for 2019 to 2020 financial year, Department for Education, 2019](#), [Teachers' pension grant: 2019 to 2020 allocations, Department for Education, 2020](#), [National funding formula tables for schools and high needs: 2019 to 2020, Department for Education, 2018](#), [Dedicated schools grant \(DSG\): 2019 to 2020, Department for Education, 2018](#)

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⁴³ [Pupil absence in schools in England, Department for Education, 2020](#). This compares to an overall absence rate of 6.5% for pupils on SEN Support and 4.3% for pupils without SEN.

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The unit cost of £22,000 for state-funded special schools is calculated as: s251 outturn lines 1.2.1 + 1.2.2 (both for SEN/Special schools) divided by the number of pupils in this school type per the school census. This is added to the £10,000 per place funding. The unit cost of £54,000 for independent and non-maintained provision is calculated as: s251 outturn line 1.2.3 (for SEN/Special schools) plus £10,000 per non-maintained special school pupil, all divided by the number of pupils in non-maintained special schools and independent special schools per SEN2.

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⁶⁷ Except where the appeal is on placement only.

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- ⁹² [Key stage 4 performance, Department for Education, 2021](#). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summer exam series for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years were cancelled, which meant that centre assessed grades were awarded to pupils. In 2020/21, this percentage had risen to 12.6%, an almost threefold increase from 2018/19.
- ⁹³ [Alternative provision Market Analysis, Department for Education, 2018](#). In the 2017-18 financial year, the average cost of a full-time placement for one academic year in AP was £18,000. The place-led element of AP funding was around £10,000, with the remainder covered by top-up funding from the commissioner.
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Appendix 2 – Meeting additional SEND need - locations of schools, buildings and land across Cambridgeshire under consideration (update April 2022)

A. Cambridge City

School	Narrative	Number of pupils	Capital	when
The Fields (run by the Castle Area Special School)- Early years provision	Split across two sites	20	Complete	September 2022

B. South Cambridgeshire

School	Narrative	Number of pupils	Capital	when
Cavendish Special Free School - (Impington)	The roll out of the allocation of the places in this new school for pupils (aged 8 upwards) with a primary need relating to autism, has been accelerated	10	N/A	2022
Abington Woods, Linton - Post 16 special	The opening of this satellite of Granta Area Special School has enabled the freeing up of space to allocate additional places within the existing special school.	8 within the Abington Woods P16 provision facilitating an additional 10 places within Granta Special School	complete	2022

Area special school, South Cambs	Study to be commissioned to access potential sites in the area	100- 120	Will be required. Costs unknown at present	Potentially 2024
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C. East Cambs

School	Narrative	Number of pupils	Capital	when
Harbour (Wilburton)- Special	Agreed increase in pupils attending the school	8	N/A	January 2022
Highfields Littleport- Special	As above	10	N/A	September 2022
Additional area special school places	Study to be commissioned to assess potential sites in the area	TBC	Will be required. Costs unknown at present	TBC

D. Fenland

School	Narrative	Number of pupils	Capital	when
Riverside Meadows Academy (formerly TBAP) (Wisbech) - SEMH Secondary	New school build to take existing pupils and expand	30	Already agreed through capital programme	September 2024
Additional Area Special school	Study to be commissioned to access potential sites/land in the area	Will be required. Costs unknown at present	TBC	TBC

Officers are currently negotiating with Affinity Multi-Academy Trust to create 60 additional places as Meadowgate Special Academy in Wisbech.

E. Huntingdon

School	Narrative	Number of pupils	Capital	When
Independent Special, Huntingdonshire	11-16 years	TBC	No	September 2022
Spring Common Special School, Huntingdon	Mobile accommodation retained.	20 places	No	Ongoing
Prestley Wood Area Special Academy at Alconbury Weald	New build for ages 3-19 years	150 places in total. Will grow to capacity over 4 years	This is included in the Council's published capital programme	September 2023
Samuel Pepys	Extension to existing build	From 102 to 165 (63)		September 2024
Additional Special School places	Study to be commissioned to access potential sites in the area	TBC	Will be required. Costs unknown at present	TBC

Officers are also in discussions with schools about capacity within existing buildings and exploring the feasibility of extending the Enhanced Response Bases offer within Cambridgeshire.

Education White Paper: Opportunity for All

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Service Director Education

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To provide an overview to the Committee on the Education White Paper: Opportunity for All. The White Paper sets out the Government's aspiration for Education reform.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

Note and comment on the report, and request any further information on the areas outlined.

Voting: Not applicable. For noting only.

Officer contact:

Name: Jonathan Lewis
Post: Service Director Education
Email: Jonathan.lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 507165

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Goodliffe and King
Post: Chair/Vice-Chair
Email: Bryony.Goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Maria.King@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the recently published Education White Paper: Opportunity for All. The paper is a vision for Education which stretches to 2030 and outlines the Government's intention for Education reform. At this stage, this is a discussion document, although legislation is expected to follow as part of the Queen's Speech and further consultation on elements of the Reform agenda.
- 1.2 At this stage, there is limited detail in the paper, so it is difficult to be specific on the impact either on education settings or the Local Authority of these changes.

2. Education White Paper: Opportunity for All

- 2.1 The Government's Education White Paper: Opportunity for All launched on 28 March 2022. The full White Paper can be [found here](#). It is the first Education White Paper since 2016 and outlines objectives for outcomes and the route the Government intends to drive this aspiration. There are significant overlaps with the Green Paper on SEND reform.

There are two key, hugely ambitious objectives:

- The White Paper restates the target the Government had already set in its 'Levelling up' paper for 90% of children by 2030 leaving primary school with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths - up from 65% currently.
 - The White Paper now sets out a new 'ambition' to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.
- 2.2 The White Paper covers four chapters, and the summary of the recommendations are outlined below. In each of the chapters, the impact on Cambridgeshire is considered.
 - 2.3 Chapter 1: An excellent teacher for every child
 1. Consultation on a new leadership level National Professional Qualification for SENCOs, which would replace the National Award in SEN Coordination as the mandatory qualification for all new SENCOs.
 2. New scholarship to attract the most talented language graduates and a new Initial Teacher Training course to support more engineers to teach physics.
 3. A new digital service will recognise teaching qualifications "from all over the world".
 4. [500,000 teacher training and development opportunities](#) by 2024, establishing a flagship Institute of Teaching, and teacher trainers being recredited.
 5. To raise teacher starting salaries to £30k by 2023.
 6. £3k retention payments for maths and science teachers in disadvantaged areas.
 7. A new relocation premium to help teachers from around the world with visas and other expenses and bursaries for international trainees.
 8. Ofsted will also inspect all Initial Teacher Training providers by July 2024, and then every three years after that.

- 2.4 Cambridgeshire view – These are all sensible measures but there is a need to understand the financial impact and the implementation process of any change. There is little change proposed for the development of teachers in primary schools and leadership retention is

emerging as a key issue and is not included in the proposals. Recruitment and retention remains a key concern.

2.5 Chapter 2: Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance

1. A new literacy and numeracy test for a sample of year 9 pupils to “estimate performance at a national level”. This will “consist of a short series of digital activities undertaken by a small number of children in school”.
2. Legislation to increase Ofsted’s powers to inspect schools that are operating illegally without registration.
3. An expectation that all mainstream schools run a 32.5-hour week by September 2023. Ofsted will check up on schools where it has concerns over education quality and their hours are below the minimum. Special schools are excluded from these arrangements.
 - *From September 2022, all state-funded schools are expected to publish their opening times on their school website (but not optional before or after school activities). Publication of school hours should present the compulsory time a school is open from the official start of the school day (i.e. morning registration) to the official end to the compulsory school day (i.e. official home time) including breaks, but not optional before or after school activities.*
 - *From Spring 2023, all state-funded schools are expected to submit the length of their school week via the spring collection of the school census.*
 - *By September 2023 at the latest, all state-funded, mainstream schools will be expected to provide a compulsory school week of at least 32.5 hours.*
5. A new network of modern foreign language hubs from 2023, and more effective professional development for language teachers.
6. Updated plans to support sport and music education will be published this year, and a new cultural education plan will come out in 2023.
7. A new careers programme for primary schools in areas of disadvantage and improved professional development for teachers and leaders on careers education.
8. Turn Oak National Academy into a new arms-length curriculum body, offering free, adaptable digital curriculum resources and video lessons, free for all teachers.
9. It commits to no changes to the national curriculum “for the remainder of the Parliament”, and GCSEs and A-levels to remain in place, returning to pre-pandemic grading in 2023.
10. Legislation to “modernise” rules on recording attendance, with a new “national data solution” which will provide a blueprint for other parts of the system.
11. There’s also the requirement for schools to publish a clear policy on attendance.
12. Legislation will be made for [a register for children not in school](#).

- 2.6 Cambridgeshire View – despite introducing another level of testing, the reintroduction of a Key Stage 3 assessment will ensure no child gets left behind in their secondary education. The changes to attendance roles and responsibilities is welcome and removing the ‘grey’ areas from the system is a positive step forward. The register for children not in school is welcomed but further details over the role and expectations on Local Authorities will be needed to allow sufficient time to develop these arrangements. We welcome the continuation of sports and music funding as well as a review of cultural education – the wider curriculum cannot be lost at the expense of rising accountability measures for the core subjects.

2.7 Chapter 3: Target support for every child who needs it

1. Ofsted will hold schools to account for the new “parent pledge” – that “any child that falls behind” in English and maths should receive “timely and evidence-based support to enable them to reach their full potential”. Government has “pledged” to make sure schools communicate this to parents.
2. New guidance on providing catch-up “targeted support”, keeping parents updated and effective assessment for children who have fallen behind will be published in partnership with Ofsted.
3. Tutoring to become a “core academic option in the pupil premium menu” with a “vibrant tutoring market” from 2024. Schools will be expected to use their core budgets, including pupil premium, to pay for support.
4. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will be funded with at least £100 million so it can “continue its crucial work to build the evidence base” for “at least the next decade”.
5. £55 million for the Accelerator Fund to “develop and scale-up the best-evidence literacy and numeracy interventions”.

2.8 Cambridgeshire View – We believe most schools communicate effectively to parents on pupil progress and the parent pledge will cement existing practice. The national roll out of the tuition programme has been problematic but we welcome the ongoing commitment to school-based provision. We are monitoring take up following the Secretary of State’s recent announcement that details on the use of tuition will be published nationally and passed to Ofsted to follow up with those not engaging. A briefing is being held on 16 May for school leaders. The Education Endowment Foundation’s impact has been positive, and we welcome further investment into evidence-based practice to support the core subject areas.

2.9 Chapter 4: A stronger and fairer system

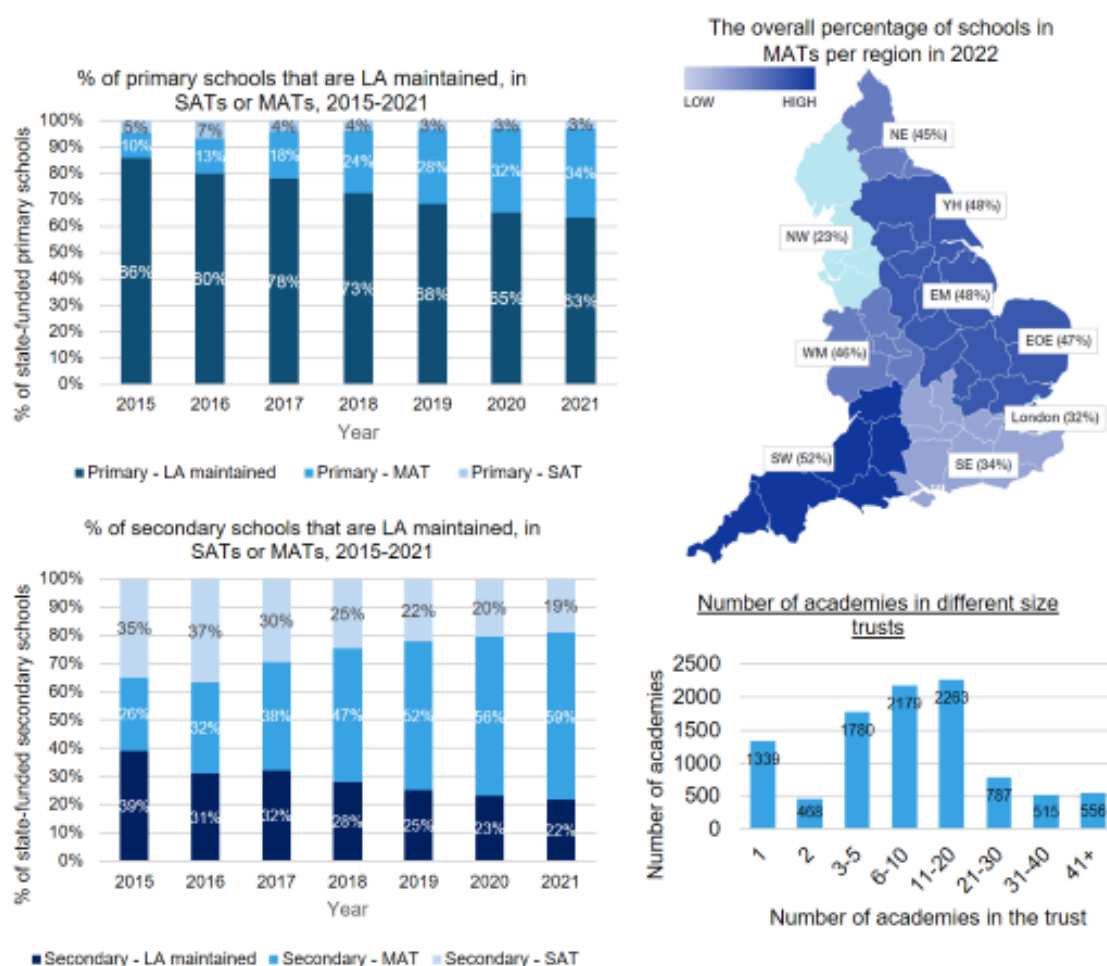
2.10 This chapter covers system reform and structures within education. It is covered under 3 key areas – Academies, Local Authority and Reform –

2.11 Academies

1. A target for all schools to be in strong multi-academy trusts or have “plans to join or form one” by 2030. There are currently 10,000 academies nationally consisting of three quarters of secondary schools and a third of primary schools. In Cambridgeshire, all our secondary schools are academies and around 40% of primary schools.
2. The DfE will “expect” most trusts to work towards serving at least 10 schools or 7,500 pupils.
3. The proportion of schools a trust can run in a particular area will be capped, though no cap will be imposed on trust size overall.
4. A review in May to consider new intervention powers over academy trusts if they fail to meet new statutory standards for being “strong” MATs.
5. Clearer expectations for trusts over providing high-quality, inclusive education, school improvement, financial management, parental engagement and workforce deployment, training and retention.
6. New statutory duties to work collaboratively with other trusts, councils and public bodies, and follow the admissions code.

7. Top slicing of individual school budgets faces new “transparency measures”.
8. In “exceptional circumstances”, good schools may be able to request to move trusts.
9. A three-year £86 million pot is earmarked for trust capacity funding, with extra “financial support” for dioceses to launch trusts following a pilot. This is alongside a new CEO development scheme will be open to executive heads and senior trust staff.
10. The DfE will “consider” bids for high-quality standalone trust free schools, but “avoid converting schools as standalone academies”. There are still a number of standalone academies in Cambridgeshire from earlier iterations of the programme.
11. Legislation will protect faith schools’ “statutory freedoms and protections” on conversion, will “ensure” selective schools are “secure” in MATs.
12. Plans will be developed for all trusts to have “local governance arrangements for their schools”.

The current academisation position can be seen below –



2.12 Local Authorities

1. Councils will have powers to require trusts to admit children, and to object to schools’ published admissions numbers. We will take responsibility for in-year admissions where this has previously been a choice of Trusts to take on this responsibility. A number of Cambridgeshire Trusts have done this.

2. There will be a “new statutory framework” to put children’s needs first and reform over-subscription rules.
3. Councils will be able to launch MATs “where too few strong trusts exist” or where more good schools need to work together to support lower performing schools. The minister will have powers to mass convert all of a council’s schools at their request.
4. A new system of proactive assurance with Local Safeguarding Partnerships commissioning safeguarding audits every three years. This will “help ensure that all schools’ policies are consistent with local safeguarding arrangements and the academy trust standards”.

2.13 Reform

1. A consultation to move schools with two consecutive Ofsted judgments below “good” into strong trusts. It proposes new powers to force “coasting” maintained and academy schools (those with two consecutive Ofsted ratings below “good”) to convert or change trusts. This consultation is open and can be [found here](#). It runs until 23 May 2022.
2. A £40 million fund is promised for 24 “priority” areas among the 55 disadvantaged “education investment areas” to address particular needs, such as literacy, numeracy or absence. These areas will also be targeted for establishing new “academically focused” 16-19 free schools. Cambridgeshire is included in this group by virtue of its previous status as an Opportunity Area. East Cambs and Fenland are a ‘Priority Area’ while the rest of Cambridgeshire is an ‘Education Investment Area’ (EIA). The specific details are limited but we are aware of the following government support -
 - Schools in the EIA will be eligible for a levelling up premium, worth up to £3k a year for 5 years for maths, physics, chemistry and computer teachers working in disadvantaged schools.
 - Extending the Connecting the Classrooms (CtC) programme with £150m to support schools reaching the minimum Wi-Fi Standards.
 - Priority will also be given for other DfE programmes including free schools.

- 2.14 Cambridgeshire View – We remain committed to our family of schools remaining maintained (or as a collective if required). Our aspiration remains keeping schools at the heart of the community with local accountability and governance. Individual schools should always consider what is best for the children in a structural change – in the short, medium and long term. It is a role for governors to decide their future. We held a briefing for maintained schools on 27 April to cover the White Paper and there was strong support for consideration of a Local Authority led Multi Academy Trust. There is little detail at this stage.

National Funding Formula

- 2.15 At the time of publishing the White Paper, the DfE have also published their plans for the national funding arrangements in response to the [recent consultation](#). This will move all formulas towards the national in a phased approach. They will also consult on the tricky areas of funding e.g. split sites, premises, PFI and exceptional funding. More details are expected in the second half of the summer term.

Next Steps

2.16 The proposals outlined in the White Paper lack the full clarity at this stage. The following actions are proposed as next steps -

- A further paper is brought to the CYP committee on the considerations for the formation of a Local Authority MAT(s) once the details of these arrangements are known.
- Officers work with the DfE, Diocesan bodies, Governors and the Cambridgeshire CEO forum to consider a proposal for the future academy landscape across the county and how it might operate. This will include consideration of small schools in the county.
- The Regional School Commissioner is invited to the Committee to provide further clarity on the key aspects of the White Paper. It would be useful if members of the committee could collate their views prior to this meeting.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

- Schools and early years settings are at the heart of communities. Ensuring they meet community needs is critical. Small schools are a key part of our education offer in the County and we need to ensure that this vital access is maintained where there is a positive education offer available to pupils.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

- Providing high quality education should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

- The White Paper sets high expectations for the stage at which children leave their school. We are fully committed to meeting these expectations, working with all schools in Cambridgeshire.

3.4 Protecting and caring for those who need us

- Education is the major universal service the council provides as all children are required to access education. School and early years settings play a critical role in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and families. The role of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board will be strengthened by the White Paper and it is positive that there will be a register established for those children not in an education setting.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category at this stage.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?

Name of Procurement Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

No implications.

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 [Government White Paper](#)

Children and Young People Committee Agenda Plan, Training Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Democratic Services Officer

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Outcome: To review the Committee's agenda plan and training plan and appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups within the Committee's remit.

It is important that the Council is represented on a wide range of outside bodies to enable it to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) review its agenda plan, attached at Appendix 1;
- b) review its training plan, attached at Appendix 2;
- c) review the appointments to Outside Bodies within the Committee's remit, attached at Appendix 3;
- d) review the appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels as detailed in Appendix 4;
- e) appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2022/23;
- f) note the Local Authority School Governor nominations and appointments for spring term 2022, attached at Appendix 5.

Voting: Co-opted members are not eligible to vote on this report.

Officer contact:

Name: Richenda Greenhill
Post: Democratic Services Officer
Email: Richenda.Greenhill@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 699171

Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Goodliffe and M King
Post: Chair/Vice-Chair
Email: bryony.goodliffe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
maria.king@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Committee (CYP) reviews its agenda plan at every meeting. The current agenda plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Committee training plan has been updated to reflect recent training which has taken place. A copy is attached at Appendix 2.

2. Appointments

- 2.1 Appointments to outside bodies and internal advisory groups and panels are agreed by the relevant Policy and Service Committee.
- 2.2 The Committee is invited to review its appointments to outside bodies as shown in Appendix 3. One vacancy exists for a nominee to represent CYP on the Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Foundation Trust Quarterly Liaison Group. Appointments to this Group are made by the Adults and Health Committee.
- 2.3 The Committee's appointments to internal advisory groups and panels are shown at Appendix 4. There is one vacancy on the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Appointments to SACRE are based on political proportionality and the vacancy is for a Conservative member. Appointments to the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers) are currently in abeyance pending proposals on future arrangements.
- 2.2 CYP is responsible for selecting and appointing the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee from the members of the Sub-Committee appointed by Council. Membership of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2022/23 will be decided by Council on 10 May 2022.
- 2.3 CYP receives termly notification of Local Authority School Governor nominations and appointments. Details of the Governor appointments made in Spring Term 2022 are attached at Appendix 5 for noting.
- 2.4 The Committee no longer recommends elected Members to the Fostering Panel for consideration, but all county councillors are encouraged to consider whether they might wish to undertake the application process to join the Fostering Panel. Councillors Hay and S King are currently appointed to the Fostering Panel.
- 2.5 The Committee agreed on 22 May 2018 to delegate, on a permanent basis between meetings, the appointment of representatives to any outstanding outside bodies, groups, panels, within the remit of CYP, to the Executive Director: People and Communities, in consultation with the Chair of CYP. Any appointments made under this delegation would be reported to the Committee at its next meeting.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 There are no significant implications for the following priorities:

Environment and Sustainability
Health and Care
Places and Communities
Children and Young People
Transport

4. Significant Implications

4.1 There are no significant implications within these categories

Resource Implications
Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
Equality and Diversity Implications
Engagement and Communications Implications
Localism and Local Member Involvement
Public Health Implications
Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

5. Source documents

5.1 [Membership of Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels](#)

Children and Young People Committee Agenda Plan

Agenda Item No. 9 – Appendix 1

Published 3 May 2022

Updated 5 May 2022

Notes

The definition of a key decision is set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 2, Article 12.

* indicates items expected to be recommended for determination by full Council.

+ indicates items expected to be confidential, which would exclude the press and public.

The following are standing agenda items which are considered at every Committee meeting:

- Minutes of previous meeting and Action Log
- Agenda Plan, Training Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
17/05/22	1. Home to School Transport to After School Clubs - SEND	S Miller	Not applicable	05/05/22	09/05/22
	2. CUSPE Policy Challenge Research on Supporting Care Leavers' Transition to Independence	D McWherter	Not applicable		
	3. Education Transport Contracts	C Buckingham	KD2022/065		
	4. Response to the Government's SEND Review Green Paper and Update on SEND Provision and Placements	J Lewis	Not applicable		

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	5. Education White Paper: Opportunity for All	J Lewis	Not applicable		
05/07/22	1. Annual Customer Services Report 2021/22	J Shickell	Not applicable	23/06/22	27/06/22
	2. Fire Safety in Schools	I Trafford	KD2022/064		
	3. Local Government Ombudsman Report	J Lewis	KD2022/075		
	4. Inclusion of SEND specific accommodation in future new school builds	F Cox	KD2022/074		
	5. Tendering for Early Years places in Oakington and Huntingdon	C Buckingham	KD2022/076		
	6. Finance and Monitoring Report	M Wade	Not applicable		
	7. Children's Mental Health Services	K Goose	Not applicable		
	8. Care Review	N Curley	Not applicable		
[06/09/22] Provisional Meeting				24/06/22	26/08/22
11/10/22	1. Regular Review of Methodology For Estimating Demand For Education Provision Arising From New Housing Developments [Previous title Review of Child Yield Multipliers]	C Buckingham	Not applicable	29/09/22	03/10/22

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	2. Business Planning: Capital	C Black	Not applicable		
	3. Finance and Monitoring Report	M Wade	Not applicable		
	4. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2021/22	N Curley	Not applicable		
29/11/22	1. Business Planning	C Black	Not applicable	17/11/22	21/11/22
	2. Schools Revenue Funding Arrangements 2022/23	J Lewis	Not applicable		
	3. Finance and Monitoring Report	M Wade	Not applicable		
17/01/23	1. Annual Safeguarding Report	J Procter	Not applicable	05/01/23	09/01/23
	2. Schools & Early Years funding arrangements 2023/24	J Lewis	KD2023/001		
	3. Transport Contracts Annual Report	C Buckingham	KD2023/004		
	4. Finance and Monitoring Report	M Wade	Not applicable		
14/03/23	1. Risk Register	C Black	Not applicable	02/03/23	06/03/23
	2. Preferred sponsor for new primary school at Darwin Green (Cambridge City)	C Buckingham	Not applicable		
	3. Finance and Monitoring Report	M Wade	Not applicable		

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
[18/04/23] Provisional Meeting				04/04/23	06/04/23

Please contact Democratic Services democraticservices@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if you require this information in a more accessible format

Children and Young People (CYP) Committee Training Plan 2021/23

Below is an outline of dates and topics for potential training committee sessions and visits.

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
Member Induction Programme									
1.	Children & Young People Committee induction	To brief Members of the role and responsibilities of the Children and Young People Committee	High	15.06.21 12.00- 2.00pm	Executive Director: People and Communities	Teams	All CYP Members	Cllrs Ambrose Smith Atkins Bywater Bradnam Bird Bulat Coutts Daunton Goodliffe Gowing Hay Hoy Prentice Kindersley M King J King Sharp Slatter Thompson Taylor van de Ven	63%

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
2.	Safeguarding	To brief Members on safeguarding issues and responsibilities	High		Director of Children's Services	Teams	All Members	Cllrs Bulat Goodliffe Taylor Thompson Bird Bradnam Coutts Cox Condron Gowing Nethsingha van de Ven Meschini	36%
3.	Corporate Parenting and the Fostering Service		High	22.10.21 10.00am -12.30pm	Assistant Director: Regional Adoption and Fostering	Virtual	All Members	Atkins Bulat Goodliffe Hay Slatter Taylor Kindersley Nethsingha van de Ven	27%
Committee training programme									
4.	Ofsted – Inspection Framework – Key areas of focus in assessing quality	Cambridgeshire children's services will have a focussed visit from Ofsted at some time in 2022, and a graded inspection in 2023. The aim:	Director of Children's Services	02.12.21 12pm – 1pm	Director of Children's Services	Virtual	CYP Members and Corporate Parenting sub committee		

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
		Introduce to the framework for inspection used by Ofsted How we ensure that we are prepared for inspections.							
5.	Education - FINANCE	Members gain a clear understanding of education funding and council decision making.		10 th Jan 12.30 – 2pm	Service Director: Education & Strategic Finance Business Partner	Teams	All CYP Members	Atkins, Bulat, Goodliffe, Daunton, Coutts, Meschini, Bywater, Slatter, Taylor, M King, Bradnam	34%
6.	Education - SEND	Outline of session: What is SEND? SEND Support in schools and settings Exclusions Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)		17 th January 12.30 – 2 pm	Assistant Director: SEND & Inclusion	Teams	All CYP Members		

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
		High Needs Block and EHCP Demand in Cambridgeshire Cambridgeshire's SEND Transformation Programme							
7.	Performance Management Framework	An introduction to the Performance Management Framework and review of the Children and Young People's Committee's key performance indicators.	Jon Lewis	24.02.22	Service Director: Education		All CYP Members invited		
8.	Place Planning 0-19; Admissions, Attendance, Elective Home Education (EHE), Children in Entertainment, Children in Employment	To brief Members about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Council's statutory responsibilities with regard to the commissioning of educational provision and the Department for Education guidance which informs decisions in respect of design and build projects 	Medium	1 March 2022	Head of Place Planning 0-19	Teams	All Members		

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the respective roles and responsibilities of internal and external partner organisations, including the Department for Education, Multi-Academy Trusts and the Diocesan Boards for Education the business planning processes involved in the commissioning of educational provision. 							
	Education - Attainment	Members gain a clear understanding of the assessment system used in schools.		23 rd March 12 – 1.30 pm	Service Director: Education	Teams	All CYP Members	Cllrs Atkins, Daunton, Bulat, Coutts, Hay, Kindersley, M King, Taylor	50%

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
9.	Supporting the mental and emotional health needs of children in care/on the edge of care	To introduce CYP Members and the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee to the clinical framework and how it supports our foster carers and contributes to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people.		7 th April 1.30 – 2.30	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Virtual	CYP Members and Corporate Parenting Sub Committee	Cllrs Atkins, Bradnam, Goodliffe, M King, Hay, Hoy and Slatter	40%
10.	Journeys for children in care including types of placements, placement matching and seeking permanent placements	To gain an understanding of the various placement types offered to our children and young people in care that supports them achieving permanence.		4 th May 12.30 – 2.00	Assistant Director for Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist your Peoples Service	Virtual	All Members		
	ISOS report and Development of the Early Help Strategy and Children and Maternity Collaborative			TBC	Service Director: Children and Safeguarding				
	Meeting with - (Young			TBC	Service Director: Children's	Virtual	All CYP Members invited		

	Subject	Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Nature of Training	Audience	Attendance By	% of elected members of the Committee attending
	People's Council)								
	Commissioning Services – what services are commissioned and how our services are commissioned across Children Services			TBC	Service Director: Children's / Head of Children's Commissioning		All CYP Members invited		
	Visit Family Safeguarding Team			TBC	Head of Safeguarding		All CYP Members invited		
	Children and Maternity Collaborative and Integrated Care System	To gain an understanding of the Best Start in Life and Strong Families, Strong Communities strategies and how they can support the development of the Maternity and Children's Collaborative.		TBC	Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director for Early Help and Children Services	Virtual	All Members		

An accessible version of this report is available on request
from [Emma Nederpel](#)

Cambridgeshire County Council Children and Young People Committee

Appointments to outside bodies, partnership liaison and advisory groups

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representative(s)	Guidance classification	Contact details
Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Foundation Trust Quarterly Liaison Group The Adults and Health Committee has invited CYP to nominate up to three representatives to attend quarterly liaison meetings with Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust. Any appointments will be made by the Adults and Health Committee.	4	Up to 3	1. Cllr Goodliffe (Lab) 2. Councillor M King (LD) 3. Vacant	Other Public Body Representative	Kate Parker Head of Public Health Business Programmes Kate.Parker@cambridgeshire.gov.uk 01480 379561
Cambridgeshire Music Hub A partnership of school music providers, led by the County Council, to deliver the government's National Plan for School Music.	3	2	1. Councillor M Atkins (LD) 2. Councillor S Taylor (Ind)	Other Public Body Representative	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Matthew Gunn Head of Cambridgeshire Music 01480 373500/ 01480 373830 Matthew.Gunn@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs To provide training and social facilities for young members of the community.	6	1	1. Cllr Bulat (Lab)	Unincorporated Association Member	Jess Shakeshaft cambsyoungfarmers@outlook.com

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representative(s)	Guidance classification	Contact details
Cambridgeshire Schools Forum The Cambridgeshire Schools Forum exists to facilitate the involvement of schools and settings in the distribution of relevant funding within the local authority area	6	3	1. Cllr Bryony Goodliffe (Lab) 2. Cllr Claire Daunton (LD) 3. Councillor S Taylor (Ind)	Other Public Body Representative	Tamar Oviatt-Ham Democratic Services Officer 01223 699715668 Tamar.Oviatt-Ham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
East of England Local Government Association Children's Services and Education Portfolio-Holder Network The network brings together the lead members for children's service and education from the 11 strategic authorities in the East of England. It aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give councils in the East of England a collective voice in response to consultations and lobbying activity • provide a forum for discussion on matters of common concern and share best practice • provide the means by which the East of England contributes to the work of the national LGA and makes best use of its members' outside appointments. 	4	2	1.Cllr M King (LD) 2 Cllr B Goodliffe (Lab)	Other Public Body Representative	Cinar Altun Cinar.altun@eelga.gov.uk

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representative(s)	Guidance classification	Contact details
F40 Group F40 (http://www.f40.org.uk) represents a group of the poorest funded education authorities in England where government-set cash allocations for primary and secondary pupils are the lowest in the country.	As required	1 +substitute	Councillor Bryony Goodliffe (Lab) Substitute: Councillor M King (LD)	Other Public Body Representative	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Safeguarding Partnership Boards have been established by Government to ensure that organisations work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare. In Cambridgeshire this includes Social Care Services, Education, Health, the Police, Probation, Sports and Leisure Services, the Voluntary Sector, Youth Offending Team and Early Years Services.	4	1	Councillor Bryony Goodliffe (Lab) It is a requirement that the Lead Member for Children's Services sits on the Board.	Other Public Body Representative	Joanne Procter Head of Service Children and Adults Safeguarding Board Joanne.Procter@peterborough.gov.uk 01733 863765
Manea Educational Foundation Established to provide grants and financial assistance for people up to the age of 25 years living within the Parish of Manea.	2	1	Councillor D Connor (Con)	Unincorporated association member	
March Educational Foundation Provides assistance with the education of people under the age of 25 who are resident in March.	3 – 4	1 For a period of five years	Councillor John Gowing (Con)	Trustee of a Charity	
Nature for Everyone Advisory Group Anglia Ruskin University and Learning through Landscapes project. Its aim is to increase outdoor learning at school and home for children with complex	TBC	1	Councillor Alex Bulat (Lab)	Unincorporated association member TBC	Sara Spear Head of School of Management, Faculty of Business and Law Anglia Ruskin University Sara.Spear@aru.ac.uk 01223 695039

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representative(s)	Guidance classification	Contact details
and severe learning difficulties in order to support their social and emotional development, mental health and wellbeing.					
Needham's Foundation, Ely Needham's Foundation is a Charitable Trust, the purpose of which is to provide financial assistance for the provision of items, services and facilities for the community or voluntary aided schools in the area of Ely and to promote the education of persons under the age of 25 who are in need of financial assistance and who are resident in the area of Ely and/or are attending or have at any time attended a community or voluntary aided school in Ely.	2	2	1. Cllr Whelan (LD) 2. Cllr Coutts (LD)	Trustee of a Charity	
Shepreth School Trust Provides financial assistance towards educational projects within the village community, both to individuals and organisations.	4	1	1. Councillor P McDonald (LD)	Trustee of a Charity	
Soham Moor Old Grammar School Fund Charity promoting the education of young people attending Soham Village College who are in need of financial assistance or to providing facilities to the Village College not normally provided by the education authority. Biggest item of expenditure tends to be to fund purchase of books by university students.	2	1	1. Councillor M Goldsack (Con)	Unincorporated Association Member	

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representative(s)	Guidance classification	Contact details
Trigg's Charity (Melbourn) Trigg's Charity provides financial assistance to local schools / persons for their educational benefit.	2	1	Councillor S van de Ven (LD)	Unincorporated Association Member	

An accessible version of this report is available on request from [Richenda Greenhill](#)

Cambridgeshire County Council Children and Young People Committee

Appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representatives	Contact details
Cambridgeshire Culture Steering Group The role of the group is to give direction to the implementation of Cambridgeshire Culture, agree the use of the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund, ensure the maintenance and development of the County Art Collection and oversee the loan scheme to schools and the work of the three Cambridgeshire Culture Area Groups. Appointments are cross party.	4	3	1. Cllr A Bulat (Lab) 2. Councillor Michael Atkins (LD) 3. Cllr Cox Condron (Lab)	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to exercise all the Council's functions relating to the delivery, by or on behalf of, the County Council, of Corporate Parenting functions with the exception of policy decisions which will remain with the Children and Young People's Committee. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee shall be selected and appointed by the Children and Young People Committee.	6	n/a	1. Chair 2. Vice Chair Appointments to be made by the Children and Young People Committee from the membership of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.	Richenda Greenhill Democratic Services Officer 01223 699171 Richenda.greenhill@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representatives	Contact details
Educational Achievement Board For Members and senior officers to hold People and Communities to account to ensure the best educational outcomes for all children in Cambridgeshire.	3	4	1. Cllr Bryony Goodliffe (Lab) 2. Cllr M King (LD) 3. Cllr S Taylor (Ind) 4. Cllr S Hoy (Con)	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers) The Joint Committee provides an opportunity for trade unions to discuss matters of mutual interest in relation to educational policy for Cambridgeshire with elected members.	2	6	1. Vacancy 2. Vacancy 3. Vacancy 4. Vacancy 5. Vacancy 6. Vacancy <i>(appointments postponed pending proposals on future arrangements)</i>	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) To advise on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education. In addition to the three formal meetings per year there is some project work which requires members to form smaller sub-committees. The SACRE Constitution calls for the appointment of four elected members based on political proportionality. SACRE meetings require the presence of an elected Member in order to be quorate.	3 per year (usually one per term) 1.30-3.30pm	4	1. Councillor K Prentice (Con) 2. Councillor A Bulat (Lab) 3. Councillor Philippa Slatter (LD) 4. 1 vacancy (Con)	Amanda Fitton SACRE Adviser Amanda.Fitton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Name of body	Meetings per year	Reps appointed	Representatives	Contact details
Virtual School Management Board The Virtual School Management Board will act as “governing body” to the Head of Virtual School, which will allow the Member representative to link directly to the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board.	Termly	1	1. Councillor A Bulat (Lab)	Jonathan Lewis Service Director: Education 01223 727994 Jonathan.Lewis@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Edwina Erskine Business Support Officer – Administration Services Team Cambridgeshire’s Virtual School for Looked After Children (ESLAC Team) 01223 699883 edwina.erskine@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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LA Governor Nominations/Appointments

January 2022

- Benwick Primary – Mark Chapman (re-appointment)
- Lionel Walden Primary – Andrew Naughton (re-appointment)
- Over Primary – Simon Gentry (re-appointment)

February 2022

- Abbots Ripton CofE Primary – Graham Cahill
- Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery – Joanna Stanbridge

March 2022

- Cherry Hinton CofE Primary – Marie-Ann Kyne-Lilley

