

Cambridgeshire County Council Sufficiency Statement

Children in Care & Care Leavers
2021 - 2024

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FOREWORD

By Abi, Young Inspector

Hi, I'm Abi, one of the Young Inspectors.



The Young Inspectors are a group of young people who have experience of children's social care and using that expertise, scrutinise services for children and young people through discussion, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and site inspections of council run services.

We recently completed an inspection of a local residential provision for children with disabilities and were able to make a number of recommendations on how services could be further personalised for individual children, which have been put into effect by the Registered Manager.

Remember that you should not underestimate the influence of matching, of carers and existing children or other young people who already live there, as it can make the difference between a stable, happy living situation and a messy placement breakdown.

Miscommunication can cause mistrust which can break down a young person's relationship with people they work with and so it's important that you are honest and realistic when communicating to young people regarding their ideals in order to manage their expectations of a move and prospective carer.

My advice to you would be to really have a "person centred" approach, so the young person is involved in processes pertaining to the move, where appropriate. Being a child anyway can make you feel powerless, but as a young person in care, those feelings of powerlessness can be threefold. Therefore, making sure young people's voices are heard and that they feel valued, respected and appreciated in all decisions that involve them, and their lives, is essential!



Executive Summary

Cambridgeshire Council is committed to securing the best possible outcomes for those children and young people in our care, leaving care or at significant risk of coming into care. Within this strategy we have analysed all relevant information to determine what needs there are in the relevant groups and what actions will be necessary to secure positive outcomes for those groups. Though like all local authorities Cambridgeshire has seen significant impacts in funding, meeting these needs of vulnerable groups will always remain a priority for the Council.

The total number of children in care has decreased since 2019 and is now comparable with statistical neighbours. This downward trend is in contrast to the national picture. Cambridgeshire children and young people in care continue to be overwhelmingly placed in foster care. A continuing priority is to increase the number of foster and residential placements in area and for those children and young people traditionally harder to place, (e.g. older young people, children and young people with challenging behaviour). The Authority is also investing in developing support services that may safely prevent children and young people entering the care system or shortening the time that they are outside safe care in their own families.

Individual trends and needs are analysed below. In the penultimate section of this document the actions are collected together. Each of these actions will have a detailed Action Plan to ensure timely delivery for the Children and Young People in the care of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Statement is to demonstrate how Cambridgeshire County Council will meet the placement needs of our current and future Children in Care and Care Leavers, improve their outcomes, and support a positive transition into adulthood in light of their needs and current provision.

Local Authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local area.

In 2010, the statutory guidance for the Sufficiency Duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on local authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

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

Under the guidance, the sufficiency duty is described as follows:

- From April 2010, local authorities will include in relevant commissioning strategies their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty
- From April 2011 working with their partners, local authorities must be in a position to secure, where reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation for children in care in their local authority area

The Statement is set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance, is linked to key planning documents, and builds on the progress made in previous Sufficiency Statements.

Action points can be found throughout the document, in tables as below, and link into the emerging trends and priorities for the Council.

Focus Area
Challenges/Gaps
-

Actions Required	Impact
•	•

All figures are taken from the 31st of March 2020 unless stated otherwise.

2.2 Covid-19: March 2020 onwards

Covid -19 has presented us with unprecedented challenges throughout 2020 and into 2021. However, throughout these past months, we've seen creative and engaging responses to the challenges we've all faced. These have included baking sessions, virtual coffee mornings, 'WhatsApp' support sessions, Zoom youth clubs, as well as continued provision of education through online and e-learning classrooms, health and wellbeing packs and food vouchers and in some cases provision of equipment and technology for children and young people, to name a few. This has all been so crucial in continuing to meet the needs of the Cambridgeshire's children and young people in care.

It's important to acknowledge the resilience that we've seen from our children, young people, carers, support workers, and staff throughout this period. We entered into a period of unknown challenges and the response we've seen has been remarkable; throughout the uncertainty of the situation, providers, staff and carers remained child focused, innovative and have demonstrated true commitment to our children and young people.



There are still many unknown challenges we have yet to face as the Local Authority, providers, and our children and young people move towards the 'new normal'. Children's Commissioning have developed recovery strategies for all our service areas. Our intention is to respond to changes in circumstances and potential changes in demand in accordance with these.

2.3 Our Children and Young People in Care

Cambridgeshire County Council believe that coproduction and participation is paramount in commissioning. The Authority has a range of methods and practices in place to consult and engage with children and young people, fulfilling our commitment to coproduction of service design and delivery with children and young people.

Children and young people have been key to the development of this strategy; we've consulted with Children in Care Councils, Care Leaver Forums and the Young Inspectors group to shape our analysis of provision, identification of gaps and our commitment to our future commissioning intentions.

Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Pledge was developed in partnership with young people, senior managers and lead members and sets out Cambridgeshire's promise and commitment to our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

 *The Young Inspectors have provided our Foreword, and the feedback, thoughts and feelings shared with us from our Children, Young People and Care Leavers are included throughout the document.* 

2.4 Update of Previous Statements

Cambridgeshire's previous Sufficiency Statement [2017-2020] clearly articulated four key strategic priorities for the Local Authority in response to the gaps and challenges identified throughout the Statement.

- 1) Deliver high quality, effective assessments and purposeful interventions with children, young people and families.
- 2) Increased development of the in house fostering service
- 3) Placement stability and range of high quality placement provision in area
- 4) Ensure looked after children and young people have access to the right health resources, including additional support where a need is identified

2.4.1 We Said, We Did

Cambridgeshire undertook a comprehensive action plan to support the activities required to achieve the identified priorities.

- 1) Deliver high quality, effective assessments and purposeful interventions with children, young people and families, including the timeliness of statutory visits.

Much of this strategic priority links in with developments undertaken by colleagues and outlined within the Child and Family strategy; updates in respect of the implementation of the THRIVE model have been identified within the Child and Family Sufficiency Strategy.



- 2) Increased development of in house fostering service

Continued development of Cambridgeshire's in house fostering service has been, and continues to be, a key strategic priority. Cambridgeshire's in house fostering service has implemented a comprehensive recruitment strategy, seeking to increase the number of in house foster carers, as well as targeting recruitment to those priority areas including Link foster carers and carers for young people aged 11+.

In to 2019/2020 period, Cambridgeshire's in house fostering service undertook a targeted recruitment programme, resulting in approvals of 29 households, offering 37 additional beds to Cambridgeshire Children in Care; this represents an increase on the previous year (24 households approved). This recruitment activity continues, with 34 households approved, resulting in 45 beds, and a net gain of 15 households in the 2020-21 period.

Despite this there continues to be a need for increased development of in house fostering provision, with focus on recruiting carers for specific cohorts of young people. This is explored in more detail at Section 4.1.2.

3) Placement stability and range of high quality placement provision in area

 *Young people valued placement stability so that they did not have to move placement, as when they do move “everything you’ve worked for, you have to start all over again.”* 

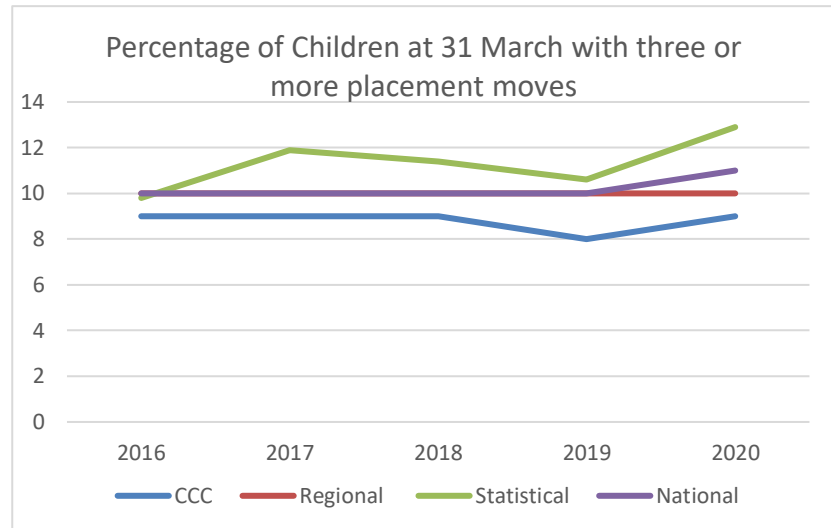
One of the core commissioning intentions that supported this priority was improving Cambridgeshire's, local supported accommodation provision. One of the core aims of this strategy was to commission provision in other key locations, as well as Cambridge City which has consistently had

comparably high availability of provision. Peterborough continues to be a popular location for supported accommodation provision, led by both affordability of local property and the availability of education and local amenities popular with young people. However, since the development of the Supported Accommodation framework we have seen increases in provision available in Huntingdon and Fenland, better supporting young people to have choice and access to live in their preferred locations.

Cambridgeshire's Supported Accommodation includes specific requirements for our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people, and the Framework has successfully managed the accommodation and support needs of this group of young people. It is of note, that for many of Cambridgeshire's unaccompanied young people, Peterborough represents a hub of diversity, with excellent networks for young people [education, culturally and for religious purposes]. As such, many of Cambridgeshire's unaccompanied young people can experience positive outcomes; successfully develop independence skills and integrate into local communities in our neighbouring authority.

Cambridgeshire has implemented a Dynamic Purchasing System for Children's External Placements (DPS), with lots for Independent Fostering Agencies, Residential Children's Homes, Independent Special Schools, and Out of School Tuition. This DPS offers Cambridgeshire greater access to provision for children and young people, the ability to commission bespoke provision to meet the needs of Children in Care, and mechanisms to manage provider quality and risks to placements. The introduction of this commissioning and purchasing model has seen an increase in placement choice both in area and out of area [as appropriate to individual child requirements/needs].

Placement stability continues to be a key priority; as at March 2021 8.7% of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population had experienced three or more placements during a year. This is significantly lower than regional, national & statistical comparators.



3 Children in Care

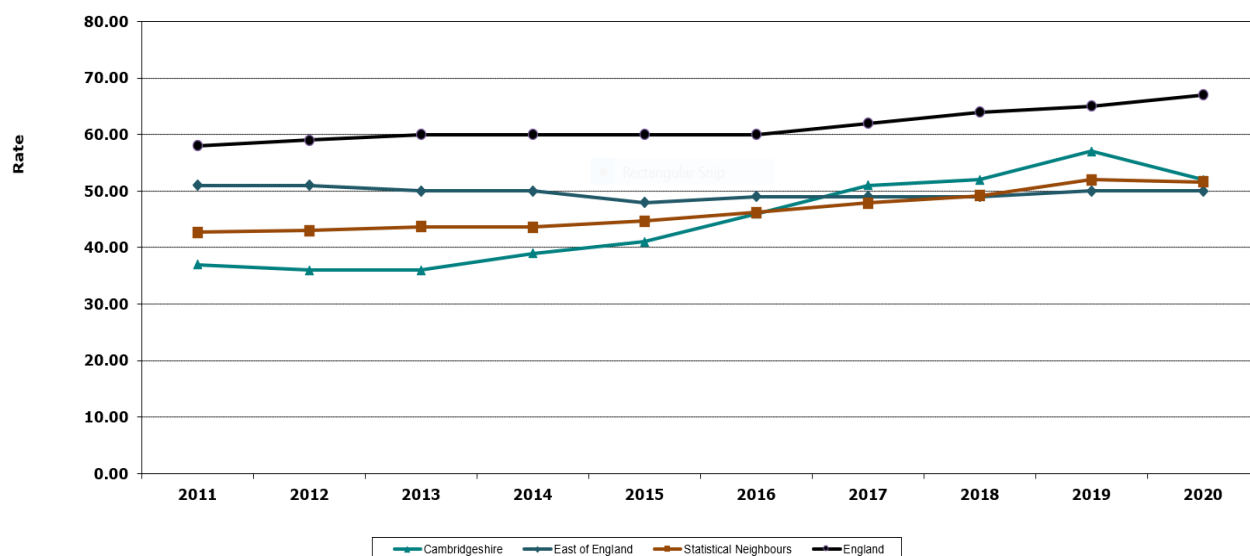
3.1 Children in Care Rate per 10,000 Children aged under 18

Table 1

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from 2019 to 2020	Changes from 2015 to 2020
Cambridgeshire	41	46	51	52	57	52	-9%	27%
Statistical Neighbours	42	42	45	46	49	51.6	3%	8%
East of England	48	49	49	49	50	50	2%	19%
England	60	60	62	64	65	67	3%	12%

Cambridgeshire saw notable increases in the number of Children in Care per 10,000 children under 18, from 2018 to 2019, and across a five year period when compared to its statistical neighbours, as well as the regional and national trends. In 2020 Cambridgeshire's rate per 10,000 reduced significantly, despite increases seen nationally, regionally and for statistical neighbours. As a result Cambridgeshire population of Children in Care, per 10,000 is now comparable with statistical neighbours and below national figures.

Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18



3.2 Comparison: Number of Children in Care

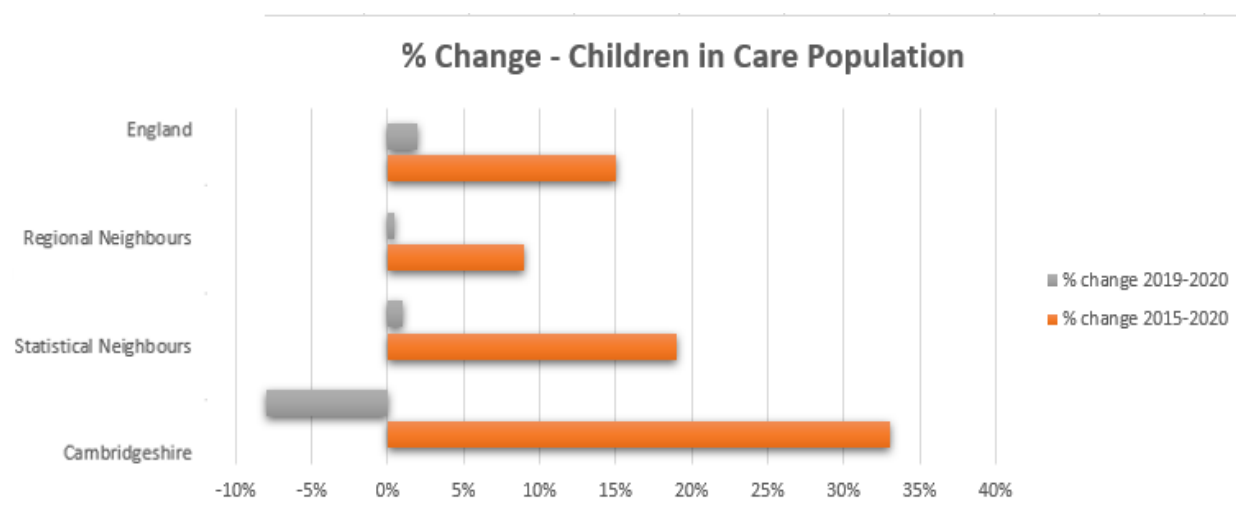
Table 2

Number of Children in Care*								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from 2019 to 2020	Change from 2015 to 2020
Cambridgeshire	535	607	686	700	773	714	-8%	33%
Statistical Neighbours Average	609.4	627.7	651.3	680	717.1	722.5	1%	19%
East of England Average	6150	6340	6450	6530	6740	6710	0.4%	9%
England Average	69470	70410	72610	75370	78140	80080	2%	15%

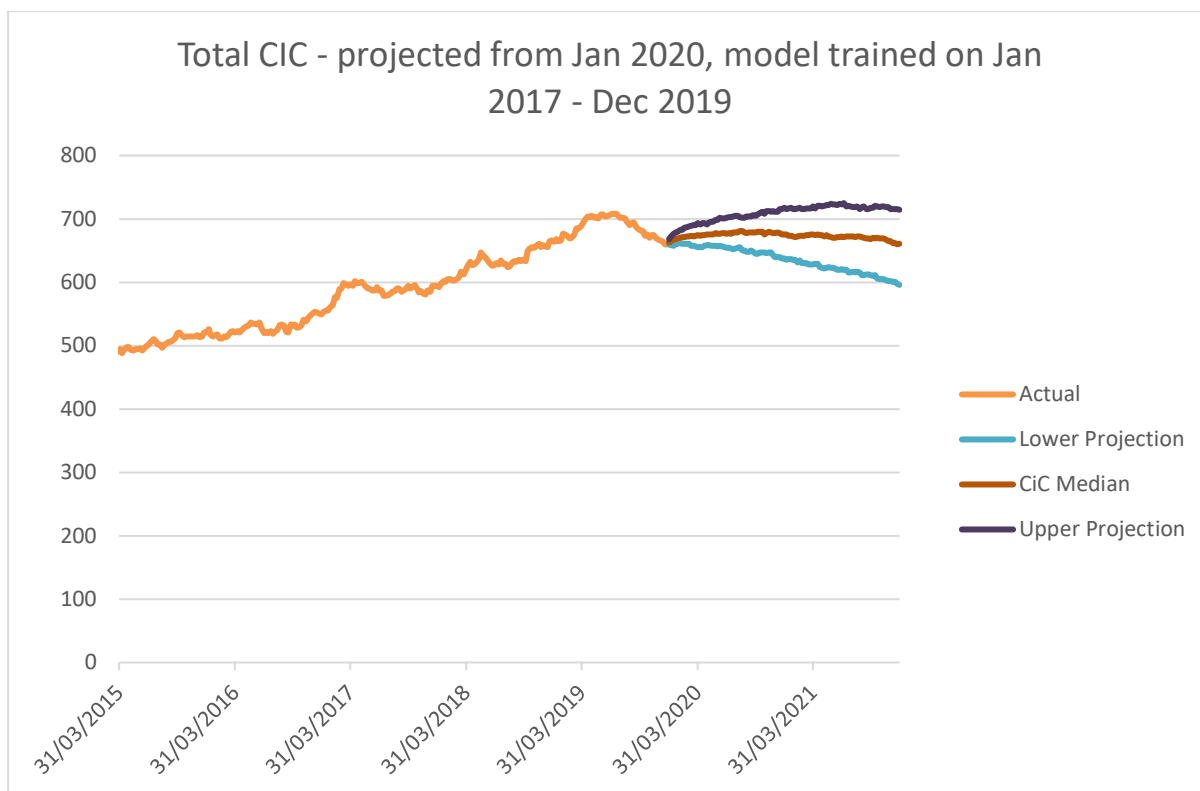
*figures for regional, statistical and national comparison at 2021 are not available at the time of writing

Over the six year period, 2015 to 2020, Cambridgeshire saw a 33% increase compared to a 19% increase seen by its statistical neighbours, and a 9% and 15% increase seen regionally and nationally.

Cambridgeshire saw notable increases in the number of children in care from 2015 to 2019 when compared to its statistical neighbours, as well as the regional and national trends. However, in 2020, Cambridgeshire saw a 8% decrease in the number of children in care from the previous year, compared to a 1% increase seen by statistical neighbours and a 2% nationally.



Historically, Cambridgeshire had presented an upward trend in the number of Children in Care; whilst this was consistent with the wider picture, it occurred at a far accelerated rate in comparison to statistical and regional neighbours, and national trends. Forecasting based on this trend had suggested a continued increase of the Children in Care population.



However, since 2019, Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population has reduced (to 714 at March 2020 further to 655 at March 2021); the previous trajectory for an annually increasing children in care population is not anticipated to continue in coming years.

Cambridgeshire is committed to ensuring that, where it is safe to do so, children and young people are supported to live at home with their families.

Cambridgeshire implemented a Family Safeguarding model in November 2019 which is supporting the local authority to reduce the Children in Care population moving towards comparable figures to those of our statistical neighbours. This is expected to be a gradual change, due in part to the proportion of children and young people in Cambridgeshire's Care population who will remain in Care for a number of years. Cambridgeshire have also adopted a strategy to increase use of Public Law Outline, and reduce the number of children who are in care proceedings.

Cambridgeshire's Reunification and Placement Stability service [RAPSS] is a further aspect of how the Authority is endeavouring to support young people to either remain safely in their family home, or to return home in a timely manner.

3.3 Improving outcomes for children and young people: Early help, including Contextual Safeguarding

An extensive consultation with key stakeholders has recently been completed, the findings of which are contained within the report 'Strong Families, Strong Communities: Securing best outcomes for children & young people' (due to be published July 2021).

This work forms an important stage in our journey towards developing seamless services for children, young people and their families through the development of an Integrated Care System, or ICS. Integrated Care Systems will be the framework for ensuring the delivery of services to

vulnerable adults as well as for children. They are being developed as part of the review of Clinical Commissioning Groups now taking place within health services. For services to children and young people, the local name for the ICS is the Children's Collaborative.

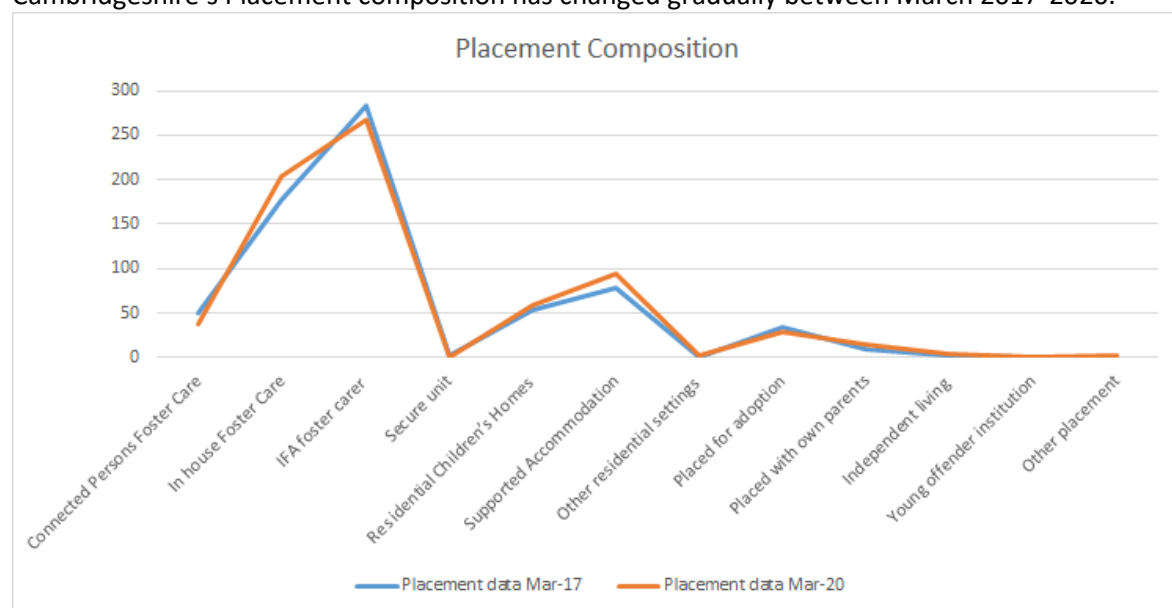
Children's Collaboratives and Integrated Care Systems do not involve large scale re-organisation of services. They are about improving the joint planning and provision of services so that they are able to adopt a holistic approach to meeting need, reducing the requirement for more complex interventions that often also have poorer outcomes.

The approach to Early Help as described in Strong Families, Strong Communities: securing best outcomes for children & young people is also about effective co-ordination of services across the partnership, assessing and meeting need flexibly, so this fits extremely well with the overarching goals of the Children's Collaborative.

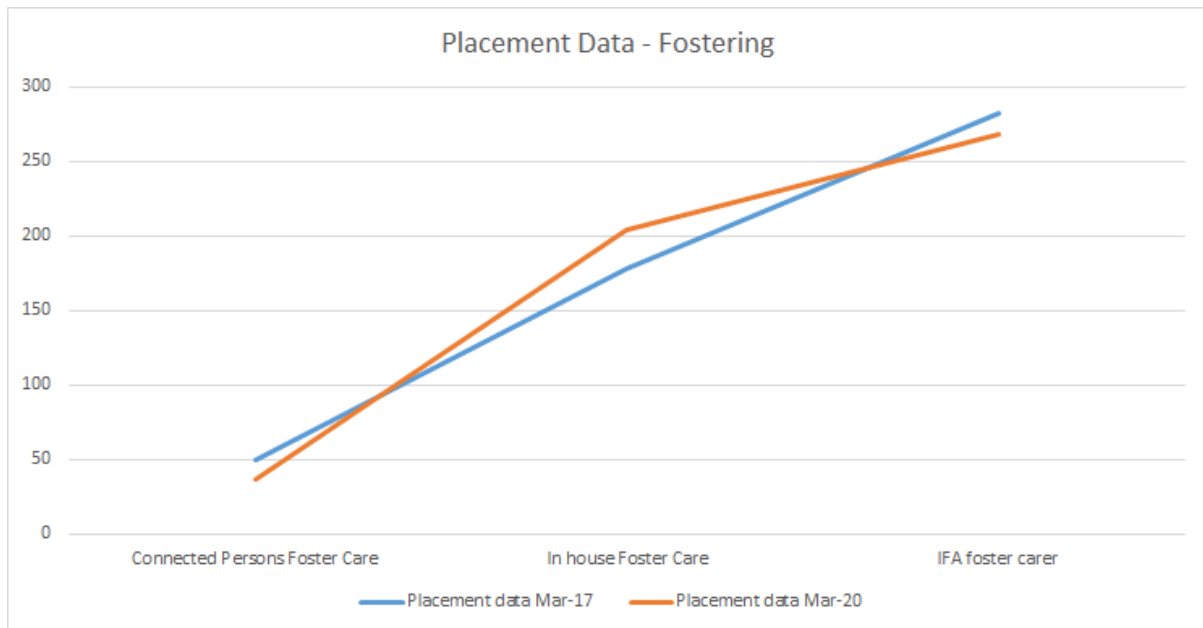
We are now ready to begin the process of implementing the recommendations of Strong Families, Strong Communities: Securing best outcomes for children & young people. This is an important step towards our overall ambition of delivering seamless services to vulnerable children, young people and their families, for the benefit of all.

3.4 Placement Composition

Cambridgeshire's Placement composition has changed gradually between March 2017-2020.



With foster care placements particularly, the development of the in house service can be seen with a reduction in IFA placements and increase with in house placements, when comparing cohorts from 2017 to 2020. This trend has continued into the 2020-21 period, with 27% of placements made in that period to in house fostering placements (150 placements), and 19% of placements made to IFA foster carers (104 placements).



3.5 Financial Composition

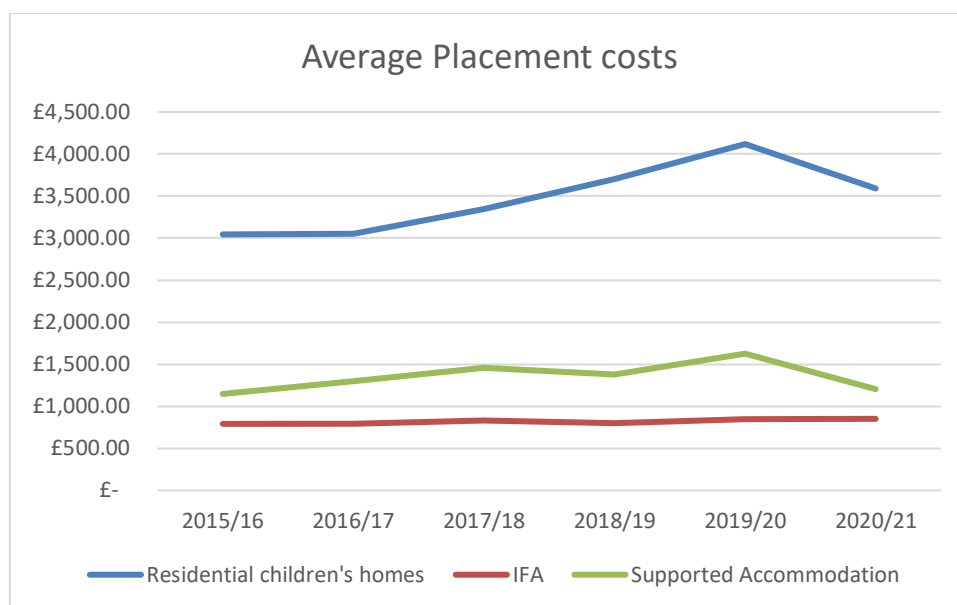
Cambridgeshire County Council continues to face financial challenges, affected by overall reductions in spending public spending while also seeing an increase in demand for services.

3.5.1 External Placements Budget

The External Placement Budget for Children in Care in the 2020 / 21 financial year was £21,703,000 (this excludes in house provisions and UASC budgets which are kept separate for Home Office funding purposes). The External Placements budget includes:

- External Fostering Placements (IFA)
- External Residential Children's Homes (including specialist residential homes for children with disabilities)
- Secure Accommodation Placements
- Residential School Placements for Children in Care
- Supported Accommodation
- Supported Living arrangements

Over recent years Cambridgeshire's spend on external 'purchase' placements (i.e. fostering, children's homes, supported accommodation) has increased by approximately £2 million; this is considered to be the result of increased Children in Care populations in recent years, compounded by lack of capacity to meet demand within in house provision.



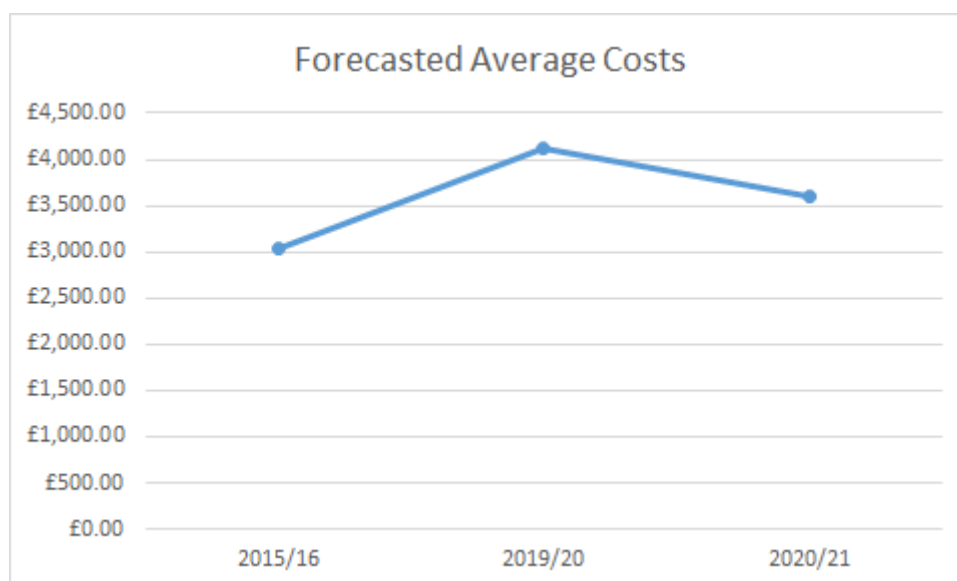
Cambridgeshire has seen a continual increase in weekly placement costs since 2015 / 16. The weekly cost for external foster placements has increased from £792 in 2015 / 16 to £847 in 2019 / 20. Cambridgeshire has seen a significant increase in the weekly cost of children’s residential placements; £3044 in 2015 / 16 increased to £4118 in 2019 / 20. According to data provided by the Independent Children’s Homes Association (ICHA), providers are reporting an increase in fee rate changes since June 2015; two-thirds of providers are reporting increases however 42% of these are within the 0-5% range of increase. Cambridgeshire have continued to see increases in average weekly IFAs fees into the 2020-21 financial year, but notably the average residential children’s home fees have reduced over the past two financial years -

Table 3

	2015/16	2019/20	2020/21
IFA	£792	£847	£850
Residential	£3044	£4118	£3593

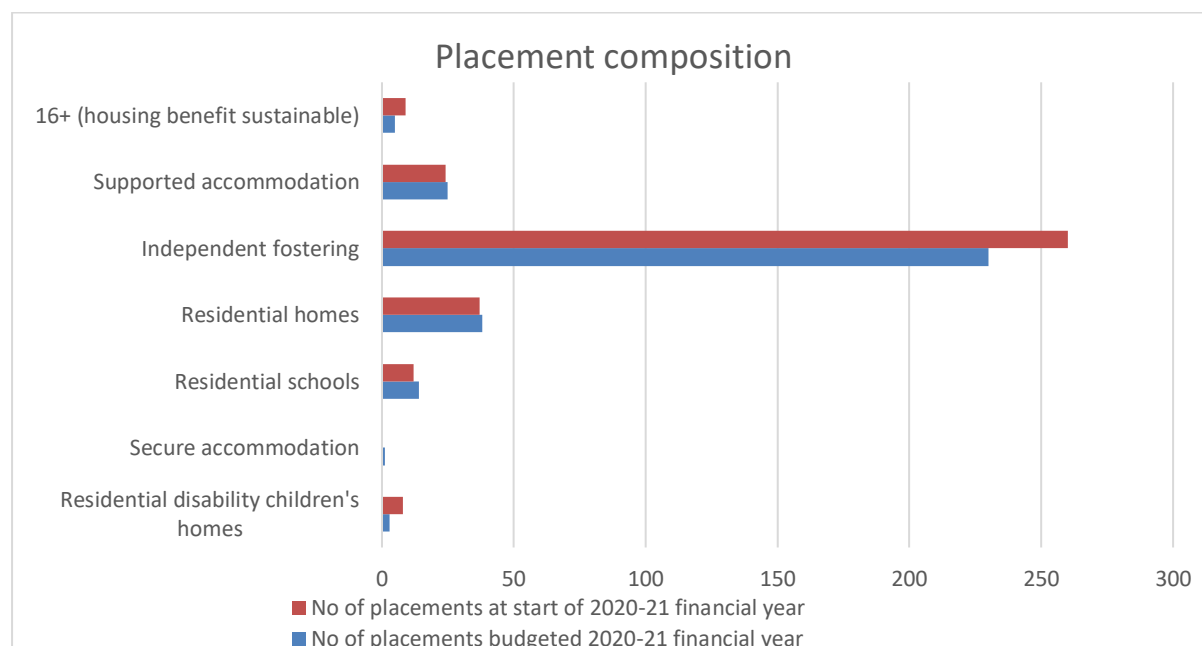
The reduction in the average weekly fee for residential placements is considered to be largely contributable to the implementation of the Children's External Placements Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS – more information available at sections 4.1 and 4.2). The average weekly fees under the DPS are lower than spot purchased placements, and as the DPS has matured, into 2020-21 we have seen a reduction in the number of spot purchased placements made, and an increased use of DPS providers to meet the needs of our children and young people requiring residential children’s home services.

Information shows that a degree of complexity of a child’s needs, and therefore a requirement for additional staffing and resources, has a strong influence on fees. Secondary to this, the pressures of increases in National Living Wage and pension contributions also sees an influence on the increase of fees.



To support in achieving a balanced budget in future financial years there needs to be a change in placement composition. More than 36% of Cambridgeshire's children in care are placed with Independent Foster Care Agency (IFA) carers; to support the Local Authority to meet both its duty to ensure good quality placement matches are available for children, and that financial duties are met. The pressure caused as a result of the proportion of IFA placements can be seen with the number of budgeted placements against the opening placement numbers at April 2020.

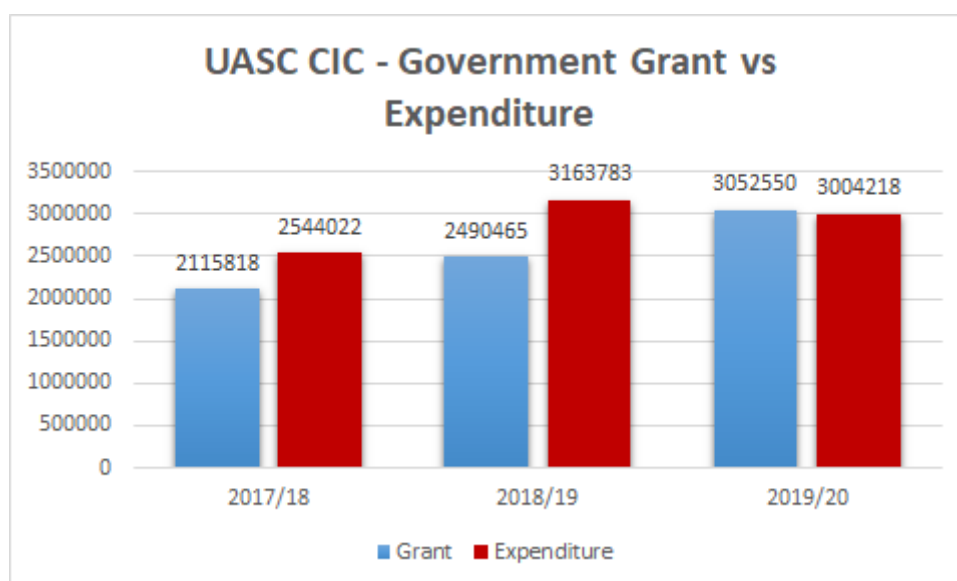
Cambridgeshire's in house fostering service must endeavour to increase available carers to support the local authority to manage this challenge. It is acknowledged that this will be a longer term endeavour, and that in all situations, suitability of local placements and robust matching will continue to take priority.



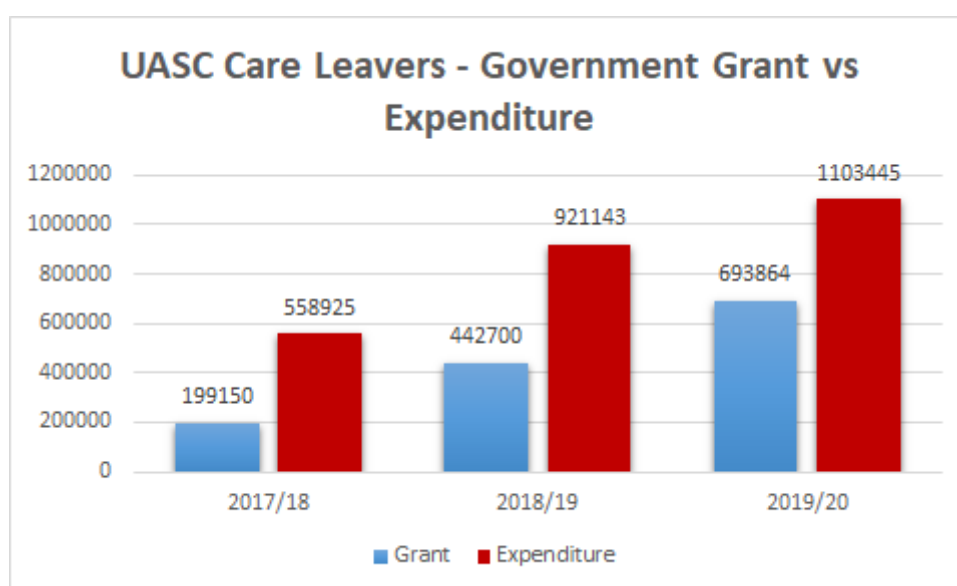
Furthermore, the Authority will use providers available via the DPS and Supported Accommodation Framework to support in reducing average placement fees; utilising cost effective creative placement options and bespoke packages, specific to children and young people's needs.

3.5.2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) budget

Local Authorities receive a set fee per young person from central Government to meet all costs for the accommodation and support of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people, this cost is not dependent on the young person's needs.



In 2017-18 and 2018-19 expenditure for UASC placements exceeded the government grant. As a result, a comprehensive review of placements was undertaken, alongside an increase in the amount of home office decisions and the progression of human rights assessments for UASC's. This accounted for a budget underspend as at 31 March 2020 for UASC under 18 years old.



Expenditure for UASC care leavers has continued to exceed the allocated budget, resulting in a combined overspend of £360k in the 2019-20 financial year. To work towards a balanced budget, Cambridgeshire has continued to work with local providers to identify local accommodation options for UASC's over 18 years of age, which will be sustainable following a decision on status, such as leave to remain/refugee status.

Spend for the 2020-21 period is not currently available, but increases to the Government grant for UASC Care Leavers is expected to result in a balanced budget position in future financial years.

4 Current provision

4.1 Fostering

4.1.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

Cambridgeshire County Council has an in house fostering service and commissions provision from external agencies via the Children's External Placements Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). The DPS began in April 2019 for an initial period of three years with the option to extend for a number of further periods, not exceeding a total of 10 years.

The DPS offers Cambridgeshire and Peterborough access to 41 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) providers (as at March 2020); these providers have over 2700 registered carers nationally and are registered to provide 5600 placements. It should be noted that this demonstrates the number of registered carers and approved fostering 'beds' cumulatively across the DPS occupied and vacant, but as you would expect availability changes on a daily basis. The majority of this provision is out of area, and Commissioning are working with both in house and local IFA providers to develop the availability of local, good quality fostering homes for our Children and Young People.

"We were made to feel very welcome by our new foster carers. It can be confusing moving into a new placement, I know I was shy and nervous and not sure what to do. Luckily the new foster carers knew how to welcome us and that meant we could get settled quicker and feel more ourselves. Their response was definitely reassuring."

Nationally the fostering market is significantly impacted by a lack of supply to meet demand coupled with an aging foster carer population; despite the potential for Cambridgeshire to access in excess of 5000 placements, vacancies are not consistently readily available. During the 2019/2020 period, Cambridgeshire made 197 placements with IFA providers, for some children this will have meant one or more placements within that period within IFA provision, 85% of these were to providers under the DPS.

The DPS has supported Cambridgeshire to ensure good quality ; 98% of IFA providers on the DPS at March 2020 were judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

4.1.2 In House Fostering

Cambridgeshire's in house fostering provision has implemented a comprehensive recruitment strategy which will increase the number of approved carers, with a focus on developing provision for those young people aged 11+. Whilst there has been a small increase in the cohort of approved foster carers, there continues to be a need to recruit carers, particularly for young people in the 11-17 age group, sibling groups and young people with a range of complex needs.

“Stability and support are important to young people going into care and would help them to reduce stress, worry less and give them peace of mind”

203 placements were made to Cambridgeshire’s In house fostering service in the 2019/20 period; of these 49 in house placements made in 2019/20 ended in 7 days or less, and 18 of the 49 were as a result of young people ceasing to be Looked After. This represents a need for Cambridgeshire’s in house service to continue to develop resilient carers, and sufficient capacity to meet the needs of these young

people who previously have experienced short term placements, often not in accordance with a planned transition or ceasing to be looked after.

4.1.3 Fostering Placements

In Cambridgeshire as at March 2020, 71% of Children in Care were living in a fostering placement (including in house, connected persons and IFA placements). This has reduced slightly (from 74% in March 2017) and is representative of the reduction of Cambridgeshire’s Children in Care population. The development of Cambridgeshire’s in house fostering service has led to a subsequent increase in in house placements (15% increase in in house placements since 2017).

Of the total IFA placements as at 30/3/2020 -268 placements accounted for 38% of the Children in Care population.

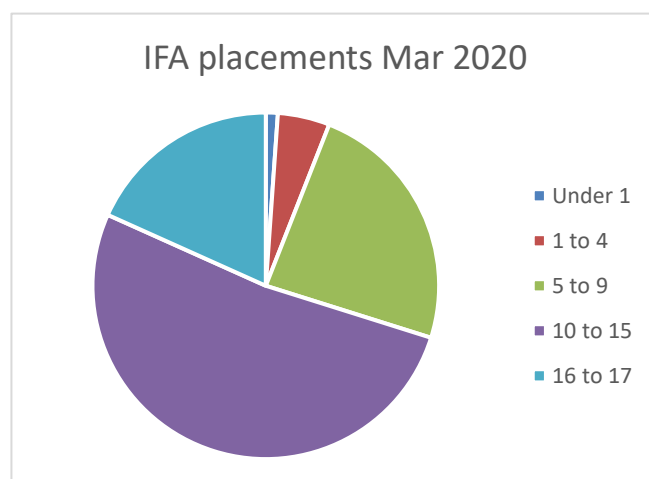
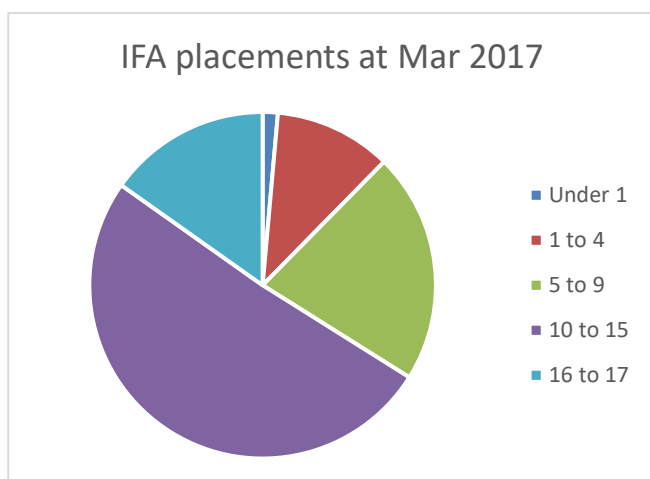
This is especially reflected in our 10 years to 15 years population which makes up 19% of our overall CiC Population [714], and accounts for 52% of IFA placements [139] and 41% of in house fostering placements [100].

“Being able to visit and spend time with the new family and have a sleepover before the move helped. It is important to have time to adjust to the new environment. Put yourselves in our shoes.”

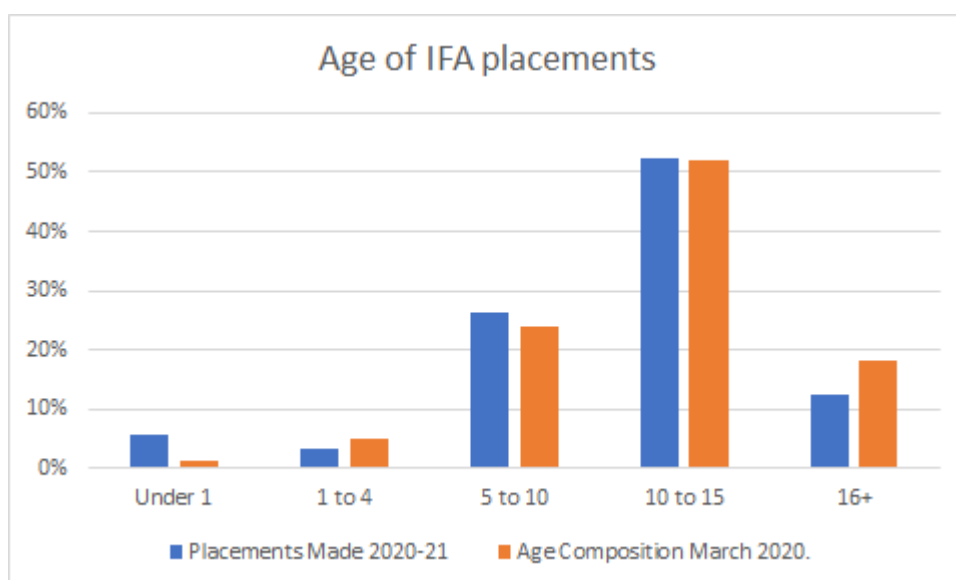
Table 4

Age composition of IFA Placements

	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
Under 1	4	5	6	3
1 to 4	31	25	28	13
5 to 9	61	56	72	64
10 to 15	144	163	161	139
16 to 17	43	45	66	49
Total	283	294	333	268



The age profile of placements made within the 2020-2021 period to IFA's largely correlates with the age composition at March 2020. The majority of placements made were for young people aged 11+ (65% of the 88 placements made). A small proportion of placements for children under 1 were made in this period, though these were all parent and child fostering placements.



4.1.4 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 1

Fostering	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of availability of local foster carers. - Lack of availability of foster carers able to meet the needs of older children and young people, and those young people with complex and challenging behaviours. - Fostering placement breakdowns, and short term 'bridging' placements, affecting stability for children and young people. 	
Actions Required	Impact

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued development of Cambridgeshire's In House Fostering Service, with focus on recruitment of carers to support older children and young people, and those young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours in our local area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of local provision, which in turn will offer greater stability to children and young people requiring short, medium or long term placements (as opposed to bridging placements).
In house Fostering	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of in house foster carers required, with particular focus on resilient foster carers able to offer placements to older children and young people and those with complex needs/challenging behaviours. 	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued successful recruitment of foster carers for Cambridgeshire's In House Fostering Service 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of local foster carers to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire children and young people in care. Support demand pressures, enable children and young people to maintain networks and have their needs met by local services close to home.
Local Provision	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for greater in area, good quality, local placements available via the DPS, to meet the needs of our children and young people and adhere to our sufficiency duty. 	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all local Fostering Agencies have an awareness of the DPS, how Cambridgeshire source placements, and how to submit a tender to join the DPS. Engagement with those providers who offer local provision to promote exploring vacancies with Cambridgeshire prior to other Local Authorities Manage the market to encourage IFAs to develop services in area. 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of local provision will support children and young people to live in 'in area' provisions (where is it suitable to do so). Children and young people are better supported to maintain local networks, education provision, health services, specialist health provision [Camhs]. Increased opportunity for permanency/rehabilitation. Reduction incosts and resources associated with out of area placements.

4.2 Residential Children's Homes

4.2.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

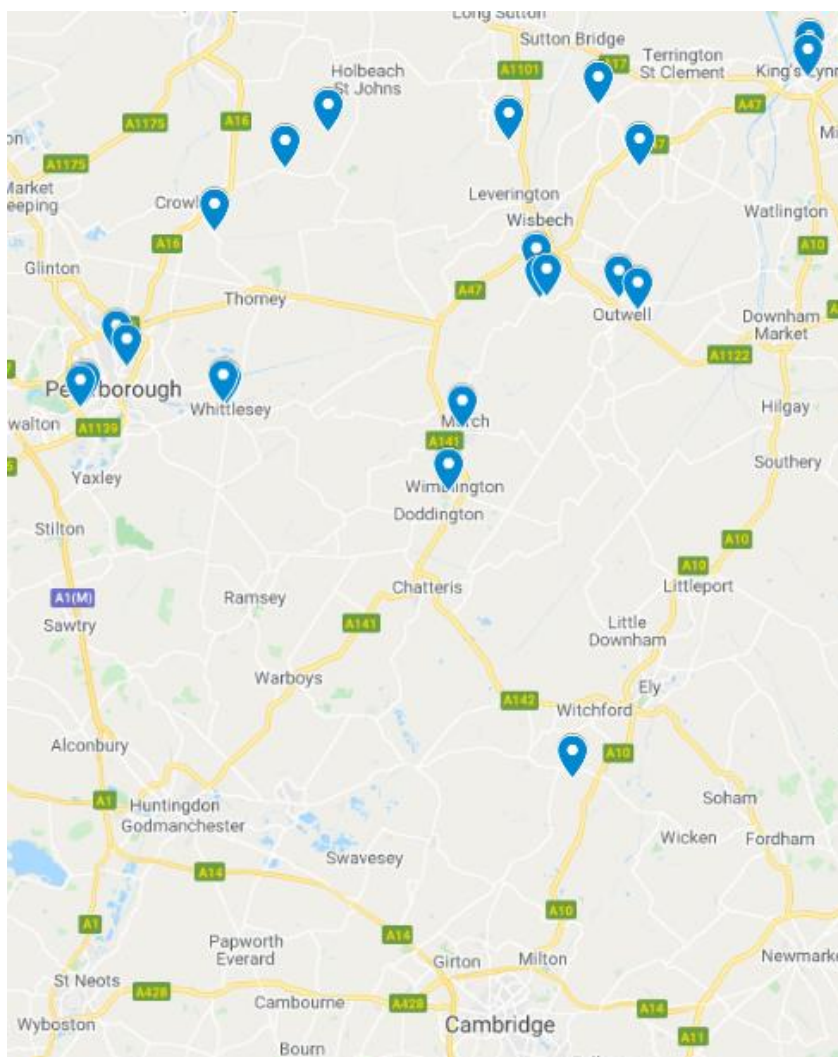
Cambridgeshire County Council [and Peterborough City Council] operate a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the provision of Residential Children's Home's.

As of April 2020, 35 providers have joined the DPS offering access to approximately 400 residential children's homes across the UK.



**approximate locations have been used to maintain anonymity of placements whilst also providing visual representation of the local and national services available to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough young people.*

Despite this, there continues to be a small number of independent children's residential homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; there are 26 currently registered in area with Ofsted, of which 21 are on contract children's residential homes, an increase of 18% since 2018. Those DPS providers with residential children's homes within the boundaries of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough mostly have provisions in the Peterborough and Fenland area. There are no DPS residential children's homes in the city of Cambridge or surrounding areas.



**approximate locations have been used to maintain anonymity of placements whilst also providing visual representation of the local and national services available to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough young people.*

Information provided by DPS providers has suggested that they are receiving a high number of referrals nationally on a weekly basis. This is also reported by the Independent Children's Home Association (ICHA); feedback from which suggests a large number of referrals are inappropriate given the services offered – e.g female 15 year old referred to the provider when they offer male only provision.

Our strategic commissioning imperative for the management and development of our DPS, will be that services are categorised by needs group i.e. homes which specialise in Emotional Behavioural Difficulties, Sexualised Behaviour, Boys only, 11-16 years old etc. This will allow for targeted placement finding, whilst ensuring that the Local Authority remains compliant from a Procurement perspective.

As the current market for children's residential homes is fluid, our commissioning priority must be to ensure there continues to be access to a wide range of available services locally, thereby allowing for the best possible match to be identified when placement finding. Whilst there is sufficient capacity within the DPS, categorising provisions by needs group will support more effective commissioning. . Commissioning have identified gaps in available provision, and we are working with strategic

providers to develop services locally to meet the needs of our children and young people. Recently, Cambridgeshire have been approached by a Local Provider, seeking to develop three homes in area, accessible via our DPS; further evidencing progress in improving access to local provision for Cambridgeshire Children and Young People.

Having good choices of placements helps young people to feel in control of their future and that they have the power to make their own decisions.

Further information on how to apply to the Children's External Placements DPS can be found on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/7a20abf2-cf9f-4dfb-8ebf-5ec39c9b3628>

4.2.2 Residential Children's Home Placements

Cambridgeshire has a lower than average proportion of Children in Care living in Residential Children's Homes, and this has remained consistent over previous years. The majority of Cambridgeshire's young people in Residential provisions are aged 10 – 15 and 16 – 17.



Residential Children's Homes				
	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
<i>Under 1</i>	1 (parent & child residential service)	0	0	0
<i>1 to 4</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>5 to 9</i>	3	6	8	4
<i>10 to 15</i>	32	41	29	31
<i>16 to 17</i>	17	16	25	23

Through experience, we know that many of Cambridgeshire's children and young people in residential children's homes present with complex and challenging behaviours, including aggression, exploitation and complex mental health needs. Data demonstrating children's presenting needs are discussed with providers via referrals, on an individual basis, but currently, this information is not recorded in a way that can easily be extracted. Going forward, commissioning will collate this

information, and in doing so will better be able to support providers in identifying gaps in provisions to meet the ongoing needs of our children and young people locally, where appropriate.

In the period April 2020 – March 2021 25 placements were made with Residential Children’s homes provisions, equating to 6% of all placements made. This is a slight reduction, compared to the proportion of Children in Care living in these provisions; it is considered that this is likely a result of the Covid-19 impact in this timescales.

This does include a small number of young people who access Residential Shared Care provision as part of a short break service, and more information about this cohort is available within the *Children with Disabilities* Sufficiency Statement.

4.2.3 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

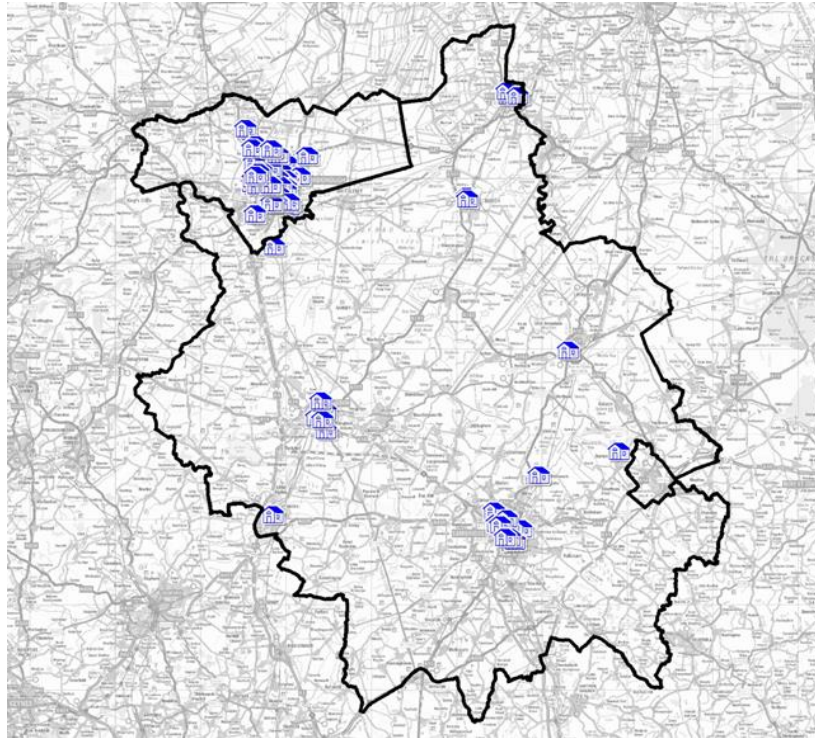
Summary 2

Residential Children’s Homes	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current DPS providers are not consistently able to meet the needs of our children and young people requiring residential provision in area. 	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options appraisal to consider the development of an inhouse residential service provision/bespoke commissioned provision. • Engagement with current providers to scope development of services • Development of locally available provision, to include gaps in current market • Ensure that local providers, who meet quality thresholds for the DPS, are encouraged to join DPS • Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s) • Develop quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of good quality, local residential provision to meet the range of needs of Cambridgeshire children and young people. • Explore opportunities to stimulate the market within the scope of currently commissioned contract (i.e DPS) • Explore opportunities to use current contract (DPS) to ‘call off’ targeted mini-competition(s) for specialist provisions to meet the needs of these cohorts of young people • Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service • Improved understanding of the specific needs, themes and trends pertaining to this cohort of young people, which will in turn inform future commissioning activity

4.3 Supported Accommodation

4.3.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough operate a Framework for Supported Accommodation services for Young People in Care aged 16+. The Framework commenced in October 2018 for an initial period of three years with the option to extend for a number of further periods, not exceeding a total of 10 years; the local authority is extending the Framework for its initial extension period to September 2023 with further reviews thereafter. As at April 2020 there are 40 providers on the framework offering supported accommodation services across the UK.



**approximate locations have been used to maintain anonymity of placements whilst also providing visual representation of the local and national services available to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough young people.*

Twenty-five of the forty framework providers offer in county provision across 92 locations. The geographical locations of in county provisions are local to areas with good transport and education links. Areas such as the Fenlands, Peterborough and Cambridge City have a higher concentration of supported accommodation services. Whilst Huntingdon has similar transport and education links, there is a significantly smaller amount of supported accommodation provisions; this is likely due to a number of factors such as the limited diversity within the local community, lack of easy access to local amenities and the local college does not offer ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses.

“Young people can feel isolated and alone in their placements, so being close to all of the essential amenities and services helps them to feel supported.”

To facilitate increasing provision in preferred locations, and in response to discussions with providers about the varying costs of services in different parts of the County, the Supported Accommodation Framework enables providers to tender pricing per area. Average prices on our supported accommodation framework vary substantially across lots and locations; this matrixed pricing structure has supported providers to appropriately cost provision, and to meet demand for provision in those areas with higher housing costs.

“Having the option to live somewhere with good job opportunities and transport links helps to put young people in the best possible position to live a successful life”

Table 5

	All Locations	Cambs city	Pboro	Fenland	East Cambs	South Cambs	Hunts	Out of County	Ave.
Lot 1	£916.92	£822.80	£621.71	£700.40	£720.40	£736.40	£693.67	£605.50	£768.03
Lot 2	£874.47	£1,036.47	£675.00	£1,027.50	£687.50	£687.50	£687.50	£710.00	£843.67
Lot 3	£767.78	£726.33	£505.29	£656.40	£686.40	£703.00	£704.25	£460.67	£684.66
Lot 4	£825.77	£894.09	£422.50	£1,027.50	£625.00	£625.00	£625.00	£347.50	£759.66
Ave.	£832.36	£861.54	£560.22	£778.14	£694.92	£707.83	£690.69	£514.45	£756.29

Further information on how to apply to the Supported Accommodation Framework can be found on Contracts Finder:

<https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=ca481a3d-333c-ea11-80fc-005056b64545&p=4d8cb5a5-74dc-e511-810e-000c29c9ba21>

4.3.2 Supported Accommodation Placements

Since 2017, in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, there has been a continued increase in the population of young people in supported accommodation provisions; this increase correlates with an increase in Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population aged 16+.

Table 6

	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>Residential accommodation not subject to Children's Homes Regulations*</i>	79	67	84	95

**Residential accommodation not subject to Children's Home Regulations includes unregulated accommodation like Supported Lodgings but the majority of these placements are supported accommodation.*

This trend is not forecast to continue, and is anticipated to reduce going forward. Cambridgeshire is forecasting a decline in demand for these services, over the duration of this statement.

4.3.3 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 3

Supported Accommodation	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure availability of good quality, local provision. - Ensure use of supported accommodation is assessed as appropriate for the young person and supports their journey to independence. - Ensure that young people are supported to achieve positive outcomes, including preparation for independent living and adulthood. 	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop provider peer support network • Continue to embed quality assurance processes; risk assessment tool to be 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers are able to share good practice

<p>developed for Supported Accommodation to improve prioritisation of visits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care have launched a 'Stepping Out' tool to support providers and young people in capturing independence skills, which has been launched with providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted use of quality assurance and contract monitoring visits, will enable Commissioning to support providers to make any necessary improvements to service delivery. • Universal tool to reflect independence skills will create uniformity across providers, and enable tools to travel with young people, enabling a continuity of support relating to independence skills.
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4.3.4 Staying Close, Staying Connected - SC,SC.

Cambridgeshire are working in partnership with Break Charity, a local provider who are leading a DfE pilot project 'Staying Close, Staying Connected'. This project has been funded by the Department for Education and aims to change the way that care leavers are supported as they leave residential care, and encourage them to achieve positive outcomes in independence. Young people aged 16+ who have previously lived in a residential children's home are eligible for the project. Break are also in the process of piloting an expansion of this project to support those young people who have not previously resided in a residential children's home.

SCSC enables young people aged 16+, to move into local accommodation (staying 'close' to an area of their choosing); accommodation is provided by Registered Social Landlords, and support provided by the Charity and Local Authority professionals.

The project is being independently evaluated by the University of York and the University of East Anglia, and is currently due to end in March 2022. Cambridgeshire is working with Break and the other partners in the project (including Peterborough City Council and Norfolk County Council) to consider sustainability plans for the project post March 2022. Cambridgeshire have referred 55 young people to the project during its lifetime; of these 21 young people have moved into the project.

“As well as making young people feel welcome and settled in their placement, it is also really important that placements support young people to prepare for the next step in their lives, whether that be a new placement or moving into independent accommodation. This helps young people to feel like they are moving forward instead of starting all over again”

“One young 39 person said of the project “they’ve changed me as a person for the better. All young people who have been through care deserve this.”

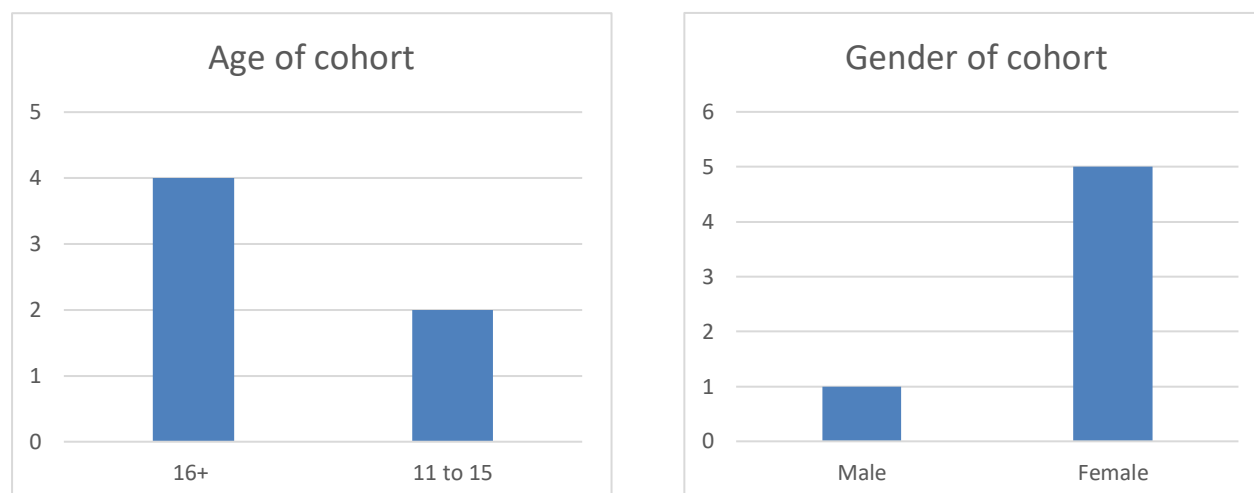
4.4 Discharge from Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

4.4.1 Placements

Recently, Cambridgeshire has seen both a significant increase in the number of children and young people (under the age of 18) who are being admitted to an NHS England Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (T4 CAMHS) provision and for whom under S117 of the Mental Health Act 1983 are eligible for social care aftercare support, be this community based or via placement options as a child/young person becoming looked after at the point of discharge. Within the 2020/21 period, at the time of writing (November 2020), Cambridgeshire's need for placements for this cohort of young people has increased by 500% compared to 2019/20.

The majority of placements required are for females, and for young people aged 16 and 17 years.

Four of these young people were placed in specialist residential children's homes, and two within Supported Living provisions. Currently Cambridgeshire's contractual provisions neither explicitly exclude nor require provision to meet the needs of this cohort of young people.



4.4.2 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 4

Transitioning from Tier 4 CAMHS provisions	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Current DPS providers are not consistently able to meet the needs of this cohort of young people within area.	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement with current providers to scope development of local service options [community based and residential]• Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s)• Develop quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore opportunities to stimulate the market within the scope of currently commissioned contract (i.e DPS)• Scope opportunities to deliver multi-agency wrap-around services within the young person's local community and maintain where possible, their remaining at home

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to use current contract (DPS) to 'call off' targeted mini-competition(s) for specialist provisions to meet the needs of this cohort of young people • Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service • Improved understanding of the specific needs, themes and trends pertaining to this cohort of young people, which will in turn inform future commissioning activity
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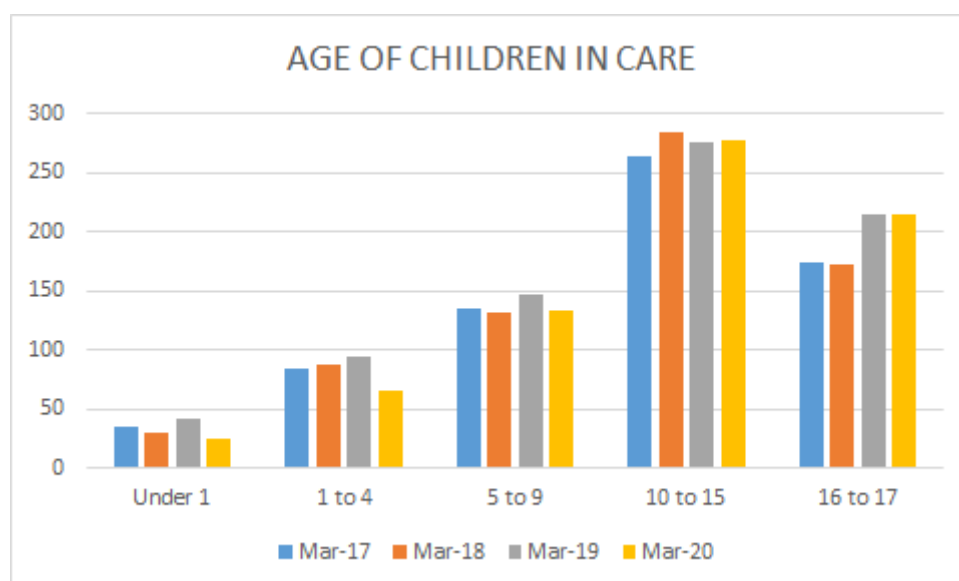
5

Population Composition

5.1 Age

The age breakdown of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population has remained relatively consistent in recent years; the only significant changes have occurred within the under 5 population (decreasing by 5%), and the 16+ population (increasing by 5%).

Cambridgeshire has consistently had a relatively high proportion of Children in Care aged 16 & 17; at 31/03/2020 30% of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population were aged 16+; however, this trend is forecast to reduce in future years. Cambridgeshire's 14 and 15 year olds have historically been a relatively significant proportion of the wider Children in Care population, which in conjunction with the number of young people aged 16+ who become Children in Care in year has contributed to a growing 16+ population. However, we now see that the 14 & 15 year old population of children in care is declining, and in turn we expect the number of Children in Care aged 16 & 17 to reduce in the coming years.



5.2 Gender

Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population has remained relatively consistent; at March 2017 57% of the population were male, and at March 2020 58%. This trend is relatively stable when looking at the gender composition of placements made in year too; 59% of placements made in the April – March 2020 period were for boys.

The primary difference in gender is seen within the cohort of young people placed in residential children's homes and supported accommodation for which 73% and 87% of the cohort are male (respectively).

5.3 Ethnicity

Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population is predominantly white (77% at March 2020), this has remained relatively consistent over previous years. However, when considered against the wider Cambridgeshire population there is evident inconsistency; Cambridgeshire's population is 1% black and 1.8% mixed, though young people from these communities are over 13% of Cambridgeshire's children in care population.

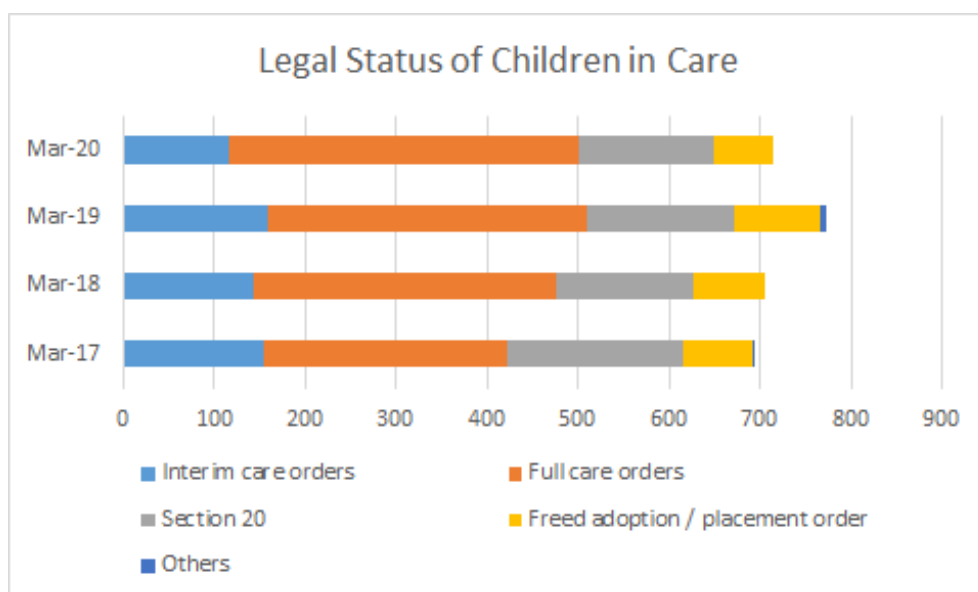
Nationally, the Children in Care population is 75% white (a reduction from 77% in 2015); this reduction is thought to have been impacted by the increased UASC population nationally, and may provide some explanation for the disparity in portions of young people with black and mixed ethnicities across Cambridgeshire, and within the Children in Care population.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Not stated / not yet obtained</i>	0	0	0	24
<i>White</i>	555	563	600	547
<i>Mixed</i>	43	60	54	54
<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	20	21	15	19
<i>Black or Black British</i>	23	29	46	41
<i>Other ethnic groups</i>	51	33	57	29

Currently there is insufficient data available as to the ethnicity of carers recruited to support Cambridgeshire Children and young people. There is an evident need to ensure that a similar profile of foster carers are recruited to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire Children in Care, supporting cultural matches to be achieved for children and young people.

5.4 Legal Status

As of the 31st March 2020, 54% of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population were accommodated under a full care order; a substantial increase of 15% from 2017. Conversely, both the proportion of young people accommodated with parental agreement [Section 20], without an order and the proportion of the population who are subject to court proceedings have declined (16% and 21% respectively).



This does however, demonstrate a continued need for a blend of short-, medium- and long-term placements to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire's Children whilst in care.

5.5 Length of Time in Care

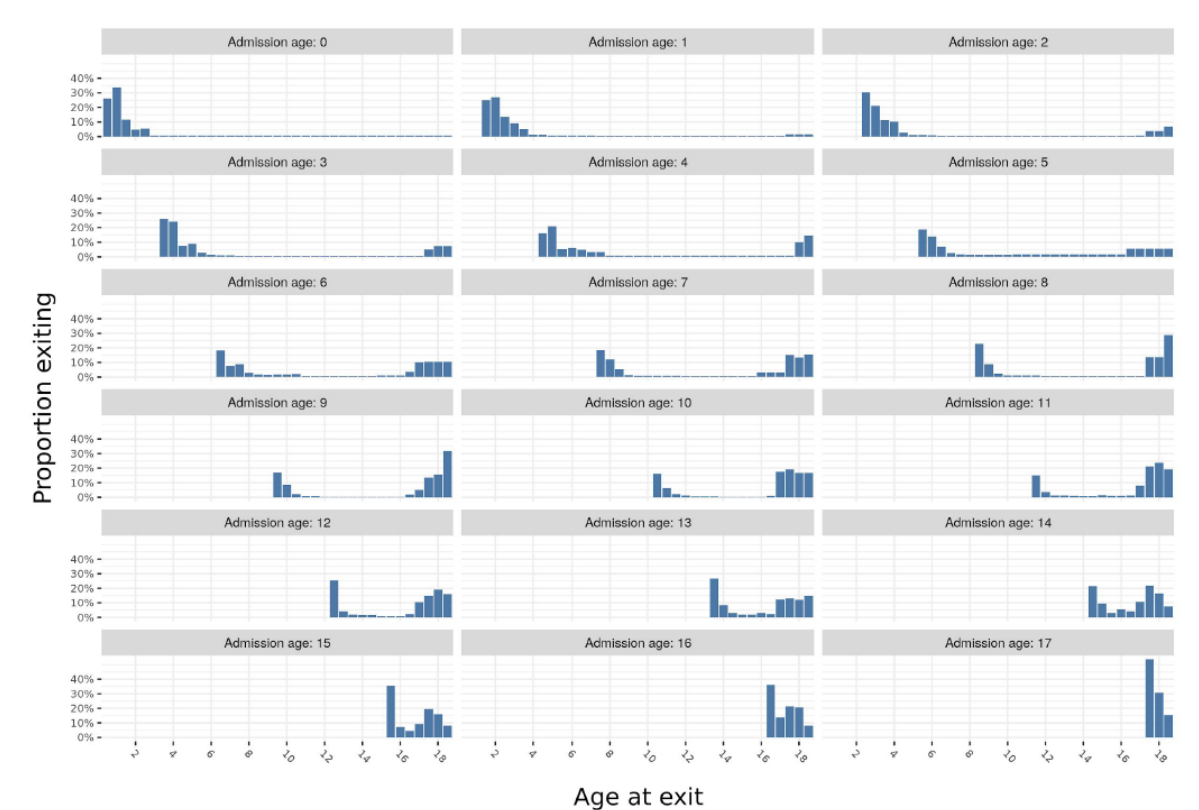
The composition of Cambridgeshire's Children in Care population has shifted in recent years, with a reduction in the proportion of children in care for less than 6 months at March. This is in part due to the implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model and increased use of Public Law Outline, which has reduced the numbers of children in care proceedings.

Table 7

Length of time in care

	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-5 months	161	125	145	91
6 up to 12 months	110	126	116	86
1 - up to 2 years	111	148	157	156
2 - 5 years	161	155	195	217
5+ years	149	152	159	164

Research suggests that in Cambridgeshire the length of time that children remain in care is primarily bimodal (from ages 2 to 15); some children leave care relatively soon after becoming looked after, whereas others are forecast to stay in care until 18.



There is scope to further explore mechanisms for supporting children and young people to remain at home where it is safe and suitable to do so. Cambridgeshire has recently developed a Family Group Conference service; which will support the reduction of children becoming looked after by supporting family networks to identify mechanisms to appropriately safeguard children in the family or extended family home.

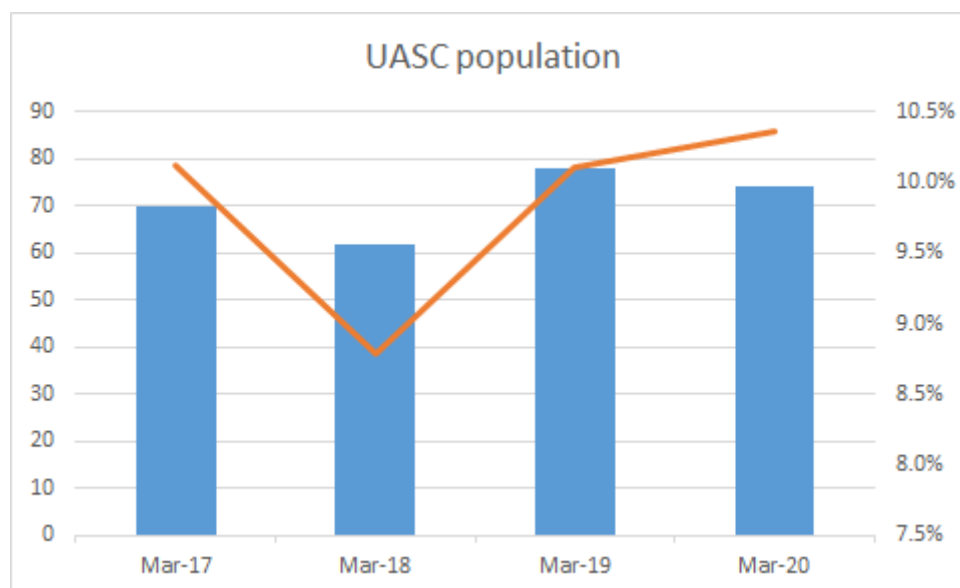
5.6 Location

Where it is safe to do so, Cambridgeshire's strategy is to support children and young people in care to live close to their home communities. However, recent challenges with the availability of suitable provision locally has seen a rise in the proportion of children and young people placed more than 20 miles from home (increased by 24% since 2017). It should be noted, that due to the size of the County, more than 20 miles from home may constitute an in-area placement.

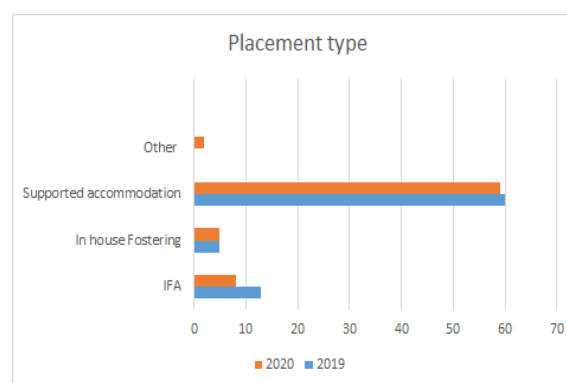
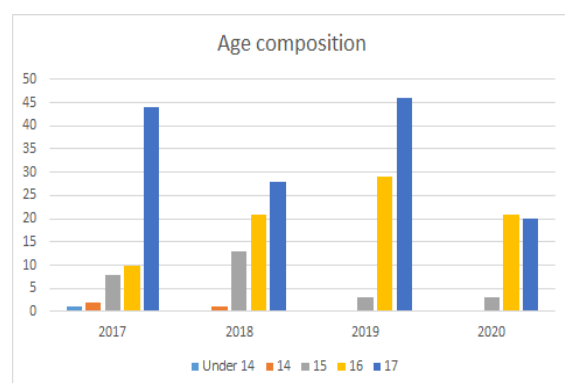
Of the 819 placements made in the 2019-2020 period 55% were in county. 69% of the 370 out of county placements were in bordering neighbouring authorities, which support young people to maintain links to local networks and education; the majority of out of county placements were fostering and supported accommodation placements. Property prices in Cambridgeshire, especially Cambridge City are amongst the highest outside of London in the UK. This impacts on availability of space for families who may otherwise consider fostering but are not able to secure property. This suggests that we are unlikely to see a growth in a variety of placements being offered within Cambridge City.

5.7 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Cambridgeshire's Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) population has been relatively consistent, since the initial increase in 2015. At March 2020, 10.4% of Cambridgeshire Children in Care population were UASC, from 10.1% since 2017.



To ensure that Local Authorities are not facing an unmanageable number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to accommodate and support, central government has developed a voluntary agreement for Local Authorities to ensure the 'fairer distribution of unaccompanied children across all local authorities'.¹ This agreement places a ceiling on Authorities for the number of unaccompanied children they must accommodate before those young people are transferred to the responsibility of other Local Authorities. For Cambridgeshire this equates to 95 unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people².



The majority of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people are assessed as being 16 and 17 years old and are placed in supported accommodation provision. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Supported Accommodation Framework was developed in response to this trend; with specific Lots

¹

² 0.07% of Cambridgeshire's 0-18 population

designed to ensure that the needs of this group of vulnerable young people are met. This includes ensuring that young people's social, cultural and legal requirements are met and supported, as well as ensuring (wherever it is safe and suitable to do so) that young people are not placed at a significant distance from their home Authority.

80% of Cambridgeshire's UASC population are placed in supported accommodation provision. Cambridgeshire's Supported Accommodation Framework provides 33 providers who specifically offer support and accommodation tailored to the needs of UASC; the majority of these services are located in Peterborough. Cambridgeshire continues to work with providers to ensure that accommodation and support is available in county and in suitable locations i.e. close to public transport links, access to educational settings providing English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESOL) courses, access to cultural facilities etc.

At March 2020, the majority of Cambridgeshire's Unaccompanied young people were male (70 of 74); have travelled from a range of home countries (see below table 9); the majority of whom identify as Muslim or Christian (table 10).

Table 8

Home country	
AFGHANISTAN	5
ALBANIA	2
ERITREA	17
ETHIOPIA	9
IRAN	14
IRAQ	12
KUWAIT	1
MOROCCO	1
PAKISTAN	1
PALESTINE	1
SUDAN	7
SYRIA	2
VIETNAM	2

Table 9

Religion	
Muslim	46
Christian	10
Roman Catholic	1
Buddhist	1
Not known/None	16

5.8 Care Leavers

Cambridgeshire is committed to supporting our Care Leavers to feel safe and supported and know where, or who to go to for information, advice and help. Cambridgeshire's Care Leavers Local Offer encompasses the following areas:

- Employment
- Education
- Accommodation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Financial
- Relationships and Participation

Further information about the Local Offer is available [here](#)

Cambridgeshire's Care Leaver population has increased substantially since 2017 to 416.

Table 10

	31/03/2017	31/03/2018	31/03/2019	31/03/2020
<i>Number of Care Leavers</i>	324	371	410	416

81% of Cambridgeshire's care leaver population are in contact with Children's Social Care; an increase from 75% in 2017. This increase is positive, however, Cambridgeshire is committed to improving this percentage..

The proportion of Cambridgeshire's Care Leavers who are in suitable accommodation has increased from 67% in 2017 to 72% in 2020.

Housing Related Support Services can offer Care Leavers accommodation as they progress towards independent living. Currently Cambridgeshire have 14 Housing Related Support Services across the county offering accommodation to young people (including Care Leavers). This service is currently being recommissioned, pending a consultation, market testing and review of delivery models.

Engagement in Education, Employment or Training (EET) is a further measure that supports us to identify outcomes for our Care Leaver population. EET figures nationally have seen a decline from 2011 – 2015, with figures beginning to rise from 2016 onwards. EET for Cambridgeshire's care leavers has increased from 62% in 2017 to 65% in 2020. EET continues to be a priority for Cambridgeshire for our Care Leavers; Cambridgeshire's Care Leavers Local Offer includes a focus on supporting young people to engage in education, employment and training (amongst others).

5.9 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 5

Population Composition	
Challenges/Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people aged 10-15 are the largest age group within the looked after population. - Boys and young men are over represented at 59% of the looked after population. - 25% of the looked after population report an ethnic identity other than white in a geographical area where white UK is 90%+ - 45% of all placements are made outside of county - 28% of care leavers are not in suitable accommodation and 35% are not in education, employment or training 	
Actions Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted recruitment of foster carers to offer placements to children and young people 11+ and males. • Targeted recruitment of foster carers from diverse ethnic backgrounds • Targeted work with in-house and external suppliers to increase number of fostering households. 	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More appropriate matching of demand with supply and increased placement stability. • Increase in placements where the child or young person's ethnicity and culture is reflected. • More Cambridgeshire children and young people kept within county and close to their own networks and supports.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with external providers encourage development of appropriate residential children's homes within Cambridgeshire for Cambridgeshire young people. • Scope viability of developing in-house residential options. • Encourage the development of social and other housing models with associated support for young people leaving care. • Develop links with local colleges, employers and training providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are stable and safe housing for young people to move into as they move to independence. • There are the right opportunities for young people leaving care to receive education, training and progress into worthwhile careers.
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6 Recommendations

6.1 Summary of recommendations

This Strategy has identified that though much has been and continues to be done, Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to building further to ensure the very best outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers. To this end, a commitment from the Authority is given to the following actions.

Area	Actions	Impact
Co-production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that feedback is actively sought from children and young people throughout all stages of the commissioning cycle. • Create opportunities for engagement with young people including reviewing of current services. • Ensure that a variety of tools for capturing the voices of children and young people are available, having regard to age, accessibility and language. • Ensure that any updates to the Children in Care pledge includes Commissioning's commitment to the sufficiency of good quality provision in our local area, and scope of placement choice in area reflective of the needs of our in Care population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned services are reflective of the feedback shared by those young people accessing services. • Ensure all services directly delivered or commissioned are reflective of the input of our children in care population in their design and delivery. • Ensure that we have the right placements, in the right locations in our authority area.
Fostering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of Cambridgeshire's In House Fostering Service, with focus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of local provision, which in turn will offer greater stability to

	recruitment of carers to support older children and young people, and those young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours in our local area.	<p>children and young people requiring short, medium or long term placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people better able to maintain networks and have their needs met by local services close to home.
Step down from residential provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued recruitment of in house foster carers who are interested in supporting young people back into family based accommodation Engagement with IFA providers to develop 'bridge to foster' type provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with Care Plans, children and young people able to move to family based care which is research linked to most positive outcomes.
Out of County Placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all local Fostering Agencies have an awareness of the DPS, how Cambridgeshire source placements, and how to submit a tender to join the DPS. Engagement with those providers who offer local provision to promote exploring vacancies with Cambridgeshire prior to other Local Authorities Manage the market to encourage IFAs to develop services in area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of local provision will support children and young people to live in 'in area' provisions (where is it suitable to do so). Children and young people are better supported to maintain local networks, education provision, health services, specialist health provision. Increased opportunity for permanency/rehabilitation. Reduction oncosts and resources associated with out of area placements.
Residential Children's Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options appraisal to consider the development of an inhouse residential service provision/ bespoke commissioned provision. Engagement with current providers to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability of good quality, local residential provision to meet the range of needs of Cambridgeshire children and young people.

	<p>scope development of services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of locally available provision, to include gaps in current market Ensure that local providers, who meet quality thresholds for the DPS, are encouraged to join DPS. • Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s). • Develop quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service • Improved understanding of the specific needs, themes and trends pertaining to this cohort of young people.
Supported Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop provider peer support network. • Continue to embed quality assurance processes; risk assessment tool to be developed for Supported Accommodation to improve prioritisation of visits. • Launched of 'Stepping Out', a tool to support providers and young people in capturing independence skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers are able to share good practice • Targeted use of quality assurance and contract monitoring visits, will enable Commissioning to support providers to make any necessary improvements to service delivery. • Universal tool to develop independence skills and create uniformity across providers. A resource to travel with young people.
Transition from Tier 4 provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to stimulate the market within the scope of currently commissioned contract (i.e. DPS) • Scope opportunities to deliver multi-agency wrap-around services within the young 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased range and choice of placement options as close as possible to home communities and supports.

	<p>person's local community and maintain where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage current providers to scope development of local service options [community based and residential] • Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted recruitment of foster carers to offer placements to children and young people 11+ and males. • Targeted recruitment of foster carers from diverse ethnic backgrounds • Encourage the development of social and other housing models with associated support for young people leaving care. • Develop links with local colleges, employers and training providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More appropriate matching of demand with supply and increased placement stability. • Increase in placements where the child or young person's ethnicity and culture is reflected. • There are stable and safe housing for young people to move into as they move to independence. • There are the right opportunities for young people leaving care to receive education, training and progress into worthwhile careers.

Each of the actions listed above has a SMART Action Plan with staff accountable to timelines to ensure that all actions that can be taken for those in or leaving the care of Cambridgeshire Council are completed in the most effective, timely manner and to the highest possible quality levels.

7 Conclusion

Abi, one of our Young Inspectors, said within the foreword of this document that ensuring that children and young people are involved in decisions that involve them is essential. Cambridgeshire are committed to ensuring that children and young people are engaged throughout commissioning processes; coproduction will be woven throughout commissioning. We are committed to ensuring that young people's views are not only sought, but that we can share the outcomes and impact of this coproduction with young people.

“ Really listen to the young person's needs, wants and desires and take them into consideration throughout every process. ”

One of the many benefits to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's close working relationship is the opportunity to identify common areas of need across the two Authorities. This Sufficiency Statement will be considered alongside Peterborough City Council's Sufficiency Statement, and where there are shared gaps and challenges we will endeavour to resolve these for both Authorities, in partnership with professionals, children, young people, their families and providers.

Cambridgeshire's commissioning intentions are governed by the Joint Commissioning Board; a partnership body across Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. This Board is responsible for ensuring Commissioning activity is undertaken in line with budgetary and strategic priorities.

Commissioning intentions will be communicated via our [website](#), and via procurement portals where this is appropriate and in accordance with regulations.

Action plans will be developed to review progress in achieving the measures identified throughout this document. We will ensure that Cambridgeshire is able to provide a range of local, appropriate and sufficient placements and services to meet the needs of our Children and Young People in Care.

In the late Summer / early Autumn of 2021, an updated version of this document will be published, with revised data sets following the publication of Statutory data at March 2021.

Appendix A – Glossary

CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health service. An NHS provision to meet mental health needs of children and young people
Connected Person	A person known to a child, young person or their family who may be able to offer care following sufficient assessment
DPS/ Dynamic Purchasing System	A framework for the supply and purchase of placements with independent fostering agencies and residential children's homes
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
Link Foster Carer(s)	A foster carer who offers short breaks through foster care, usually to a child or young person with disabilities
SMART	An acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child/ Children