

Cambridgeshire County Council

Corporate Parenting Annual Report Sub Committee

2019/20



Welcome Foreword from Councillor Lis Every, Chairperson of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee



Welcome to this year's Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report. In this report we will be looking back on our successes and achievements throughout 2019 and the progress we have made against our priorities for children in care and care leaving young people.

In writing this foreword, I realise that any report covering this period would not be complete without an acknowledgement of the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic which arrived with us in the latter part of this reporting year. I fully appreciate the enormity of effect this has had on many people's lives, on the children we support and the staff that have worked tirelessly to continue to deliver a service to our most disadvantaged and vulnerable children. I extend a sincere and wholehearted thank you to all our staff from myself and from my colleagues who sit on the Sub-Committee. We have been reassured that the children and young people whom the Council cares for and supports have been in the forefront of everyone's mind during these challenging times.

A key event took place in October 2019 when we were fortunate to participate in a supportive peer review visit by Central Bedfordshire which looked at our services for children in care and young people leaving care and provided us with an expert external perspective on our services. Whilst peer reviews are not inspections, they are a key tool for improvement, identifying strengths and challenging us to think about areas for development. The areas for improvement are noted within the body of this report but the key positive messages included:

- Children's Services had clearly evidenced significant improvement because of considered and effective change in the structure of the service, processes and priorities
- Improvement was reflected in performance data, reviews of case files and the view of practitioners
- Social Workers and Personal Advisors know their children well and are able to articulate considered and effective planning for children, the service knows itself well

In February 2020, Cambridgeshire's children's services also received a focussed visit from Ofsted, looking specifically at the Local Authority's arrangements for children in care. Inspectors noted that senior leaders had focussed on addressing actions highlighted for improvement in the last inspection (early 2019) and that they fully understood both the service strengths and areas for development working systematically, together with partners, to drive up the quality of social work practice. Crucially for children, Inspectors recognised the improvements that had been made in services for children in care and that these improvements had positively impacted on their experiences and progress.

The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee was also considered within the focussed visit and Inspectors did note that the committee provided a forum to challenge and hold officers to account, as well as providing direction to inform improvements. When I met with the Inspectors, I did agree that more work needed to be undertaken to ensure that we develop processes and structures that support our ambition for children in care and care leavers to be fully involved in steering and influencing the committee agenda and outcomes. Alongside our participation service and Council officers, we have identified this as a target area for next year and I look forward to noting the improvements in next year's annual report.

Finally, in recognition that the service children in care experience is enhanced by the passion and commitment of the Council's workforce, I would also like to thank our Children and Safeguarding Director Lou Williams, his staff and our foster carers for all their continued hard work. This year I am also noting the departure of Assistant Director, Sarah Jane Smedmor and welcoming Assistant Director Nicola Curley who joined the Corporate Parenting service in March and I look forward to working with her as we continue on our improvement journey



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The role of the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee – how we do things in Cambridgeshire

What is corporate parenting?

Corporate parenting is founded on the principle that the Local Authority, collectively with other relevant services, should have the same aspirations and provide the same kind of care that any good parent would provide for their own children

Background

In April 2017, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee of the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee became active following a review of the long established Corporate Parenting Board. The new arrangements reflected the drive to strengthen arrangements for oversight and decision making in respect of corporate parenting activity with clear accountability to the CYP Committee through adopting a scheme of delegated authority and a framework for decision making.

Purpose

The purpose of Sub-Committee is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in its care and provides a key role in ensuring accountability. The transformation of the Sub Committee has been led by the Chair, reinvigorating it into one which is proactive in challenging service delivery and advocating strongly for Children in Care and Care Leavers resulting in a more robust constitution with stronger governance principles.

The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to exercise all the Council's functions relating to the delivery, by or on behalf of the Council, of Corporate Parentings functions with the exception of policy decisions which remains with the CYP Committee.

Delegated authority includes:

- Working with the Virtual School to raise standards of attainment and developing education, employment and training opportunities for children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Ensuring mechanisms for consultation and participation are positively promoted and that the Council actively listens and responds to the views and experiences of children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Receiving regular reports on the provisions of services for children in care and care leavers as required by legislation and for the purpose of monitoring and offering advice.
- Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group and health providers to ensure delivery of services to meet health needs including health assessments and plans, emotional health, sexual health, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy.

The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) reminds us that: 'corporate parenting should seek to ensure supportive relationships where young people feel cared for, not just looked after'. Being a Good Corporate Parent involves championing the rights of Children in Care and Care Leavers, ensuring they have access to good services and support from the local authority and from other partner agencies working with them

Future developments

Over the last year, the Sub-Committee has been focussing its activity around five key priorities which has helped us to maintain scrutiny on specific areas and topics that are central to the lived experience of children in care and those leaving care. This report will follow the format of the following priorities:

- Being and feeling safe
- Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle
- Achieving stability and permanence
- Preparing for adulthood
- Hearing the voices of children and young people

During the focussed visit from Ofsted in February 2020, Inspectors told us that we needed to improve on how, as a Council, we demonstrate “the impact of children’s involvement and participation, so that children are told what is being done in response to their views and wishes, both for their own individual case plans and when contributing to strategic service planning.”

In response, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee agreed to review and consider a restructure of meetings in order to help us to bring about more effective engagement with children and young people. During 2020, a proposed structure will be considered that will see the Sub- Committee continuing to hold six meetings a year but these will arranged over three formal and three informal meetings. The meetings will be themed around Placement, Education and Health and each topic will be considered in both sets of meetings.

The informal meetings will be chaired by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Chairperson, attended by representatives from the Children in Care Council, Elected Members and Council officers. The informal meeting is seen as an opportunity for Corporate Parents to listen to young people in an environment where they feel able to talk freely about their experiences in care and as care leavers and discuss ways to improve services going forward.

Be someone to talk to if you
just want a listening ear

Talk about Covid or
anything you want

Help you with tools
to manage anxiety

Follow a recipe, prepare
a meal with you or do a
quiz or game with you

Help you find
useful things
online

Share fun things to do online
like zoo tours, plays and
musicals and games

Children in Care and Care Leaver demographics Who our children are;

714

children in care who Cambridgeshire were responsible for

74

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children in care in Cambridgeshire

416

young people in the leaving care population

229

children and young people in a long-term fostering placement

65

children in care with a recorded disability

302

female children in care

412

male children in care

Children in Care	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
Total CIC Population	785	786	778	783	771	766	750	752	743	740	727	714
Non-Unaccompanied Children	713	717	712	710	696	690	672	668	658	655	645	640
Unaccompanied Children (UC)	72	69	66	73	75	76	78	84	85	85	82	74
Unaccompanied Children %	9.17 %	8.78%	8.48 %	9.32 %	9.73 %	9.92 %	10.40 %	11.17 %	11.44 %	11.49 %	11.28 %	10.36 %
Rate per 10,000	57.8	57.9	57.3	57.7	56.8	56.4	55.3	55.4	54.7	54.5	53.6	52.6

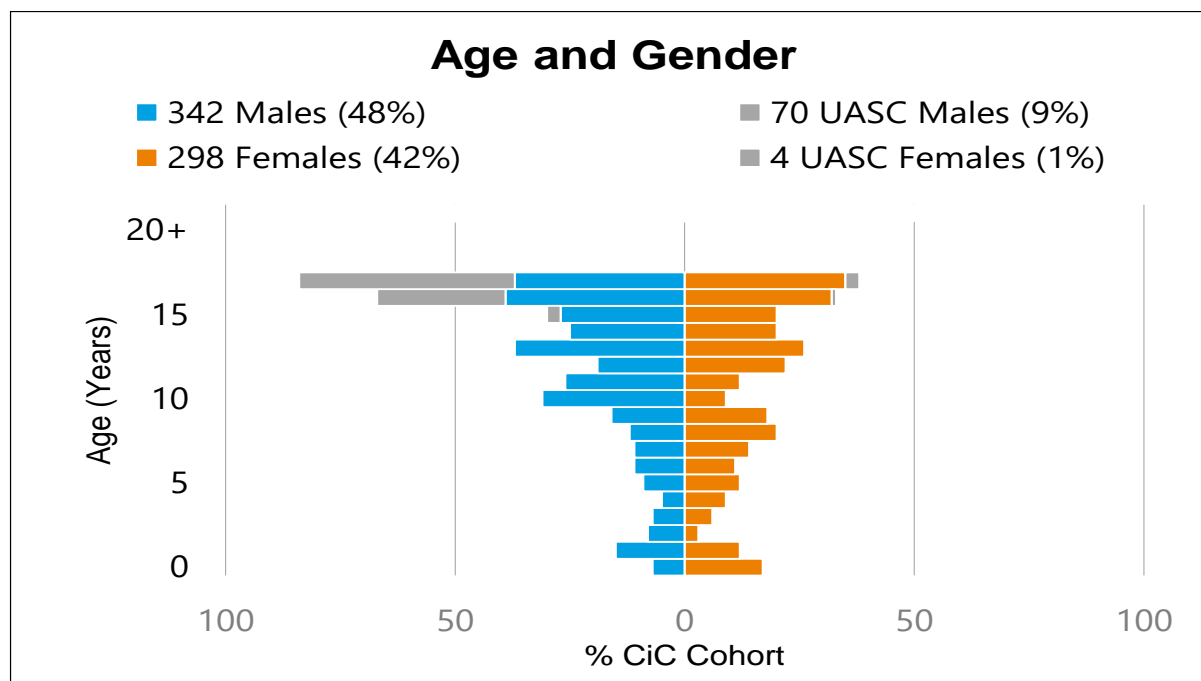
Children in Care

As of 31st March 2020, Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for caring for and looking after 714 Children in Care (excluding children in respite care), a decrease when compared to the 772 children in Care at the end of March 2019. Between April and July 2019 there was a significant increase in the numbers of children, which slowly went down during the year.

The rise in the numbers of children during April and July was also reflected in the increased number of unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum who arrived in Cambridgeshire during the summer months, with numbers of spontaneous arrivals decreasing over the latter part of the year.

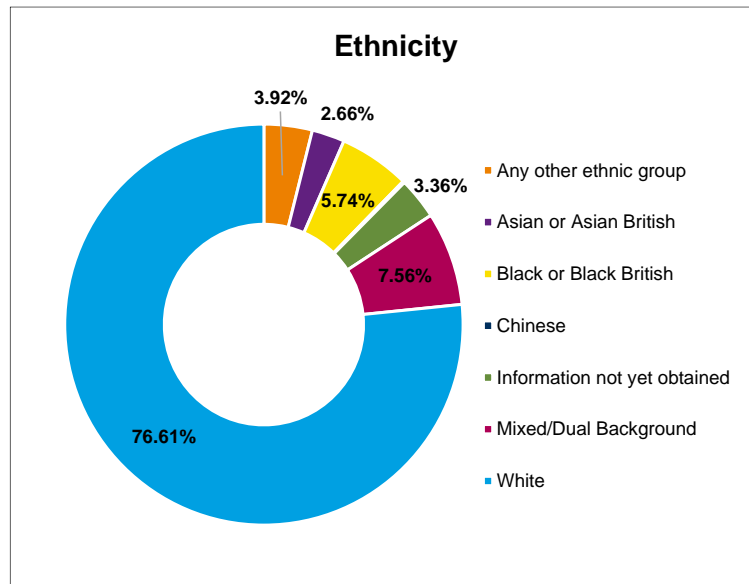
The vast majority of these children will have experienced frightening and distressing experiences during their journey to the UK and in order to ensure social workers had the capacity to respond to these children's complex needs, it was agreed with the Eastern Region Network that Cambridgeshire would be exempt from receiving children from other Local Authorities via the National Transfer Scheme for a short period in late summer.

The chart below shows the age and gender of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care as of 31st March 2020. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children made up 10% of the care population and all but four children are male.

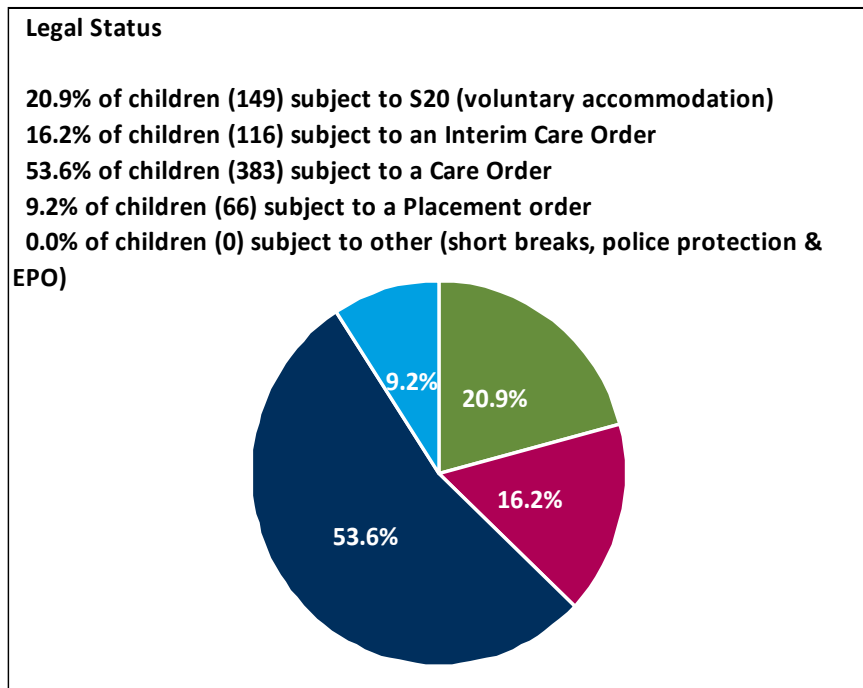


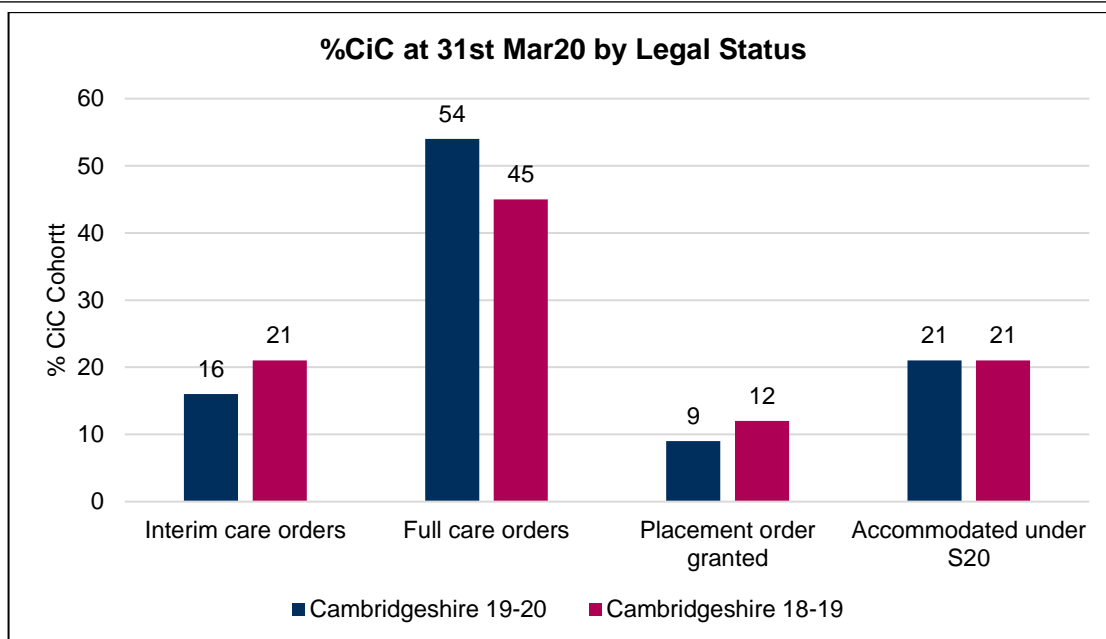
At the end of the year there are 65 children in care with a recorded disability, representing 9% of the care population. Of these the most prominent disabilities recorded are Learning Difficulties (26.9%) and Autism and Asperger Syndrome (17.6%).

The chart below shows the ethnicity of Children in Care as of the 31st March 2020.



The chart below provides a breakdown of the legal status of children as of the 31st March 2020. The numbers in brackets represent the numbers of children.





Care Leavers

As of the 31st March 2020 the leaving care population consists of 416 young people, compared to 360 children at the end of 2019. We do recognise that the care leaving cohort will continue to rise in the coming years as a result of legislation extending the support of Personal Advisors to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years (Children and Social Work Act 2017).

To support this activity, capacity in the specialist Leaving Care Teams has been increased through additional Personal Advisor posts and Personal Advisor posts within the Children in Care Teams who have a focus on transition planning for children moving into adulthood. To further support our care leavers, specialist posts have also been created: a Local Offer Personal Advisor, an Education, Employment and Training Coordinator and a Homelessness Reduction Personal Advisor.

26 Care Leavers (6.3%) have a recorded disability and of these the most common conditions recorded are Autism or Asperger Syndrome (46%), Behavioural Difficulties (23%), and Learning Difficulties (19%).

Whilst these demographics are important to help us understand who are children are, we need to take into account that each one of these figures is an individual child or young person with their own unique life experiences, aspirations and asks of their Corporate Parent

Corporate Parenting Priorities 2019/2020

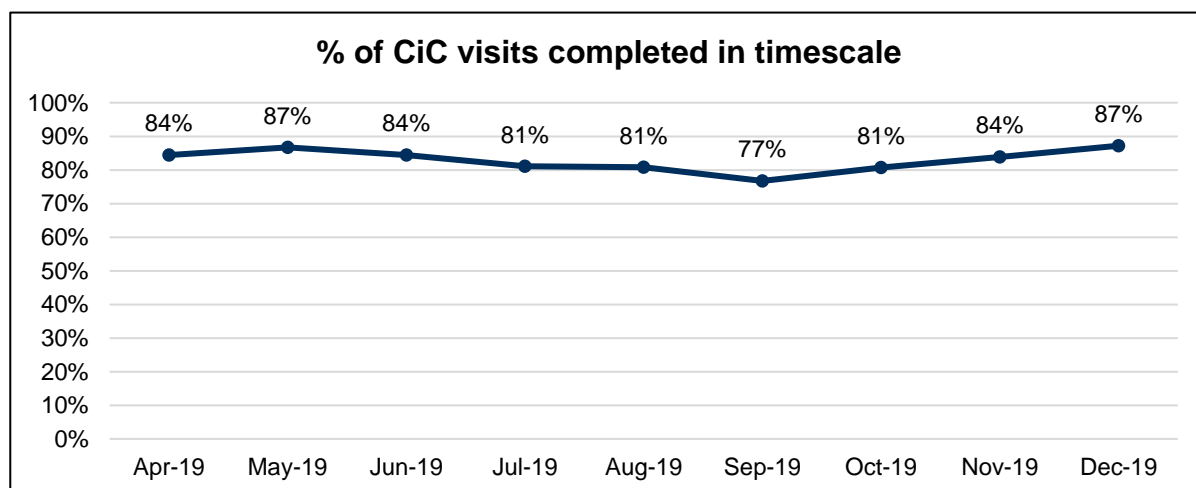
Being and Feeling Safe

- To ensure all children in care receive a timely visit from their social worker and have the opportunity to build meaningful relationships
- To have consistent oversight of children in care who are at risk of exploitation
- To continue to improve workforce recruitment, retention and agency rates so children and young people benefit from consistent relationships

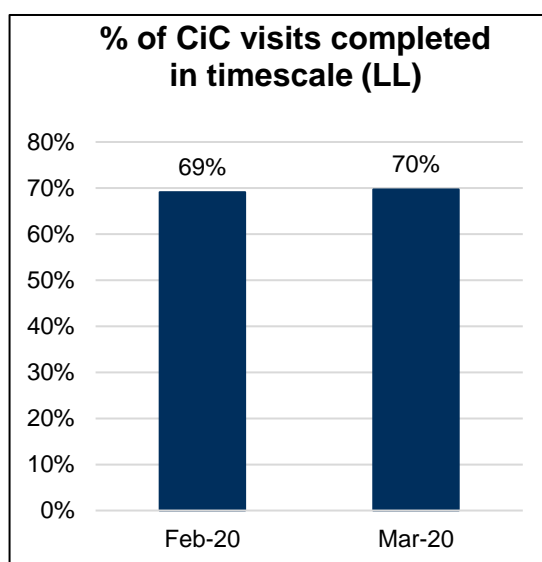
A key indicator for this priority is the percentage of children in care receiving regular visits from their social worker.

In January 2020, Cambridgeshire Children's Services moved its case management system to a new system (Liquid Logic). As part of this move there were a number of changes to reporting which included a change in the definition of how visits were reported. Therefore, the data pre- and post-January is not comparable, so is reported separately.

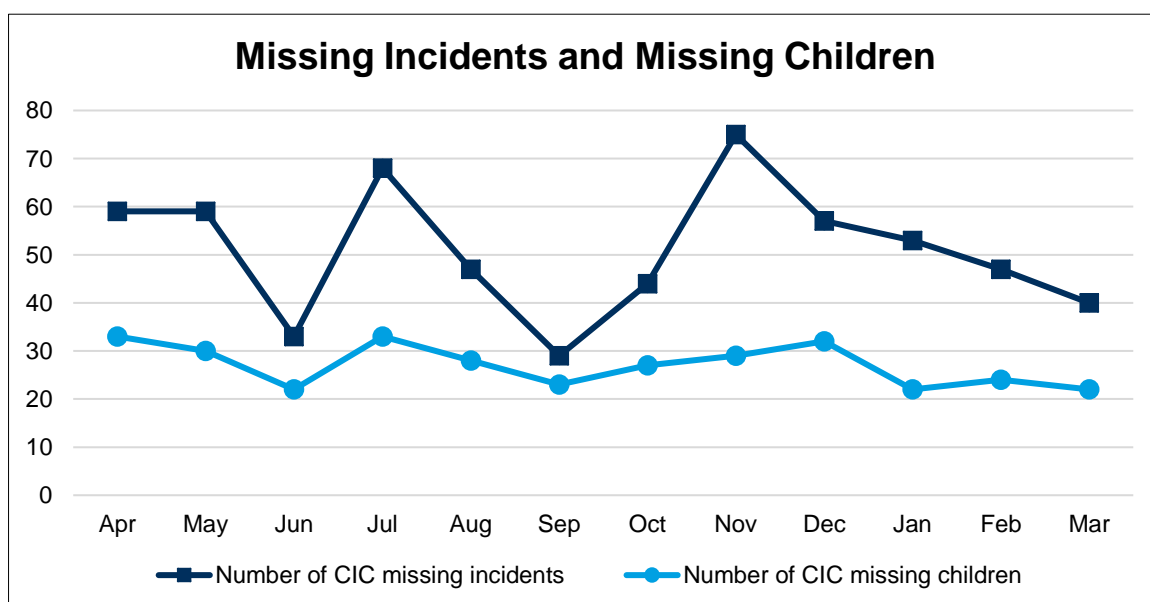
This graph shows the percentage of visits completed in each month that were in timescale. Whilst performance improved slightly from April to December 2019 it remains below our target of 95% of visits in timescale.



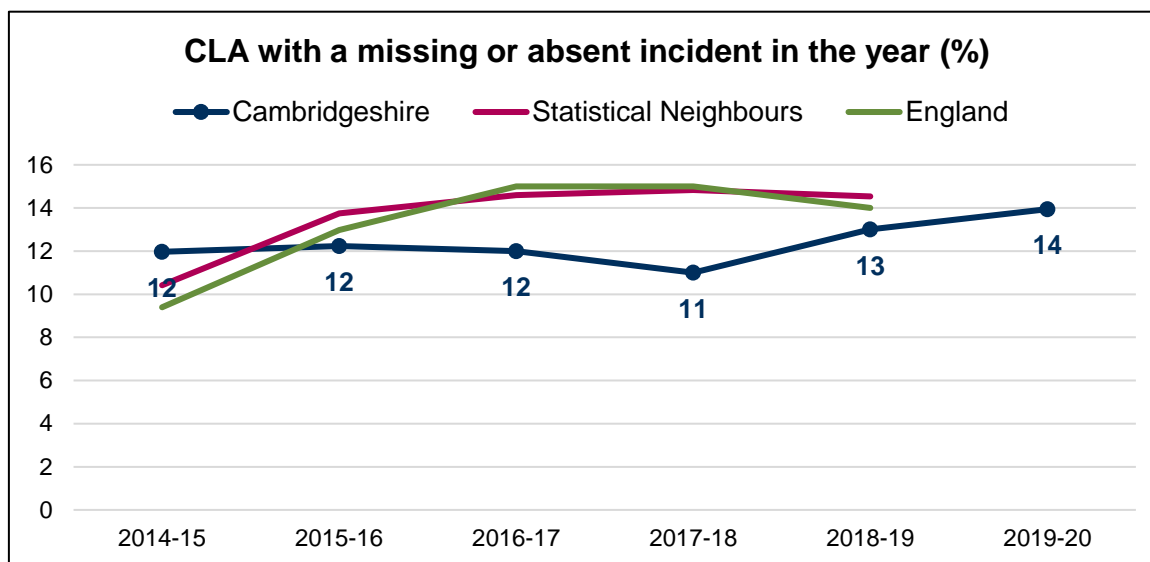
This second graph shows the percentage of children in care who had a visit in the last 6 weeks (standard visit pattern) at month end. Figures are not available for January due to the move onto the new Liquid Logic system. This definition is currently under review as it does not take into account children who are on a 3 monthly visit pattern (usually children in settled and longer term care arrangements), which accounts for the significant drop in the percentage of children visiting within timescale from December onwards. If these children were included, the percentage on visits carried out on time would be higher.



Another key indicator relating to this priority is the number of children who are reported missing and how many times they have been reported as missing. The graph below captures these figures and show that a small number of children will have been reported missing on a number of occasions. These children and their plans are monitored carefully with increased oversight from the social work teams alongside our partner agencies such as the police.



The graph below details the comparative data up to 2018/19 which showed that Cambridgeshire has previously reported less Children in Care as missing than our statistical neighbours. The comparative data for Cambridgeshire's statistical neighbours and the national picture for 2019/20 is not yet available.



Note: Cambridgeshire do not record absent incidents, but rather report all these as missing incidents. They have been added together in this graph for comparisons to Statistical Neighbours and England.

The number and timeliness of Return Home interviews (RHI's) with children and young people who have been reported missing is another key indicator relating to this priority. In Cambridgeshire the RHI's are conducted by specialist staff within the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked HUB (MET HUB). The MET HUB sits within the Integrated Front Door which enables timely access to key information about children and families from across partner agencies.

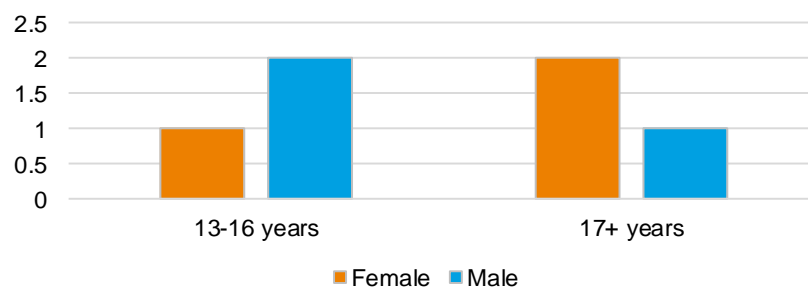
The target timeframe to conduct return interviews is 72 hours from the point the child is found and returns to their care accommodation. For Children in Care, 583 RHI's were required during the year with 491 being completed. Some RHI's will not be completed as the young person refuses to engage with the interview

The following two graphs show the number of children assessed as at risk and under what category at the end of March 2020.

Child Sexual Exploitation

In March there were 6 CIC who were identified as at mild/emerging or moderate risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

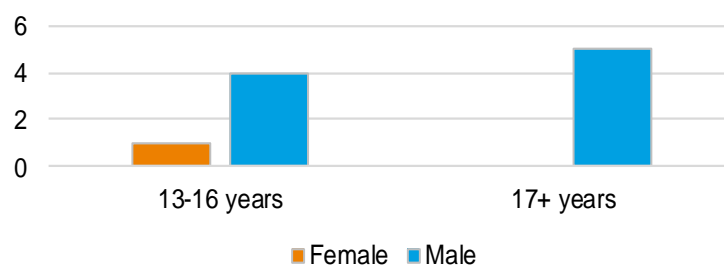
CIC CSE by Age & Gender



Child Criminal Exploitation

In March there were 10 CIC who were identified as at mild/emerging, moderate & significant Child Criminal Exploitation

CIC Criminal exploitation by Age & Gender



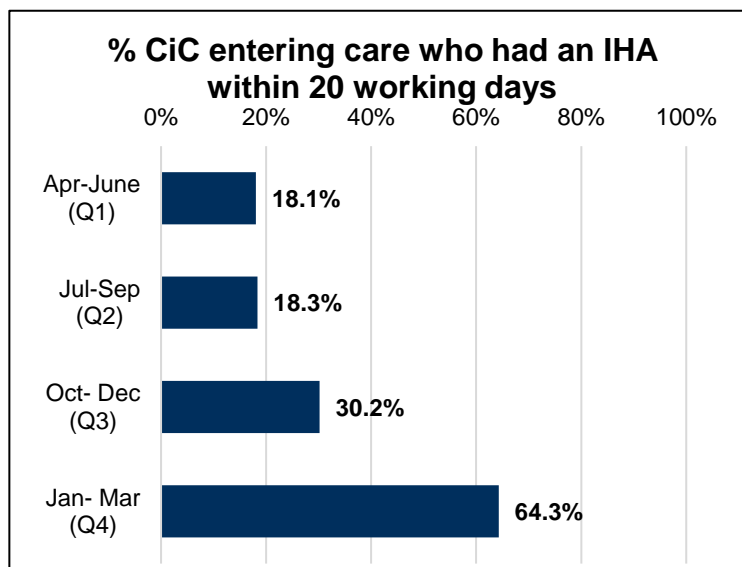
**Being and Feeling Safe
Ofsted told us in February:**

Strengths	Areas for development
<p>Decisions that children should come into care are appropriate and are appropriately escalated into Court</p>	<p>Greater focus is needed on planning before children are born, specifically when older siblings are no longer living with their parents or birth families</p>
<p>Most children in care have social workers who regularly visit and build meaningful relationships with them, often going the extra mile to ensure children are well supported</p>	<p>Whilst there has been increased focus by workers and carers on helping children to understand their family history and make sense of why they are in care, life story work needs to be given continual focus and be shared and discussed with children in a way that they will understand</p>
<p>Investment and success with attracting new staff to Cambridgeshire has increased capacity and reduced caseloads allowing social workers more time to conduct direct work with children and promote greater stability in their lives</p>	<p>Whilst this has promoted stability in many teams, further improvement is needed in some teams to ensure children are able to maintain meaningful relationships with their worker</p>
<p>Every Cambridgeshire child who goes missing is offered a return home interview and risk assessment tools are completed to a high standard leading to effective plans that help keep children safe</p>	<p>More work is needed to show that arrangements and plans for monitoring and protecting children at risk of exploitation are making a difference to children and communities, for example planned activity to disrupt adults who are involved in targeting children to become involved in criminality</p>

Being Healthy and Leading a Healthy Lifestyle

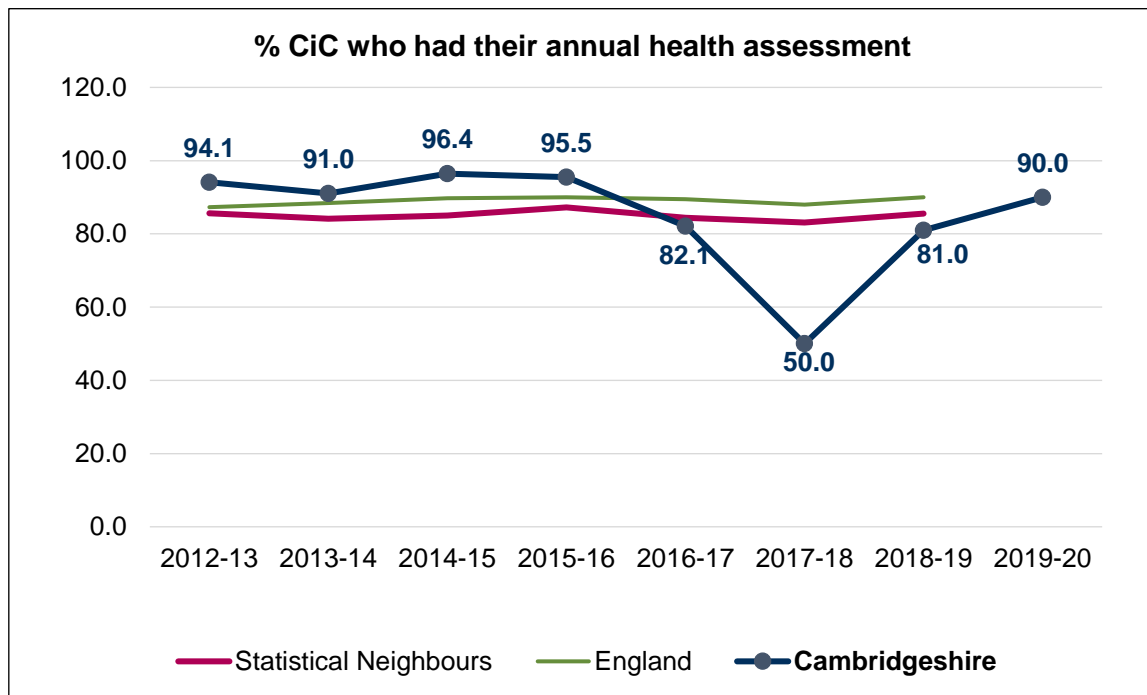
- To ensure improvement in the timeliness of initial and review health assessments
- To ensure that all children and young people are registered with a dentist and have regular check ups

The graph below shows that whilst we have seen steady improvement throughout the year, we still need to significantly improve on our performance to make sure that the initial health needs of children in care are responded to in a timely way. Initial Health Assessments can be delayed for a number of reasons such as obtaining consent which allows referrals to be made to health, delayed clinic appointments and non-attendance at clinic appointments. There are also different arrangements that apply to children who live in Cambridgeshire and those who live outside of Cambridgeshire that affect how other health authorities prioritise Cambridgeshire children.

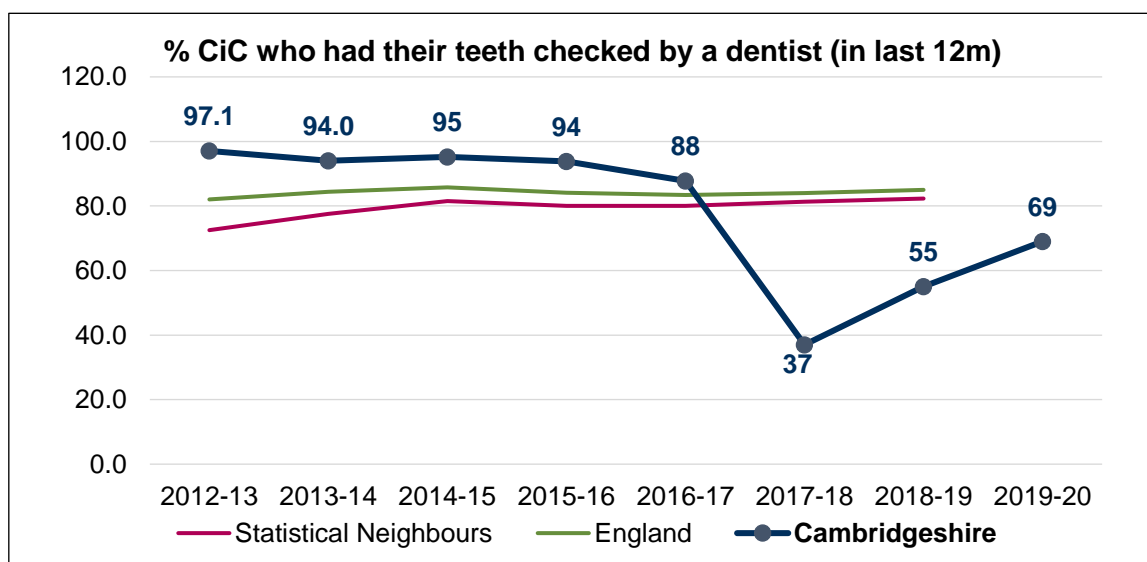


A joint working group completed a great deal of activity around health assessments during this reporting year and now that the new case management system is in place, requests for assessments are triggered automatically when children come into care and a health questionnaire within the system pre-populates information to ensure that health colleagues have all the information they need in order to be able to carry out effective medicals. Whilst there has been an understandable delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these new processes are now live within the Liquid Logic system. Ensuring improvement and scrutinising this activity will remain a priority for the Sub-Committee next year.

The chart below shows the percentage of children who received their annual health assessment, this is the cohort of children on the 31st March who have been in care continuously for over 12 months and received their health assessment within the last 12 months (or 6 months for under 5 year olds). Cambridgeshire has seen a 9% improvement as compared to 2018/19.



The chart below shows the percentage of children who had been in care continuously for over 12 months on 31st March 2020 and had a dental check in the last 12 months. Again performance for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care improved in 2019-2020, however there is room for further significant improvement.



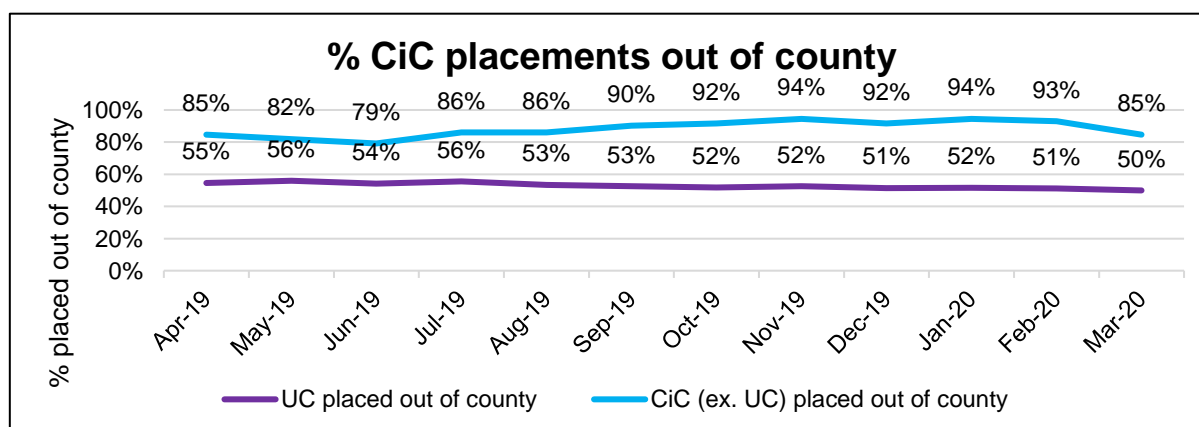
Being Healthy and Leading a Healthy Lifestyle Ofsted told us in February:

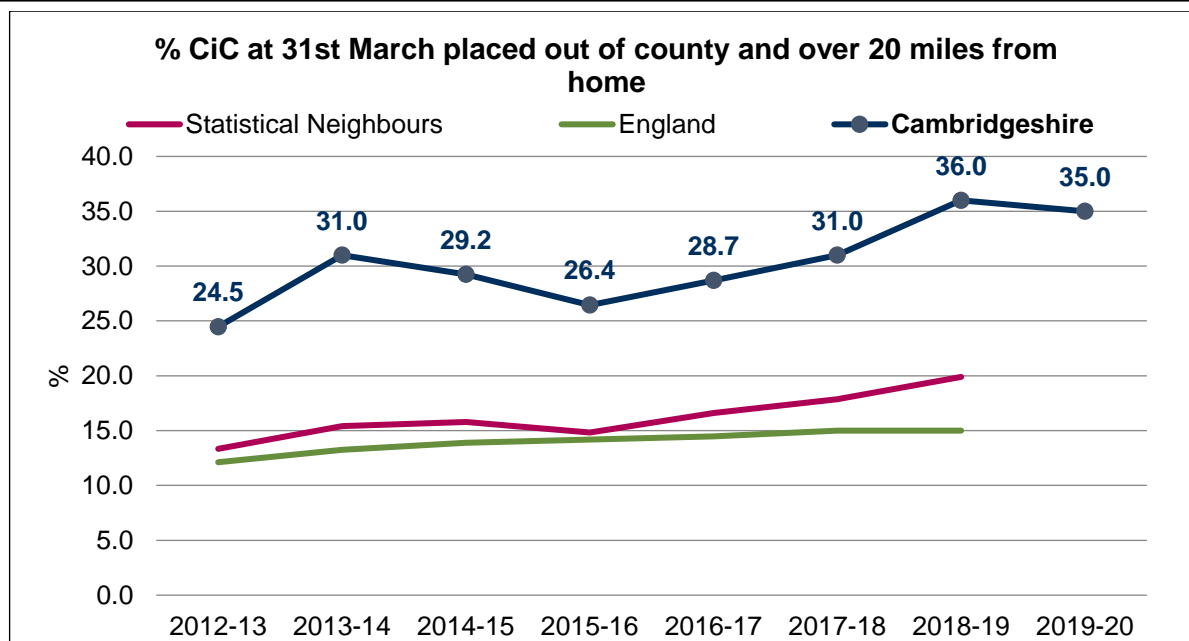
Strengths	Areas for development
<p>Senior leaders recognise that mental health and emotional well-being services are fragmented and the restructure of the corporate parenting service's clinical team will support this activity</p> <p>There has been some recent improvement in children accessing timely health assessments</p>	<p>Waiting times need to be reduced and pathways clarified in order to make sure that children in care and care leavers can access the right help and support when they need it</p> <p>Some children when they come into care are still not getting timely health assessments, Local authority leaders are discussing this with health strategic leads but substantial progress is yet to be made</p> <p>Challenges remain in accessing timely health assessments for children living outside of Cambridgeshire</p>

Achieving stability and permanence

- To support the increase in the number, quality and range of local foster carers and placement provision
- To ensure improvement around placement stability
- To increase the number and timeliness of permanent care arrangements

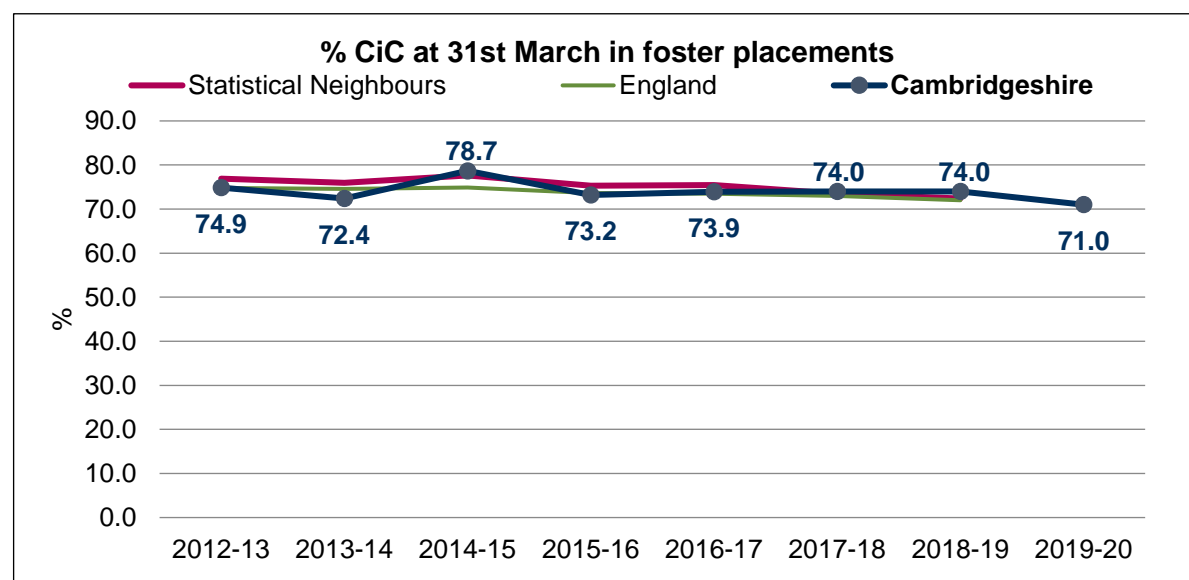
The graphs below show the percentage of children living out of county and those living out of county and over 20 miles from their home with 35% of the total children in care cohort living further than 20 miles outside of Cambridgeshire's borders. The number of children living outside of Cambridgeshire (excluding unaccompanied children) rose by 9.0% by November 2019 before decreasing to 85% in March 2020, the same as at the start of the year. It must be noted that unaccompanied young people are often supported to live in communities outside of Cambridgeshire that better meet their religious and cultural needs.





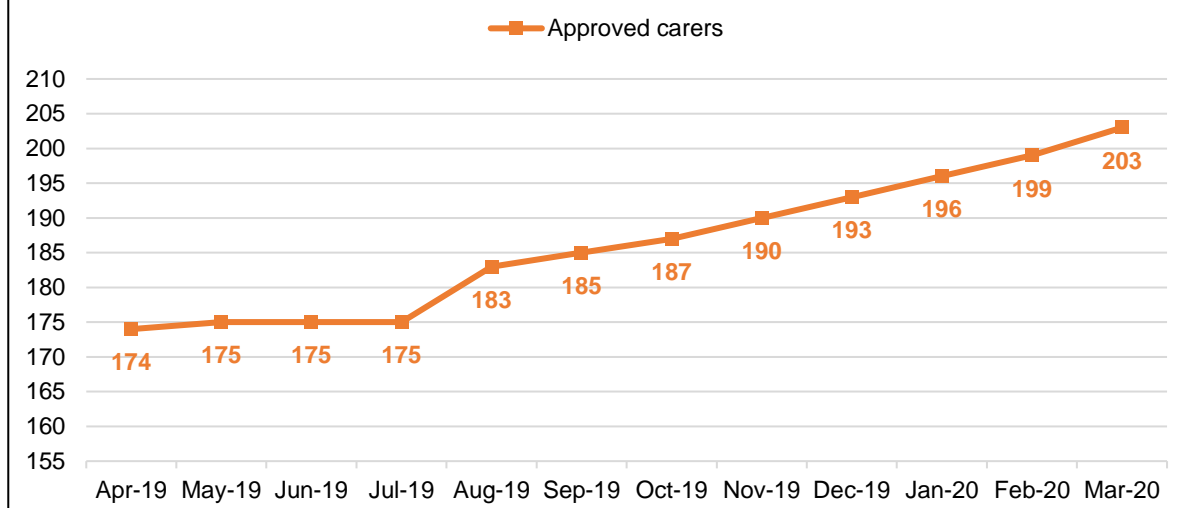
Fostering

The number of children living in a foster care arrangement (both Cambridgeshire County Council foster carers and agency foster carers) decreased to 71% of the overall children in care cohort, a decrease of 3% compared to previous year.

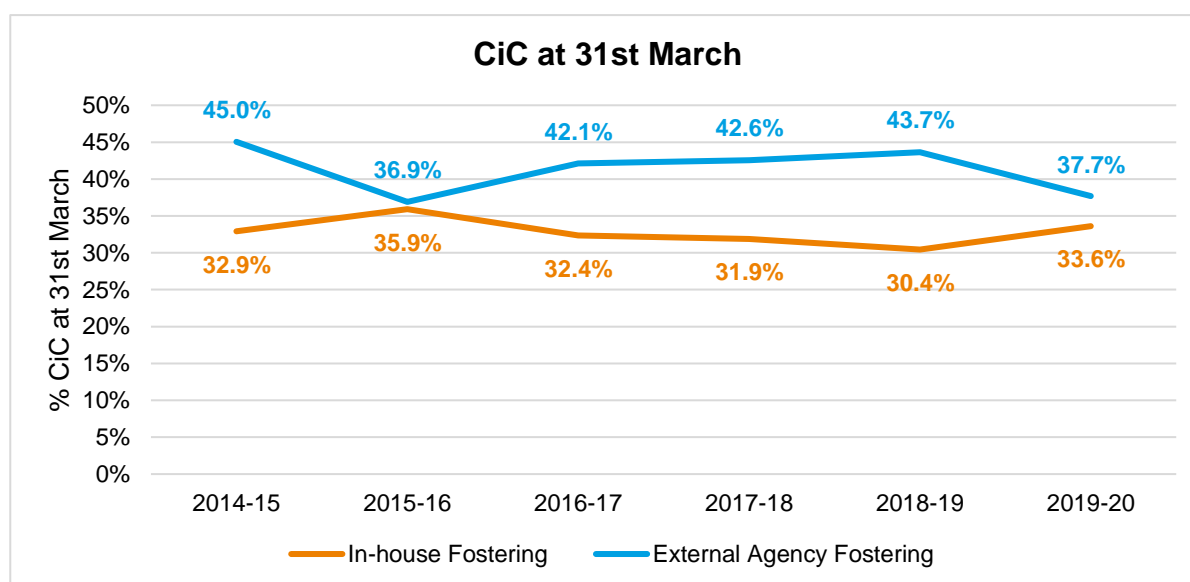


The number of approved Cambridgeshire fostering households increased throughout the year in 2019/20 by 29 fostering families compared to an increase of 12 fostering families during 2018/19. This is inclusive of all types of approved foster carers.

Number of In-house fostering carers

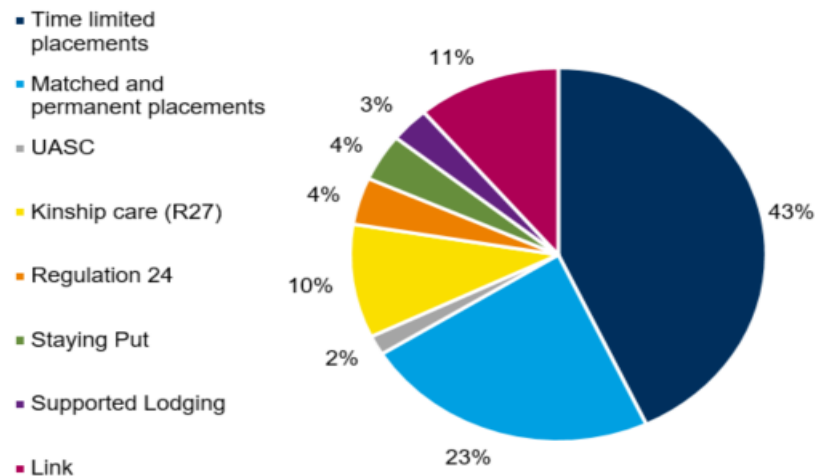


The graph below details the percentage of children living with Cambridgeshire foster carers and those living with agency foster carers. The number of children living with in-house foster carers has increased to 33.6% whereas the number of children living with agency foster carers has fallen to 37.7%.

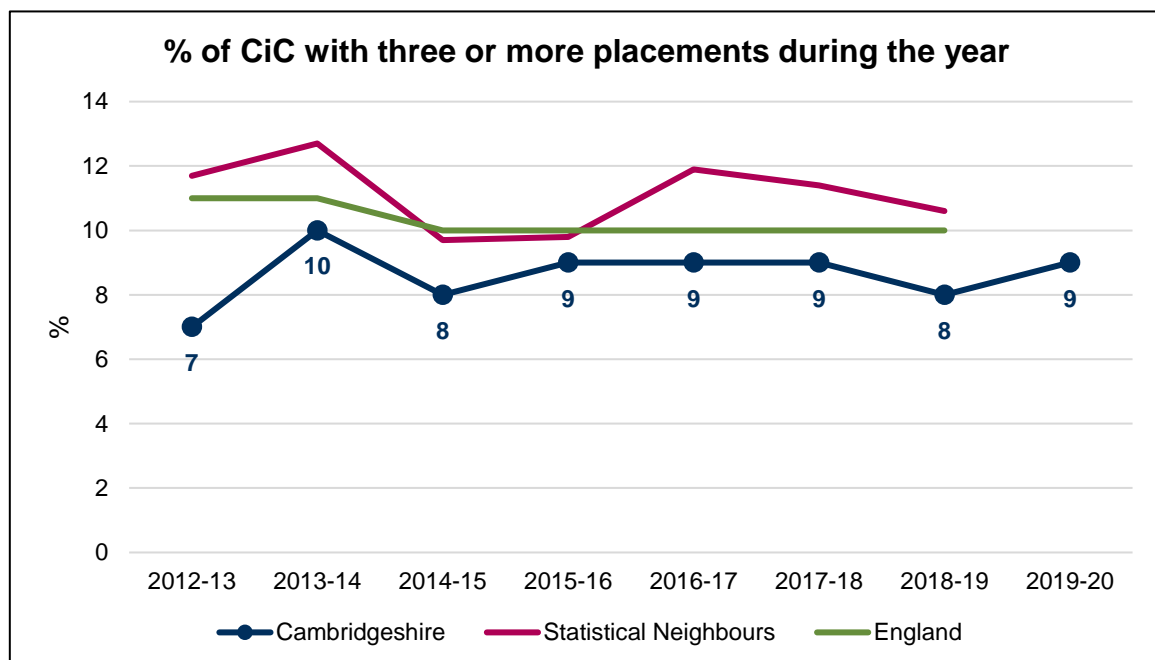


The chart below shows the type of in-house care arrangements that children and young people were living in as of the 31st March 2019 with Cambridgeshire foster carers, former foster carers and supported lodgings carers.

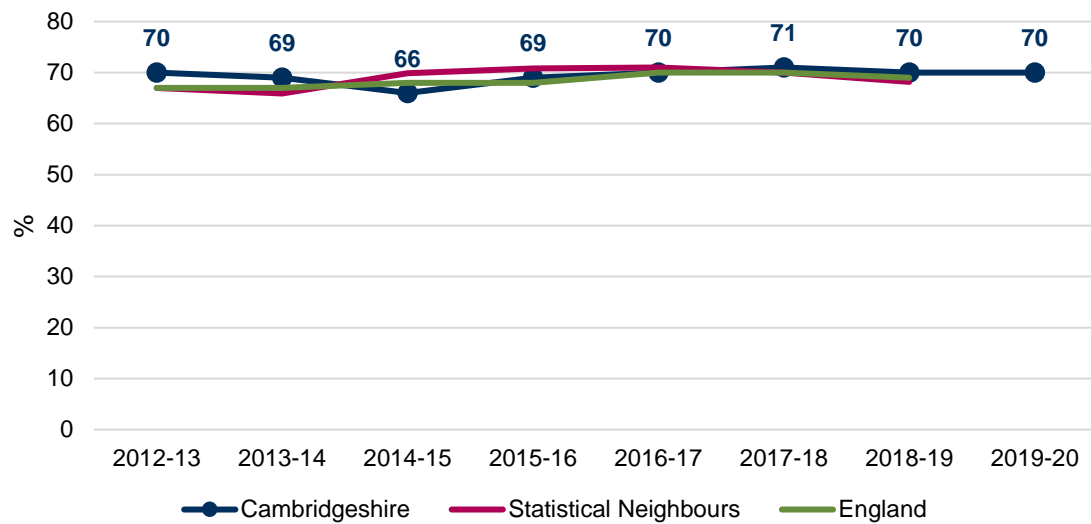
In March 2019 there were a total of 295 children placed in in-house fostering placements (including staying put & link).



Performance in relation to the stability of care arrangements for Cambridgeshire's children in care remains better than our statistical neighbours reported last year, with less children experiencing three or more moves during the year and more children being cared for by the same carers for at least 2 years.



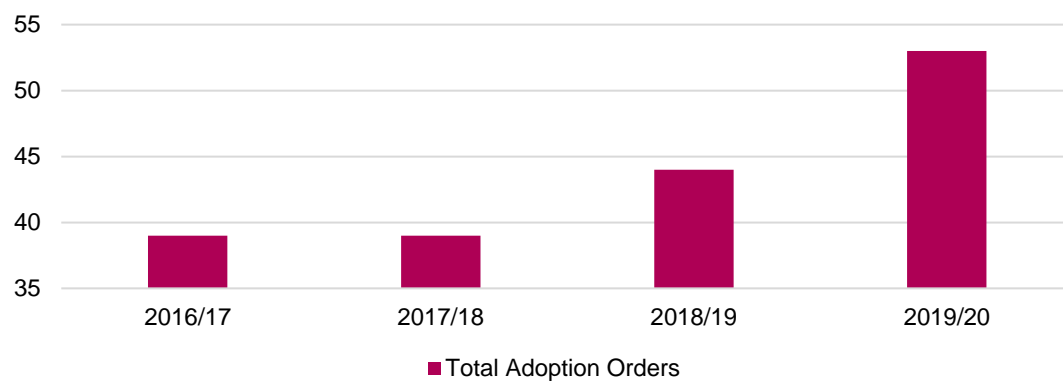
Children in care for at least 2.5 years and aged under 16 who have been in the same placement for at least 2 years

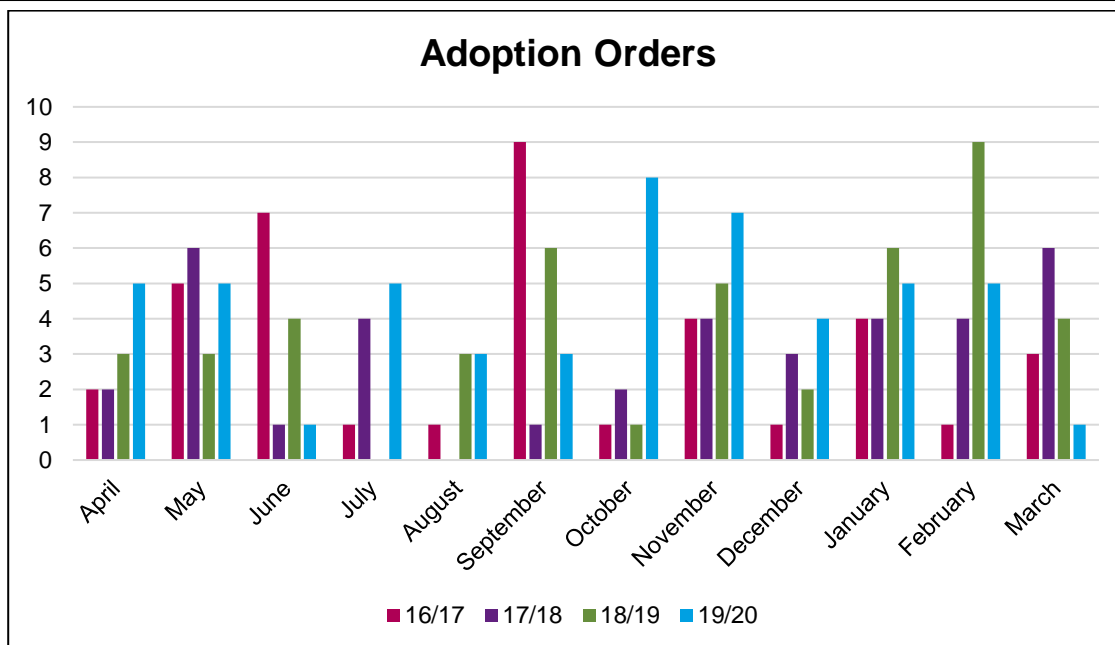


Adoption

The graph below shows a steady increase over the last two years in the number of Cambridgeshire children who have been adopted. 52 Adoption Orders were granted in Court during 2019/20 which is an increase of 15% compared to the number of Adoption Orders granted in 2018/19.

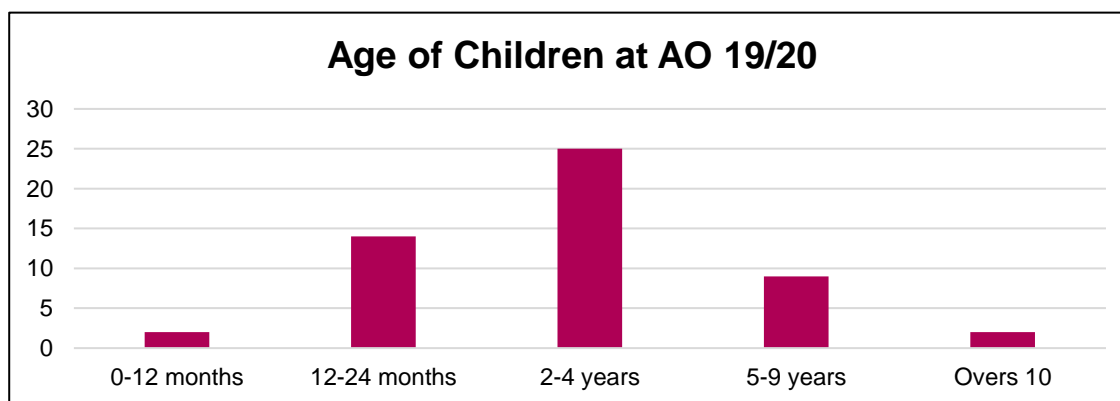
Total Adoption Orders



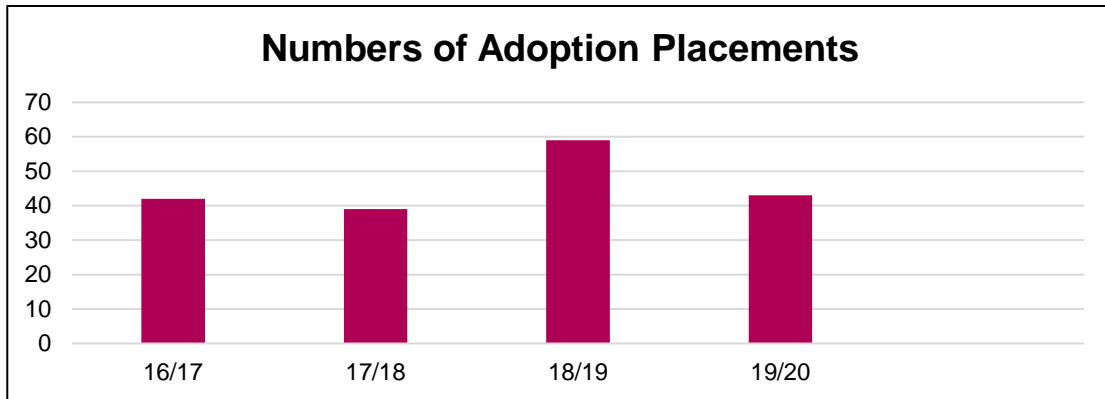


In total 17.9% of children who left care in 2019/20 were adopted and 24 (46%) of these children belonged to a sibling group. Three children (6%) moved to their Early Permanence carers shortly after their birth and Care and Placement Orders were granted for all these children, so this prevented additional moves for them.

The graph below shows the age range of children at the point their Adoption Orders were granted, ages ranged from 10 months to over 12 years. The average age for children moving in with their pre adoptive families was 3 years and 3 months in 2019/20.



On average 79% of children moved to live with their adoptive family within 12 months of the decision being made that they will be adoptive. The average time between a child becoming looked after and being adopted was 458 days in 2019/20. Whilst this is an increase on the previous year, some children had complex histories and vulnerabilities which led to delays in decision making in Court. 43 children moved to live with their adoptive families during 2019/20, which is a decrease in number when compared to the previous year which saw 59 children moving to live with their adoptive families. This is largely due to the substantial increase in the number of Care Proceedings in 2018/19 as can be seen in the graph below.



In 2019/20, 31 children moved to live with Cambridgeshire adopters and 12 children moved to live with adopters from external adoption agencies. This is a significant decrease in the use of external agency adopters compared to the previous year.

This year, 27 children met the 'harder to place' definition as defined by the DFE, these children included children from a Black Minority Ethnic background, children with a diagnosed disability and children from large sibling groups.



Adoption changes futures

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/adoption
adoptionenquiries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

0300 123 1093


Cambridgeshire
County Council

**Achieving Stability and Permanence
Ofsted told us in February:**

Strengths	Areas for development
<p>Most children live in good quality care arrangements, with carers who meet their needs and make a positive difference in their lives</p> <p>Recent recruitment activity has successfully increased the number of in house carers</p> <p>Efforts are made to manage and minimise the impact of out of area care arrangements, with additional support to maintain school placements and investment in meaningful family time</p> <p>The number of children being helped to achieve permanence with matched foster carers and families is steadily increasing</p> <p>The local Authority recognises the importance of children understanding whether they can remain with their carers throughout their childhood and beyond and leaders have strengthened systems and processes to monitor and track arrangements to secure permanence</p> <p>The work of the relatively new permanence workers now provides children and their carer's with the best possible chance of successfully achieving permanence</p> <p>For new entrants to care, work now continues at pace to ensure plans progress for children to either return home or to secure permanence through care</p> <p>Where it is possible that children can return home to the care of their birth families, this is supported well and skilfully coordinated</p>	<p>Cambridgeshire needs foster carers with the right skills, knowledge, experience and cultural match to meet children's presenting needs</p> <p>Greater availability of foster to adopt (early permanence) care arrangements would help to avoid placement moves for very young children</p> <p>Still too many Cambridgeshire children in care live outside of the county and a long way from family and friends</p> <p>For some children, a lack of translating plans into practice means that they are left waiting too long for these arrangements to be confirmed</p>

Preparing for Adulthood

- To close the gap between the educational outcomes for Children in Care and all children
- To ensure Cambridgeshire Children in Care do at least as well as Children in Care nationally
- To continue to monitor the use and impact of the Pupil Premium
- To continue to improve the engagement of older children in care and care leavers in positive employment, education or training activities
- To ensure suitable housing options for care leavers are in place
- To continue to develop the Leaving Care Offer

The Virtual School

In May 2020, there were 716 Children in Care on the Virtual School roll compared to 706 children in May 2019 and 376 of these children had been looked after by Cambridgeshire for a year or more on the 31st March 2019. The Virtual School identify these children as the 'qualifying cohort' for reporting purposes. Of these 376 children 51% were living in Cambridgeshire. The table below shows where these children were living.

Placement Region for Cambridgeshire Children in Care	% of Cohort	Number
East	73.7%	277
South West	1.1%	4
South East	4.5%	17
North West	0.8%	3
East Midlands	13.0%	49
London	4.3%	16
West Midlands	1.6%	6
North East	1.1%	4
Total	100.0%	376

As 49% of this cohort of children were living outside of Cambridgeshire, the Virtual School has introduced measures to support schools and these children. These measures include:

- Researching OFSTED ratings for school and seeking advice from the Virtual School and SEND service where appropriate in the area
- Support and training for out of county schools with Cambridgeshire's PEP process
- The Virtual School supports all children in care from two years old (if attending an early years provision) to eighteen years old (until the end of year 13 if in education), eliciting support to navigate other local authority systems where necessary
- The offer of advisory meetings is according to need rather than location
- Working closely with the Admissions Team within Cambridgeshire to support with identifying out of county schools for children in care and where this is likely to be delayed, the Virtual School will identify and fund a tuition package

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The percentage of Cambridgeshire's children and young people in care reported as having a categorisation of SEN Support remains broadly the same as last year and slightly below the national figure, whereas those being supported by an EHCP remains above the national level. This reflects the complexities of this cohort of children as depicted in the table below.

	SEN Support			EHCP		
	2018	2019		2018	2019	
	% of Cohort		Difference 2018 to 2019	% of Cohort		Difference 2018 to 2019
National - ALL Pupils	11.6%	11.7%	0.1%	2.9%	3.1%	0.2%
Cambridgeshire - All Pupils	11.1%	10.7%	-0.4%	3.0%	3.2%	0.2%
National - CiC	29.6%	29.0%	-0.6%	26.5%	27.2%	0.7%
Cambridgeshire - CiC	25.8%	22.6%	-3.2%	30.8%	29.3%	-1.5%

Early Year's Attainment

GLD refers to Good Level of Development. This is the national benchmark for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (aged 5). Children are deemed to have met GLD if they have achieved the Early Learning Goals in the curriculum areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language Development, Literacy and Mathematics.

There are only 8 children in the Early Year's qualifying cohort, last year there were 12 children. As there is such a small number of children, this makes comparing Cambridgeshire against the national picture misleading.

The table below shows that Cambridgeshire is 10% below the figure for children in care nationally in relation to meeting the requirements of GLD (less than one child).

Good Level of Development (GLD)	RECEPTION (EYFSP)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cambridgeshire - CiC Number in Cohort	x	x	12	8
Cambridgeshire - CiC	x	x	42%	38%
National - CiC	x	x	47%	48%
Cambridgeshire - All Pupils	70%	71%	71%	71%
National - All Pupils	69%	71%	72%	72%

Key Stage One and Two attainment

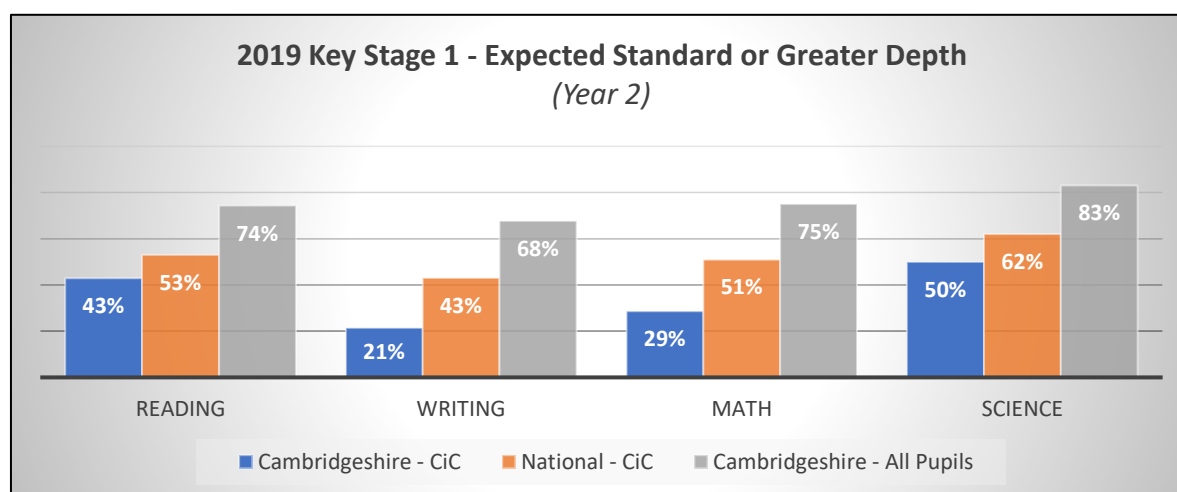
At the end of Key Stage 1 (aged 7) and Key Stage 2 (aged 11), children are assessed as:
Working towards the expected standard: not yet reaching the standard expected for their school year

Working at expected standard: at the level expected for their year group

Working at greater depth: working more deeply with the expectations for their year

Key Stage One

Of the 14 children (16 the previous year) in this cohort, the graph below shows that the percentage of children in care achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths has fallen. As a result, the Virtual School has put in place greater scrutiny through advisory visits and PEP quality assurance processes, with a specific focus on how to use the Pupil Premium to maximise progress.



Cambridgeshire Virtual School

Key Stage Two

There are 26 Cambridgeshire Children in Care in this cohort (29 the previous year). The table below shows that Cambridgeshire's children in care are achieving better than the national children in care picture for writing and maths and broadly in line for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Cambridgeshire compares favourably with its statistical neighbours (11 authorities), with Cambridgeshire being ranked the highest in writing, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Cambridgeshire is ranked 6th for reading.

ALL Subjects - 2019 (Expected Standard or Greater Depth Standard)					
Expected or Better	KEY STAGE 2				
	Reading	Writing	Maths	GPS	RWM Combined
Cambridgeshire – Number in CiC Cohort	26				
Cambridgeshire - CiC	35%	52%	54%	50%	28%
National - CiC	50%	51%	52%	53%	37%
Cambridgeshire - All Pupils	73%	75%	76%	76%	63%
National - All Pupils	73%	78%	79%	78%	65%

The table below shows the progress made by children from their Key Stage 1 results to their Key Stage 2 results. This shows that children have made less progress in reading but have made above expected progress in writing and maths, making better progress than all children in Cambridgeshire and all children nationally.

Progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2	KEY STAGE 2		
	Reading	Writing	Maths
Cambridgeshire - CiC	-1.05	0.83	0.43
National - CiC	-0.22	-0.77	-0.95
Cambridgeshire - All Pupils	0.16	-0.80	-0.30
National - All Pupils	0.03	0.01	0.04

Key Stage Four Attainment

Unlike last year, all GCSEs are now graded 9-1, with 9 being the highest grade and 1 the lowest. It is important to note that the new GCSE content is recognised as more challenging. Grades 4 and 5 are equivalent to what was a 'C' in the old GCSE grades. Grade 5 is known as a strong pass and grade 4 as a standard pass. Students that do not achieve at least a 4, will be expected to re-sit the GCSE (unless there are specific circumstances, for example SEND).

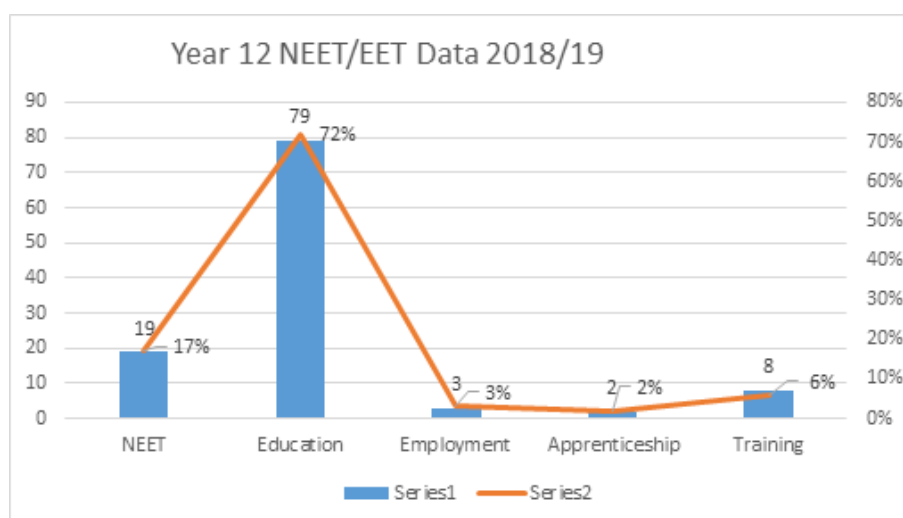
There are 64 children in total in this cohort. The number of Cambridgeshire Children in Care achieving a standard pass is 5% below the nation figure for children in care but within 2% for a strong pass.

Achieved Basics	KEY STAGE 4					
	2017		2018		2019	
	Standard (9-4)	Strong (9-5)	Standard (9-4)	Strong (9-5)	Standard (9-4)	Strong (9-5)
Cambridgeshire - CiC Cohort	43		55		64	
Cambridgeshire - CiC	12%	7%	15%	7%	13%	5%
National - CiC	17%	7%	17%	8%	18%	7%
Cambridgeshire - All Pupils	67%	47%	67%	46%	57%	43%
National - All Pupils	x	43%	64%	43%	56%	40%

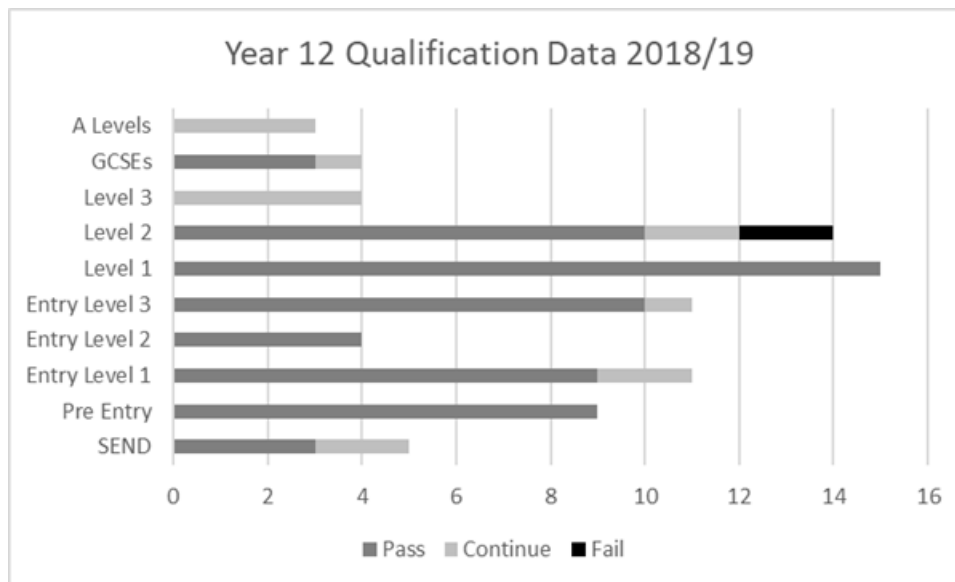
Post 16 Attainment

Year 12

Of the 111 children in care within this cohort, 19 are not in education, employment or training as shown in the table below.

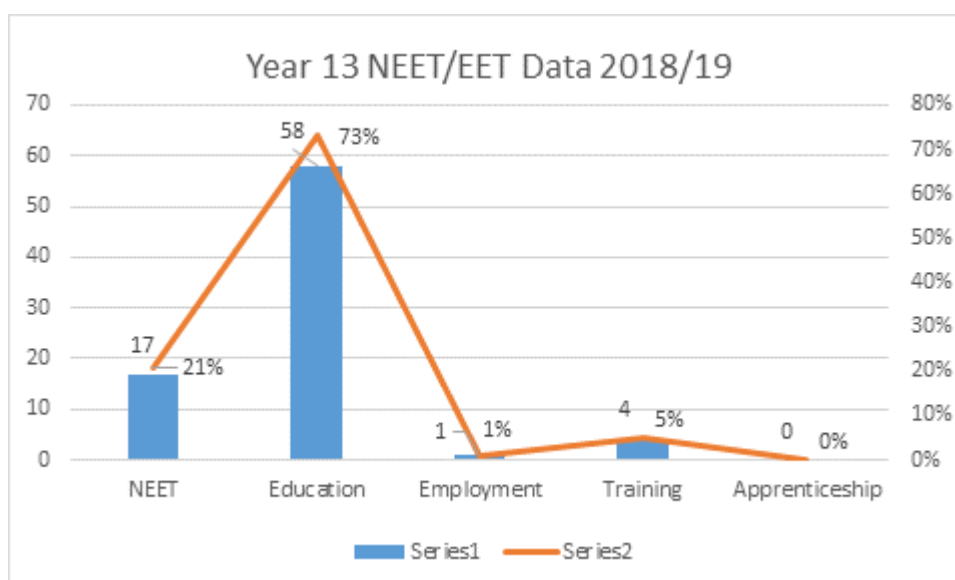


Of the 79 children who continued in education, at the end of year 12 the following qualifications were achieved as outlined in the graph below. 47 of these children are unaccompanied Children in Care arriving in Cambridgeshire, which accounts for the high number of Pre Entry – Entry 3 figures. 'A' level and level 3 studies are two year courses which is why all of these students are continuing and not completing in year 12.

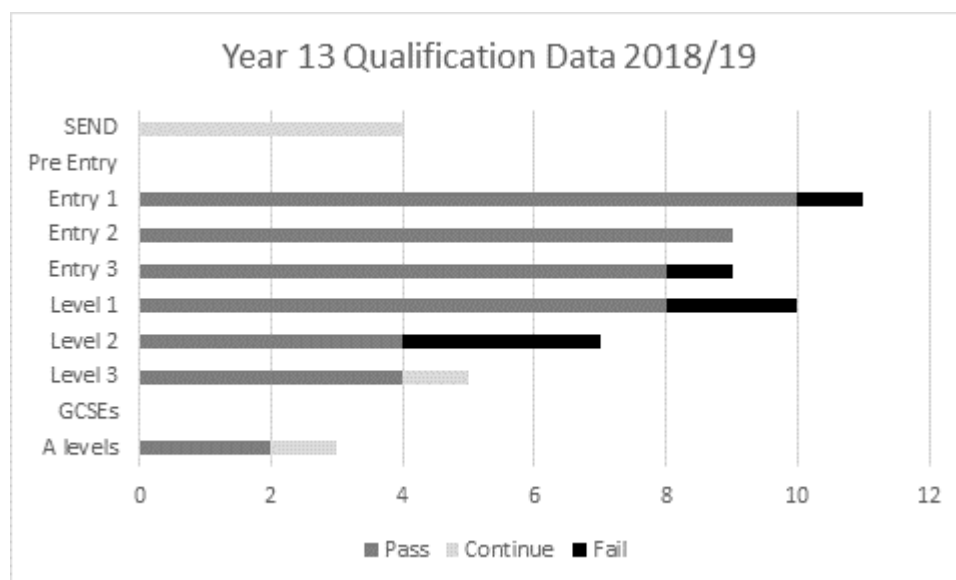


Year 13

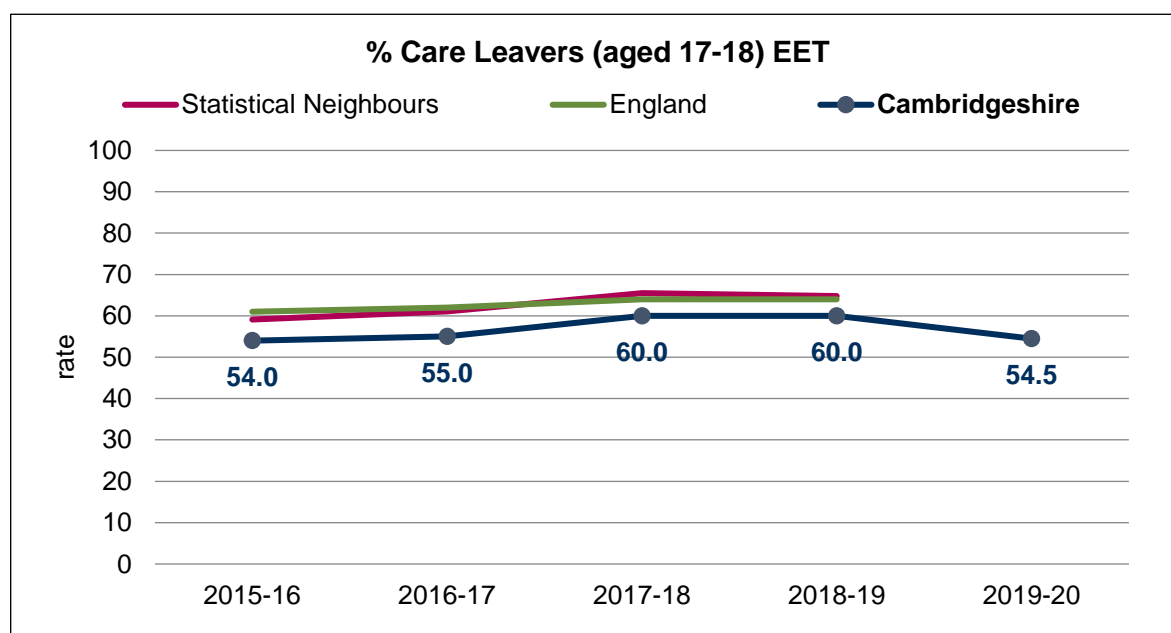
Of the 80 children in care within this cohort, 17 are not in education, employment or training as shown in the table below.

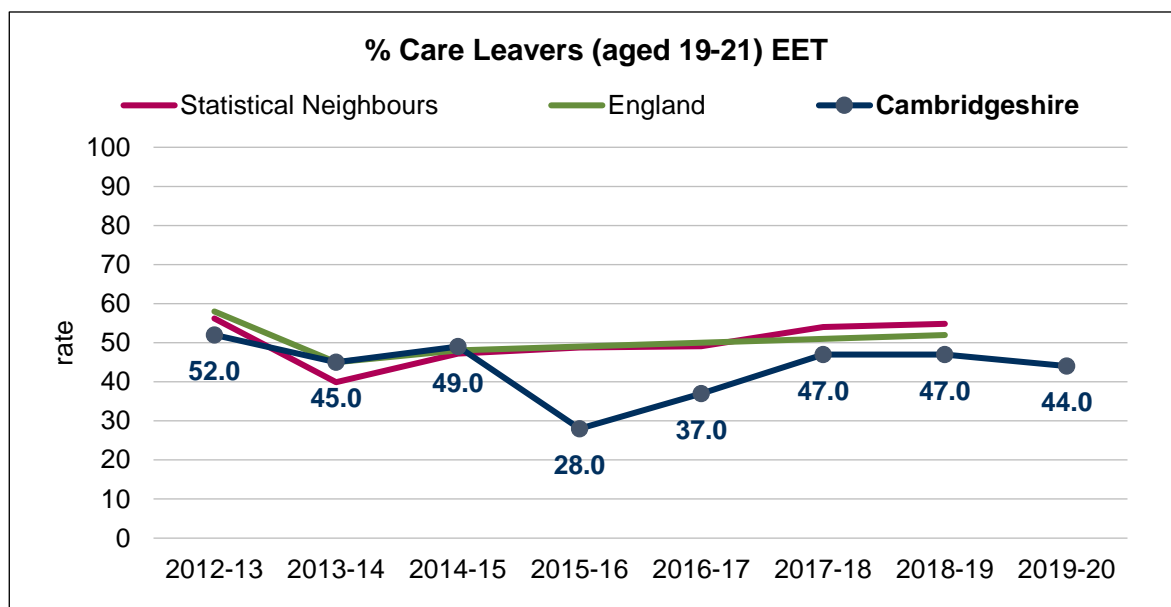


Of the 58 children who continued in education, at the end of year 13, they achieved the following qualifications as outlined in the graph below. 30 of these children are unaccompanied children in care arriving in Cambridgeshire which accounts for the high number of Pre Entry – Entry 3 figures. 76% of these children returned to higher education as they needed to complete further courses to be able to move on to higher education.



As the two graphs below show, the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training at the ages of 17-18 and 19-21 years respectively, remained static through 2017 to 2019. In 2019/20 performance has fallen in respect of both age ranges.





Another important indicator in Preparing for Adulthood is the percentage of care leavers living in suitable accommodation and the number that the Local Authority maintain a relationship with. In relation to performance in both these areas, in April 2020 Cambridgeshire's performance was showing a similar trend as those in education, employment or training, with

Cambridgeshire performing below the national percentage (for the previous year) across the reported age ranges. Difficulties with the migration of information onto the new case management system (Liquid Logic) at the end of this reporting year will have had an impact on performance figures.

Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation

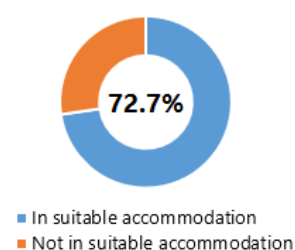
17– 18 year olds: Cambridgeshire- 74%
National - 90% (2018-19)
19- 21 year olds: Cambridgeshire – 72%
National – 89% (2018-19)

Care Leavers in touch with the Local Authority

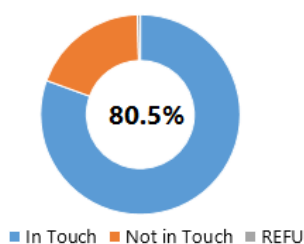
17– 18 year olds: Cambridgeshire-81%
National - 90% (2018-19)
19- 21 year olds: Cambridgeshire – 80%
National – 85% (2018-19)

The pie charts below show Cambridgeshire's performance against key indicators as of the 31st March 2020 in relation to the overall care leaving cohort.

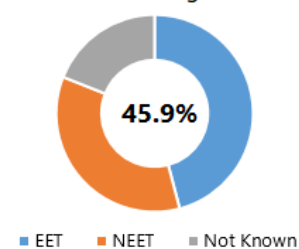
In Suitable Accommodation



In Touch



In Employment, Education or Training



Out of the 594 'eligible', 'relevant' or 'former relevant' young people who were at least 16 years and 3 months old and had an open referral at the end of April 2020, 561 had a Pathway Plan in place. This equates to 94.4% of the entire cohort and very close to our target of 95%. Cambridgeshire is able to show that an increasing number of young people had a Pathway plan over the last year.

Cambridgeshire's published Care Leaving Offer continues to be developed and is monitored by the Specialist Local Offer Personal Advisor. Cambridgeshire has been able to provide a number of new opportunities over the year for care leaving young people which include:

- Establishing a mentoring scheme for Care Leavers to support them to realise their aspirations
- Fully funded Duke of Edinburgh scheme supported by local businesses
- Bicycle scheme for care leavers to support them to access education, employment and training opportunities
- Securing funding for activity days such as theme park tickets to prevent isolation
- Securing funding for driving tuition for care leavers
- Securing outcome based community grants to support care leavers

Preparing for Adulthood Ofsted told us in February:

Strengths	Areas for development
<p>The Virtual School has strengthened its role in ensuring that children are given appropriate support with their education needs</p> <p>Most children live in good quality placements with carers who meet their needs, evidenced in the progress children make in their education and their participation in a range of social and leisure activities, resulting in increased confidence and self-esteem</p>	<p>Care plans are predominantly focussed on rudimentary process issues, rather than on those things that are important to children and that are gathered through consultation exercises and conversations with them</p>



Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People

- Hearing directly from care leavers on the impact of Cambridgeshire's Local Offer and develop their voice and influence
- Closing the loop in acting on young people's feedback to ensure children in care and care leavers experience tangible changes in the areas they think we could do better on
- Continue to raise awareness with the Council services to create opportunities for young people to influence wider services

The Participation Service

Over the year, a number of participation events for children in care and care leavers were held, supported by the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee. Up until COVID and the pandemic 'lock down' these were activity based events for children in care and care leavers, hosted by the participation team, using local resources and amenities to enrich the life experiences and opportunities of children in care and care leavers. All events were designed to support relationship building with Sub Committee members and senior managers of the county council and include consultation and co-production activities. Many events were also delivered in partnership with Cambridge University, the Library service and other partners.

Since the pandemic in March 2020, all participation events moved into a virtual space and supported by regular interactive News Letters for children in care and care leavers.

Face to face participation events included:

- Four activity based meetings of the **Children In Care Council (CiCC)**, attended by a total of 69 children and young people aged 5 – 18 years.
- Five 'Just Us' activity based events for children in care aged 6-12 years.
- The CiCC members designed and planned the Annual Children in Care Awards Ceremony which was due to take place in March 2020 and was deferred because of COVID. Certificates of achievement were sent to all of the children and care leavers who were nominated, with a message from the Director Lou Williams. A celebration event will take place at the earliest opportunity.
- **The Care Leaver Forum** was re-established in October 2019 with a core group of 7 young people attending. The group has been very active, taking part in staff recruitment, as well as contributing to the development of the Health Passport, The Local Offer and 'Care Leavers Finance Document'. 10 care leavers attended the first care leaver Christmas meal.
- The annual summer 'Picnic in the Park' took place and was well attended, with 132 children, young people and their carers coming along. As well as hosting a variety of activities and attractions the event was supported by the 'Connections Bus' the library service and the Cambridge University Realise Team to promote their offer to children in care and care leavers.

- 30 children aged 6 – 11 and their carers attended a 'Make and Take' Christmas Craft Fair hosted by teams from within children's services and the 'children in care health team'.

Enrichment in partnership with other organisations:

- **The National Children's Bureau (NCB)** - we supported children and young people to contribute to a consultation by the NCB on their understanding of children's rights in respect of health care.
- **Cambridge University Enrichment Team** - we supported children, young people and their carers to attend a stargazing event at Cambridge University hosted by the Realise Team. In addition, a number of young people attended a number of other science based events organised by the Realise Team for Children in Care and hosted at the University.
- **The Fitzwilliam Museum** – young people aged 11 years and over attended a four-day bronze arts award event for children in care, and received an accredited award upon completion.
- **The Cambridgeshire Library Service** – in partnership we hosted an even for children in care creating digital art characters and the young people's work was show cased.
- **The Junction Theatre** – donated tickets for their seasonal production and the participation team supported Children in Care Council members to attend the Wind in The Willows performance as a thank you for their contributions to the Children in Care Council.
- **The Regional Film Project** – we supported Children in Care Council members to contribute to a regional film project about children's top tips for social workers in 2019. One member attended the film premier in April 2019. Five Children in Care Council members are now taking part in the Regional Film Project 2020, with the focus on children's journey into and leaving care, their first big meeting and feeling settled in placement. This work has been suspended due to the Pandemic.

Topics and themes where children in care and care leavers have provided feedback, challenge and scrutiny have included for example:

- Advice to workers on terminology and child friendly alternatives to adult language and jargon
- Their experience of the impact of The Promise on their lived experiences around support; seeing the people who are important to them; and support for developing independence skills and leaving care

- Feedback about what is good and not so good about being in care and what advice they would give to other children and workers?
- Care leavers provided feedback and input to the development of the 'Health Passport', the 'Local Offer' and 'Care Leavers Finance Document'.

All feedback, challenge and scrutiny has been communicated through the appropriate channels to impact policy and practice, and feedback given to the Children in Care Council and Care leaver Forum of the impact of their contributions.

Voice of the children in care planning

In line with the national expectation that children's views are sought in an age appropriate manner for their Children in Care reviews, 55% of children in care over the age of four attended their review, 38% conveyed their views via another person or through using the Mind of My Own app or a consultation document. In addition Independent Advocates from NYAS worked with 276 Cambridgeshire children in care put their views across in key meetings and care planning.

Siblings Forever

Siblings Forever is a two night activity trip for brothers and sisters aged 8 to 18 years who have been separated through care. It allows siblings to have extended time together in a safe and fun environment. The year two activity trips took place in May and October 2019, and held again at the Graffham Water Activity Centre. Children give poignant feedback about how much they enjoy this opportunity to spend time with their siblings doing lots of fun things.

"I liked it a lot. All of the activities I enjoyed. And being with my brothers and sisters was good." 9 year old

"I absolutely loved it. It was so nice to spend some time with my siblings and I loved meeting new people." 14 year old

"It was brilliant. Just seeing my brother and sisters was the best thing." 10 year old

For 2020/21, the following areas for development twill continue to be monitored, scrutinised and supported by the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee:

Ensuring children and young people (and especially care leavers) have access to assessment and support for their health needs in a flexible and creative way that supports them to understand and prioritise their health

Hearing from young people about their experience of accessing appropriate and tailored health services

Continuing to drive attainment for all children in care to reach their potential and be as close as possible in their achievements to children outside of the care system

Hearing from young people about their experiences of being supported through transitions and into adulthood

Hearing from children and young people of their experience of the care they are provided with in a variety of different care arrangements

Closing the loop in acting on young people's feedback to ensure children in care and care leavers experience tangible changes in the areas they think Cambridgeshire could do better on

Supporting the development and aspirations of Cambridgeshire's Local Offer

Supporting the recruitment and retention of foster carers that are prepared and supported to undertake the role of caring for children with complex needs – local foster families for local children

Encouraging Corporate Parenting partners to be more ambitious in expressing and realising their Corporate Parenting offers. The Corporate Parenting Sub Committee will continue to create a culture of accountability in order to achieve