

Peterborough City 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!

Abi



1

Executive Summary

Peterborough City 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 Peterborough 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 remained relatively constant over the last three years, though, in common with the national and regional picture, has increased since 2015. The current rate of children in care is, however, significantly below that of the average of our ten most similar local authorities Peterborough 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 Peterborough City Council.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to demonstrate how Peterborough City Council will meet the placement needs of our current and future Children in Care and Care Leavers, and 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 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 faced. These have included baking sessions, virtual coffee mornings, 'WhatsApp' support sessions, and 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 Peterborough's children and young people in care.

It's important to acknowledge the resilience that we've seen from our 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 our service areas, and our intention is to respond to changes to circumstances and potential changes in demand for provision in accordance with these.

As with many other Local Authorities, Peterborough are cognisant of the potential for an increase in the Children in Care population as we transition out of 'lockdown'.

2.3 Our Children and Young People in Care

Peterborough City Council believe that coproduction and participation is paramount to good 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 the 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.

[Peterborough's Children in Care Pledge](#) was developed in partnership with young people, senior managers and lead members and sets out Peterborough's promise and commitment to our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Throughout this statement we have included the voices, views and wishes of our children and young people as shown below:

“ *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.* ”

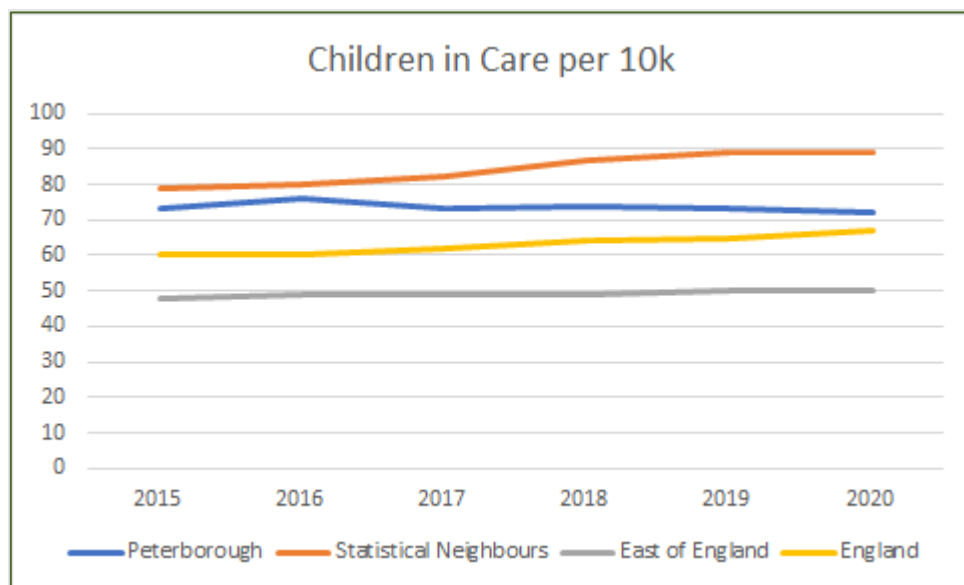
3 Children in Care

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
Peterborough	73	76	73	74	73	72	-1%	-1%
Statistical Neighbours	79	80	82	87	89	89	0%	13%
East of England	48	49	49	49	50	50	0%	4%
England	60	60	62	64	65	67	3%	12%

Table 1 demonstrates, that compared to national, regional and statistical neighbours for whom the rate of Children in Care per 10,000 children under 18 has increased significantly, Peterborough saw decreases in the rate per 10,000 Children aged under 18 from both the previous year and across a six year period.

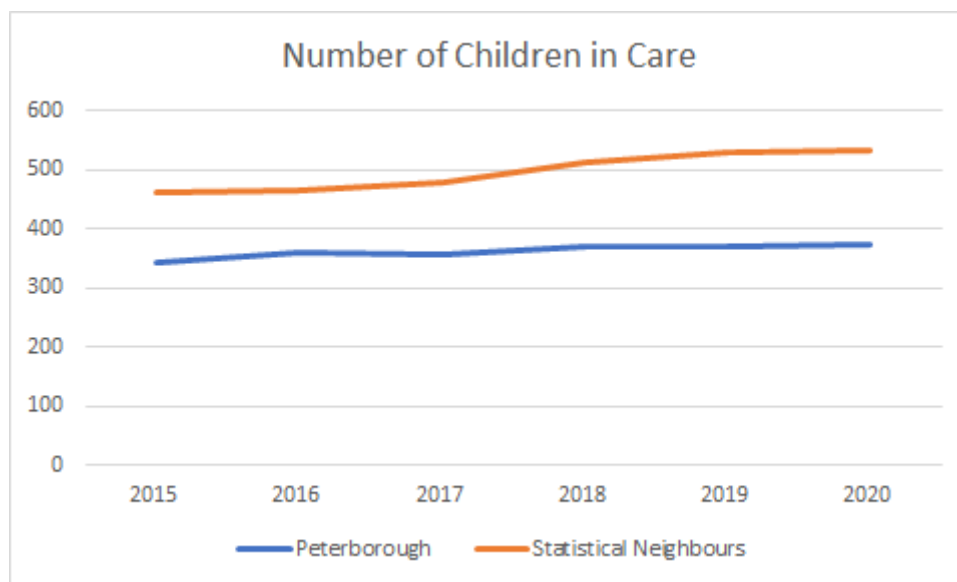


3.2 Number of Children in Care [at 31st March]

Table 2

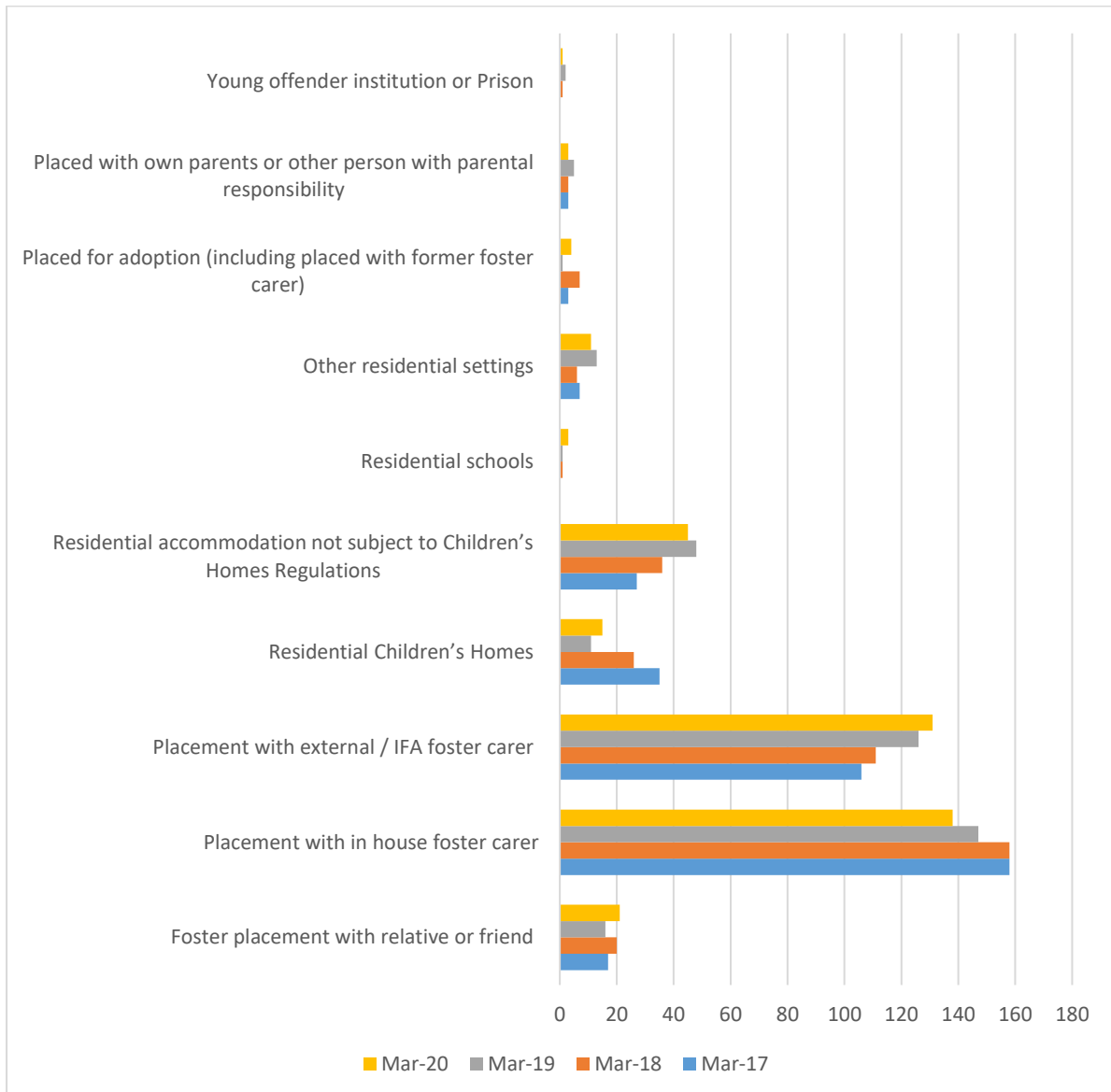
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from 2019 to 2020	Changes from 2015 to 2020
Peterborough	342	360	356	369	370	372	1%	9%
Statistical Neighbours	460	465	480	513	529	533	1%	16%
East of England	6150	6340	6450	6530	6740	6710	0%	9%
England	69470	70410	72610	75370	78140	80080	2%	15%

Peterborough’s Children in Care population remained relatively consistent in 2020 from the previous three years, though comparisons against the 2015 population demonstrate a 9% increase in this cohort of children and young people. National, regional and statistical neighbours show similar increases in populations within this time period, but Peterborough’s increase has happened at a slower rate.



3.3 Placement Mix

Peterborough’s placement composition for Children in Care demonstrates that the majority of placements are within fostering placements, the majority of which are within in house fostering. There is however a reduction in the number of in house placements in March 2020, compared to March 2017, and a comparable increase in placements made with external, Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).



Peterborough’s population of young people living in Residential Accommodation not subject to Children’s Homes Regulations (i.e. Supported accommodation) has increased from 2017 (27) to 45 at March 2020. Conversely, there has been a reduction in the number of Children in Care living in Residential Children’s Homes in this same time period.

3.4 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’ (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 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.

3.5 Financial Overview

Peterborough City Council continues to face financial challenges, with public spending cuts and increased demand for services. In order to meet statutory requirements to submit a balanced budget, Peterborough is tasked with achieving £57m in savings across the period 2020-2023¹.

The Council have adopted seven priorities against the funding challenges it faces:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Growth, regeneration and economic development of the city to bring new investment and jobs. Supporting people into work and off benefits is vital to the city’s economy and to the wellbeing of the people concerned; |
| 2 | Improving educational attainment and skills for all children and young people, allowing them to seize the opportunities offered by new jobs and our university provision, thereby keeping their talent and skills in the city; |
| 3 | Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults; |

¹ <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/asset-library/mediumtermfinancialstrategy2020-21to2022-23tranchetwo1.pdf>

4	Pursuing the Environment Capital agenda to position Peterborough as a leading city in environmental matters, including reducing the city's carbon footprint
5	Supporting Peterborough's culture and leisure offer
6	Keeping our communities safe, cohesive and healthy;
7	Achieving the best health and wellbeing for the city

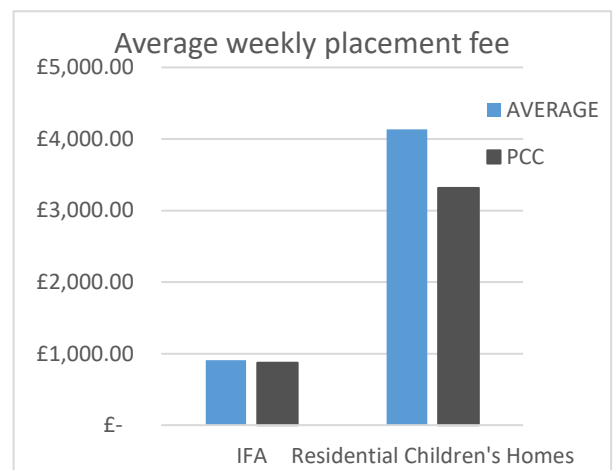
The External Placement Budget for Children in Care in the 2020 / 21 financial year was £10,017,251. The External Placements budget includes:

- External Fostering Placements (IFA)
- External Residential Children's Homes
- Supported Accommodation
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC] Placements

Over recent years Peterborough's spend on external 'purchase' placements (i.e. Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA), residential children's homes, and supported accommodation placements) has increased, over the previous years. However, it is considered that this is led by increasing costs for placements, as well as in year changes to the Children in Care population.

In line with financial challenges and cost reduction requirements for the Local Authority, the budget for external and internal placements in 2020/21 was £10m and £3.8m respectively; a 9% reduction on the previous year.

Average placement fee information demonstrates that despite the increase in annual spend, Peterborough are sourcing placements at a lower than average cost for children and young people, when compared to regional neighbours.



4 Current Provision

4.1 Fostering

4.1.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

Peterborough City 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 Peterborough and Cambridgeshire access to 41 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) providers (as at March 2020); these providers have over 2700 registered carers, offering in excess of 5600 placements nationally. It should be noted that this demonstrates the number of registered carers and approved fostering ‘beds’ cumulatively [occupied and vacant] across the DPS. Nationally the fostering market is significantly impacted by a lack of supply to meet growing demand; despite the potential for Peterborough to access in excess of 5000 placements, vacancies are not readily available.

The DPS has supported Peterborough to ensure quality of providers; 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

Peterborough’s in house provision has employed a comprehensive recruitment strategy which aims to increase the number of approved carers, with a focus on developing provision for those young people aged 11+. Whilst there has been an increase in the cohort of available foster carers, there continues to be a need to recruit carers, particularly for young people in the 11-17 age group.

4.1.3 Fostering Placements

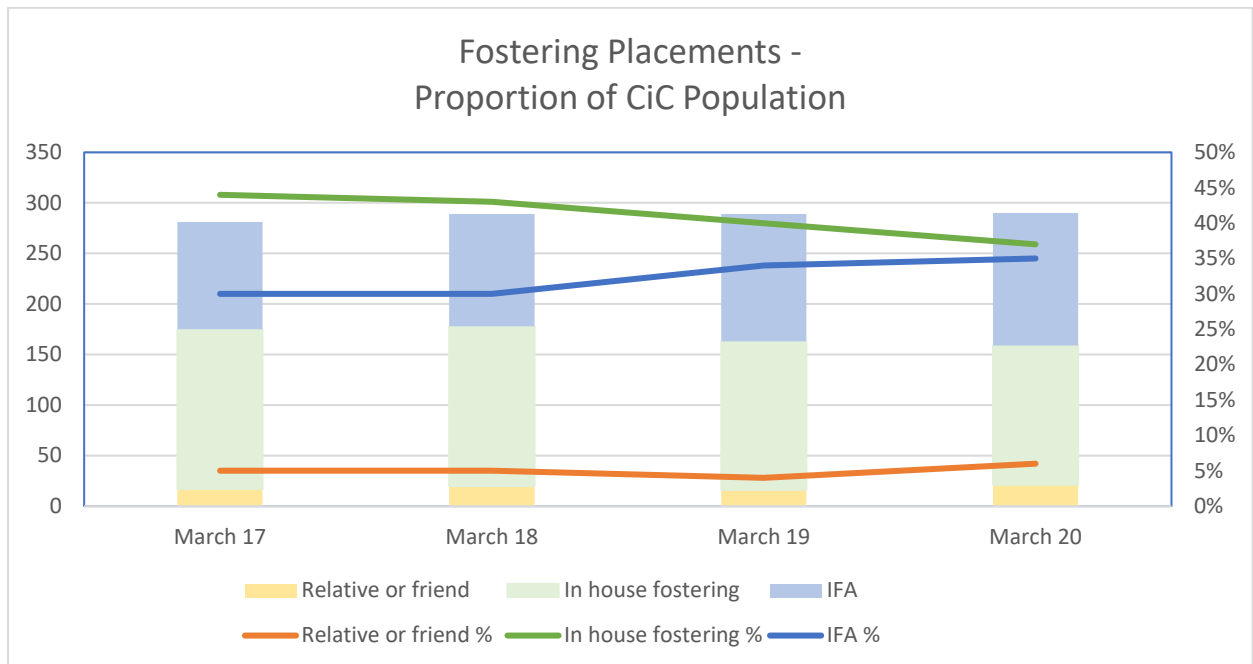
We were made to feel very welcome by our new foster carers. It can be confusing moving into a new placement, I know I was shy and nervous and not sure what to do. Luckily the new foster carers knew how to welcome us and that meant we could get settled quicker and feel more ourselves. Their response was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



Between March 2017 – 2020, Peterborough has consistently seen 72-74% of the Children in Care population living in fostering placements. However, within this time period we have seen a shift towards increased proportions of placements made with external fostering agencies.

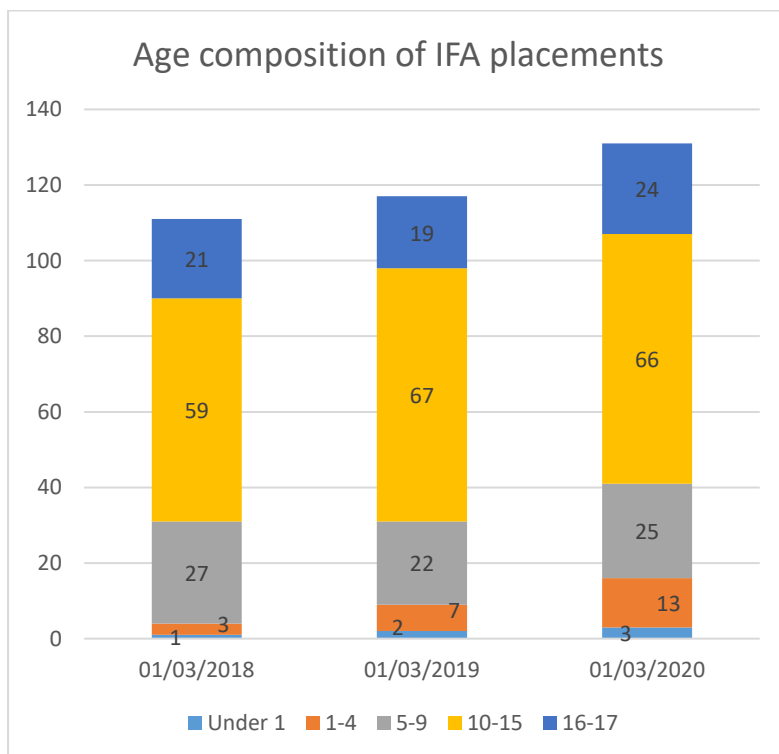
At March 2017 44% [158] of the Children in Care population were placed with Peterborough’s in house foster carers, in March 2020 this had reduced to 37% [138] with IFA placements increasing from 30% [106] to 35% [131] within the

same period. Connected Persons placements have remained consistent, with between 4 – 6% of the Children in Care population living in fostering placements with family or friends.



During April 2019 – March 2020, a total of 227 placements were made with IFA foster carers, with 131 placements at 31 March 2020. The bar chart below demonstrates the age range of children placed in IFA placements, it's of note that the majority are aged 10-15yrs.

“ 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. ”



This clearly identifies that demand for placements for this older cohort of young people is currently being met by the external market for foster placements, as well as identifying a need for in house Fostering to recruit foster carers able to meet the needs of this cohort of young people. Demand for fostering placements for this older cohort is not forecast to reduce in coming years.

4.1.4 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 1

Fostering	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <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. 	
<p>Actions Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of Peterborough'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. 	<p>Impact</p> <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	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <p>Continue to increase in available in house foster carers required, with particular focus on resilient foster carers able to offer placements to older children and young people</p>	
<p>Actions Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued recruitment of foster carers for Peterborough's In House Fostering Service 	<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of local foster carers to meet the needs of Peterborough children and young people in care. • Effective use of available financial envelope
Local Provision	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <p>Need to develop the availability of in area provision accessible under the DPS.</p>	
<p>Actions Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all local Fostering Agencies have an awareness of the DPS, how Peterborough 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 Peterborough prior to other Local Authorities 	<p>Impact</p> <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 education provisions.

4.2 Residential Children’s Homes

4.2.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

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

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

Despite this, there continues to be a comparatively small number of children’s residential homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; there are 21 on contract children’s residential homes in area, with the majority of those homes within Peterborough, and the Fenland area. The commissioning arrangement has helped to increase the number of residential children’s home in Peterborough; since the commencement of the DPS in April 2019 four homes have opened in area, offering an additional 15 beds.



**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 on contract providers has informed that they are receiving a high number of referrals on a weekly basis. This is also reported by the Independent Children’s Home Association (ICHA); as a result of procurement frameworks those providers with services that are targeted at specific cohorts of children receive numerous referrals, not appropriate to their service, as a result of being a qualified provider.

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. to ensure appropriate referrals are being received by providers.

As the current market for children’s residential homes is fluid, Peterborough must ensure there continues to be access to a wide range of available local services, 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 also enable the Children’s Commissioning Team to identify where there are gaps in the market in terms of specialist provision. Once Commissioning have identified these gaps in available provision, we will work with strategic providers to develop services locally to meet the needs of our 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

Peterborough has a lower than average proportion of Children in Care living in Residential provisions (including Residential Children’s Homes, Schools and other residential settings), and this has remained consistent over previous years. At March 2020, 29 of Peterborough’s 372 Children in Care lived in a residential provision, 12 of whom were in Residential Children’s Homes. On average nationally 10% of Children in Care live in Residential Children’s Homes; Peterborough’s Children in Care population in residential provisions has reduced since 2017 (12%), to 8% in 2020.



The majority of Peterborough’s young people in Residential Children’s Homes are aged 10 – 15 and 16 – 17.

Table 3

Residential Children’s Homes – Age Composition

	2015	2016	2017
<i>Under 5</i>	0	0	0
<i>5 to 9</i>	2	0	1
<i>10 to 15</i>	15	9	8
<i>16 to 17</i>	9	4	3

4.2.3 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 2

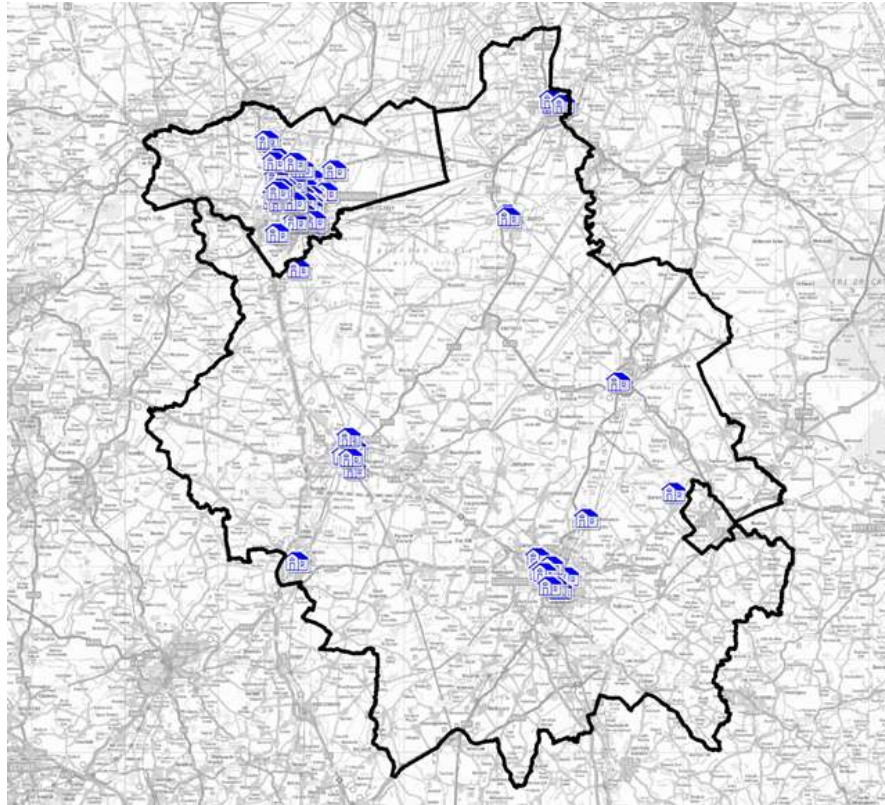
Residential Children's Homes	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current contracted providers are not consistently able to meet the needs of this cohort of young people. 	
<p>Actions Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with current providers to scope development of services • Development of more locally available provision. • 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) • Improve the quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people. • 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 	<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of good quality, local residential provision to meet the range of needs of Peterborough's children and 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 children and young people in care, which will in turn inform future commissioning activity

4.3 Supported Accommodation

4.3.1 Externally Commissioned Provision

Peterborough and Cambridgeshire 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 framework will be extended, subject to provider agreement, for the first extension period, to September 2023, with further extension periods to be considered, in accordance with the contract.

As at April 2020 there are 40 providers on the framework offering supported accommodation services across the UK. The below map outlines the availability of provision more locally.



**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.*

25 of the 40 framework providers offer in area provision across 92 locations. The geographical locations of in county provisions are local to areas with good transport and education links. Areas such as Peterborough, the Fenlands and Cambridge City have a higher concentration of supported accommodation services.

“ 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 local area, 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.

Table 4

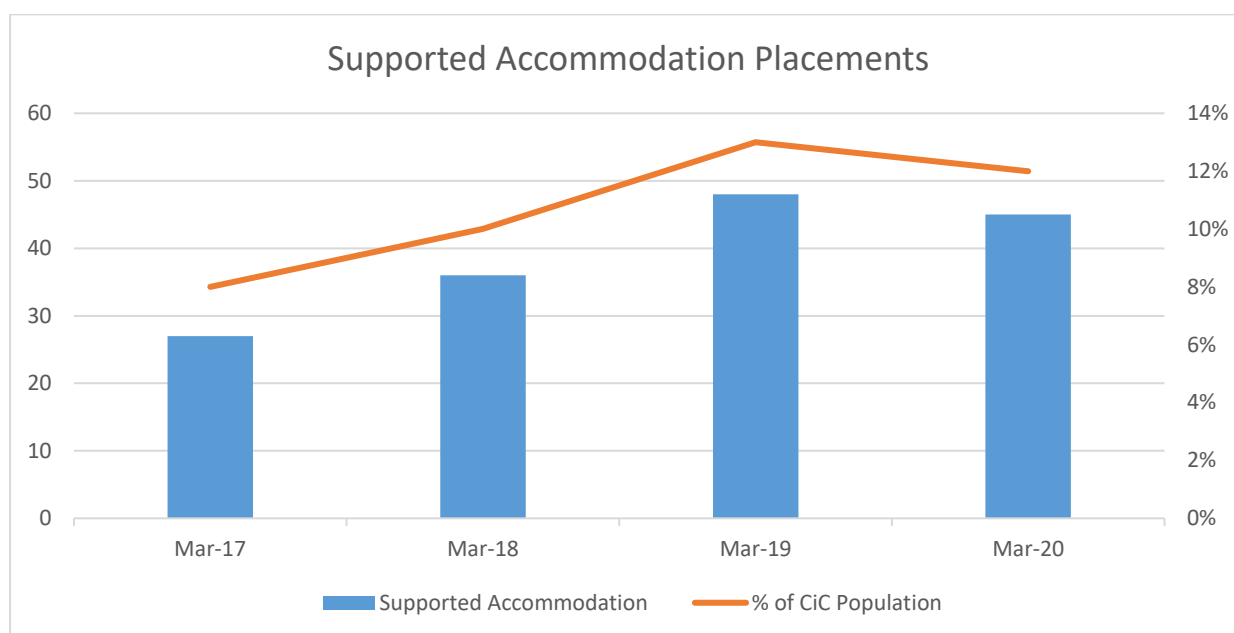
	All Locations	Cambs city	Pboro	Fenland	East Cambs	South Cambs	Hunts	Out of County	Ave.
Lot 1	£916.92	£822.80	£621.71	£700.40	£720.40	£736.40	£693.67	£605.50	£768.03
Lot 2	£874.47	£1,036.47	£675.00	£1,027.50	£687.50	£687.50	£687.50	£710.00	£843.67
Lot 3	£767.78	£726.33	£505.29	£656.40	£686.40	£703.00	£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

The proportion of Peterborough's Children in Care population living in Supported Accommodation provisions has increased from 8% in 2017 to 12% in 2020.



At December 2020, Peterborough's Supported Accommodation population was 43 suggesting that the increase from 2017 to 2019, has not continued and has plateaued. The proportion of Peterborough's Children in Care population turning 16 years old over the next 2 years remains consistent, as do trends over recent years for the number of young people entering Care aged 16 and 17 years. As a result, it is likely that Peterborough's Supported Accommodation population will remain at a consistent level over the next 2-3 years.

The majority of Supported Accommodation placements are for Peterborough's Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People; 23 of the 45 placements in March 2020 were Unaccompanied Young People. Peterborough work with providers to ensure that placements for our Unaccompanied Young People are culturally appropriate, supporting young people to maintain links to their heritage, whilst endeavouring to support young people to develop independence skills and integrate into local community networks.

4.3.3 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 3

Supported Accommodation	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure availability of good quality, local provision - Ensure use of supported accommodation is only made where it 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. 	
<p>Actions Required</p> <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. • Social Care colleagues are in the process of launching a 'Stepping Out' tool to support providers and young people in capturing independence skills, which will be launched with providers. 	<p>Impact</p> <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 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.

4.3.4 Staying Close, Staying Connected

Peterborough are working in partnership with Break Charity who are leading a 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.

The project (which is being independently evaluated by the University of York and the University of East Anglia) was due to end in March 2021, however this has now been extended.

Peterborough is working with Break and the other partners on the project (including Cambridgeshire County Council and Norfolk County Council) to consider sustainability plans for the

“ 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 ”

project going forward The Authorities are awaiting clarification of funding entitlements for the project, and will be undertaking a commissioning exercise once this information is available.

Currently there are two young people from Peterborough City Council who have left residential care and are being supported through Staying Close Staying Connected. Peterborough City Council is keen for the provider to develop further capacity to meet needs in this area.

“ One young 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, Peterborough have seen an increase in the number of placements required to support children and young people (under the age of 18) who have previously been admitted to an NHS England Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (T4 CAMHS) provision and whom are ready to be discharged to community based services in a supportive, planned way with a multi-agency plan.

In the 2020/21 period, at the time of writing (December 2020), Peterborough have required three placements for this cohort of young people.

Peterborough’s cohort of young people requiring a transition from T4 CAMHS provision are both male and female, and aged 16+.

Currently Peterborough’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	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current contracted providers are not consistently able to meet the needs of this cohort of young people 	
<p>Actions Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market stimulation exercise to encourage third sector and independent sector providers to develop locally based resources within the local community. • Engagement with current providers to scope development of service • Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s). 	<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People discharged to their local area, utilising opportunities to deliver multi-agency wrap-around services within the young person’s local community and maintain where possible, their remaining at home • Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in

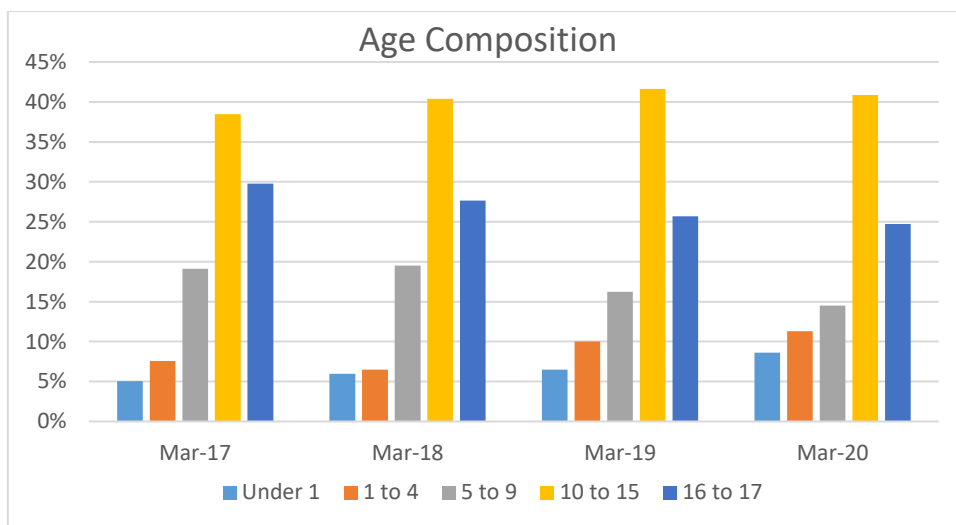
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to stimulate the market within the scope of currently commissioned contract (i.e DPS) • Explore opportunities to use current contract (DPS) to 'call off' targeted mini-competition(s) for specialist provisions to meet the needs of this cohort of young people • Develop quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people 	<p>financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 composition of Peterborough’s Children in care population has changed gradually over recent years, with the most significant change in the under 5 population, which has increased by 8% since 2017. Despite this, Peterborough’s 10 – 15 year old cohort has grown marginally (by 3%), and consistently encompasses the majority of the population.

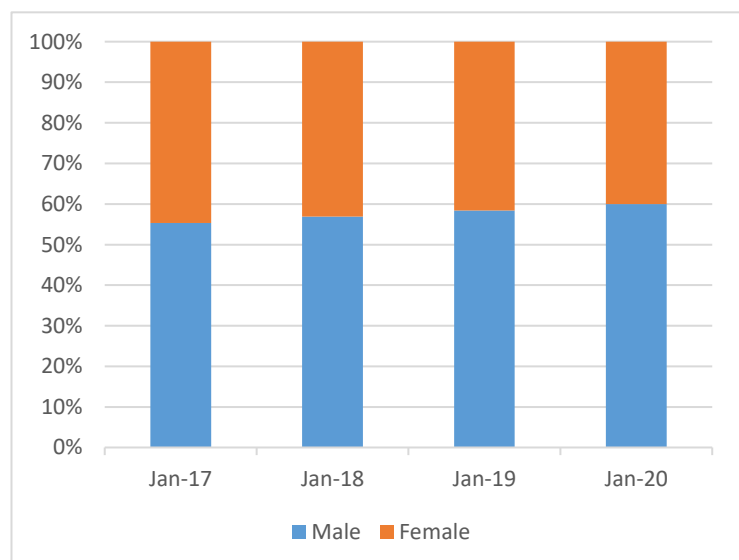


That Peterborough’s Children in Care cohort has such a diverse age composition demonstrates the need for a variety of placement options to meet the needs of our children and young people.

5.2 Gender

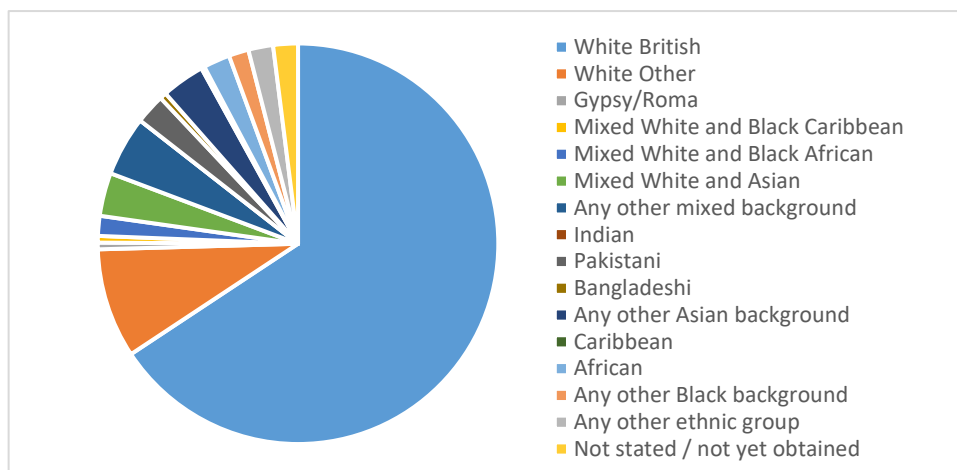
The majority of Peterborough’s Children in Care population is male, and this majority has increased since 2017 to 60%, and has remained relatively consistent as of December 2020 (59%).

The most significant differences in this cohort are within the residential and supported accommodation cohorts which are 67% and 68% male respectively.



5.3 Ethnicity

The composition of Peterborough's Children in Care population by ethnicity has remained consistent in recent years. Peterborough's Children in Care population is predominantly white



(75% white British and white 'other'). There is an evident need to ensure that a similar profile of foster carers are recruited to meet the needs of Peterborough Children in Care, supporting cultural matches to be achieved for children and young people.

5.4 Legal Status

20% of Peterborough's Children in Care population are subject to court proceedings, and therefore will not be in a permanent placement. A further 14% of children and young people are accommodated with parental agreement, without an order. 66% of children and young people are subject to full care orders, placement orders, and adoption.

Table 5

	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>Interim care orders</i>	48	52	63	74
<i>Full care orders</i>	181	212	215	209
<i>Section 20</i>	95	79	60	53
<i>Freed adoption / placement order</i>	31	24	30	35
<i>Others</i>	1	2	2	1

Peterborough has seen a reduction in the proportion of children and young people in Care with parental consent (reduced by 13% from 2017), and a corresponding increase in both Interim and Full Care Orders. Despite these changes, we continue to require a mix of long and short-medium term placements for children and young people to meet the needs of the Children in Care population.

5.5 Length of Time in Care

The proportion of time in care for Peterborough's Children in Care population has remained consistent. On average across the previous four years 48% of children and young people are looked after for less than two years.

Table 6

<i>Length of time in care</i>	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>0-6 months</i>	59	65	75	80
<i>6 - 12 months</i>	39	55	48	49
<i>1 - 2 years</i>	71	43	65	52
<i>2 - 5 years</i>	78	92	90	100

5+ years	109	114	92	97
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5.6 Location

Due in part to its size as a Unitary Authority, the proportion of placements in area (i.e within Peterborough) is relatively low at 40% in March 2020. However, 70% of children and young people live in placements no more than 20 miles from their home address.

We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are able to live in the local area where it safe and appropriate to do so.

“ I like how my placement is close to my friends so I can see them. ”

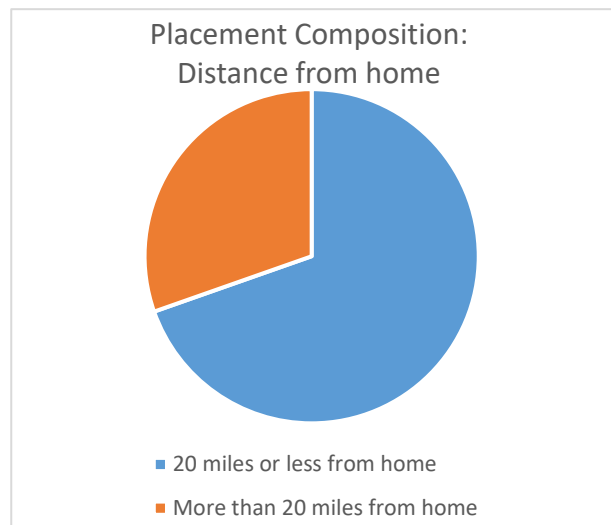
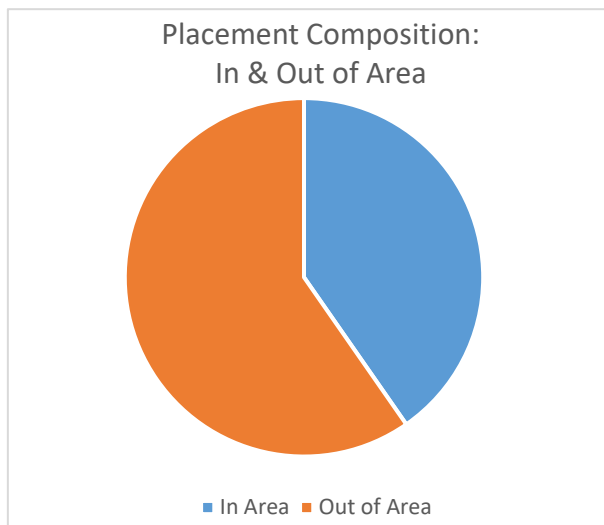


Table 7

Location of placement	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>In Area</i>	158	153	148	150
<i>Out of Area</i>	198	216	222	222
<i>20 miles or less from home</i>	263	255	258	259
<i>More than 20 miles from home</i>	93	114	112	113

The need to increase the availability of good quality, in area provision remains a key strategic priority for Peterborough.

“ Distance matters ”

5.7 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Despite a significant increase in Peterborough’s Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children population in 2015 and 2016, more recently this population has remained relatively consistent.

Table 8

	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>UASC as at year end</i>	24	19	22	28

To ensure that Local Authorities are not facing an unmanageable number of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people to accommodate and support, central government developed a voluntary agreement for Local Authorities to ensure the 'fairer distribution of unaccompanied children across all local authorities'. 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 Peterborough this equates to 33 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

Often unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are assessed as being 16 and 17 years old and are placed in supported accommodation provision. Peterborough and Cambridgeshire's Supported Accommodation Framework was developed in response to this trend; with specific Lots designed to ensure that the needs of this cohort 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. The Supported Accommodation Framework provides 33 providers who specifically offer support and accommodation tailored to the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People; the majority of these services are located in Peterborough.

The majority of Peterborough's Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are aged 16 and 17, and all are male. 82% of this cohort live in Supported Accommodation provisions and 18% in fostering placements; this represents an increase in supported accommodation placements over recent years.

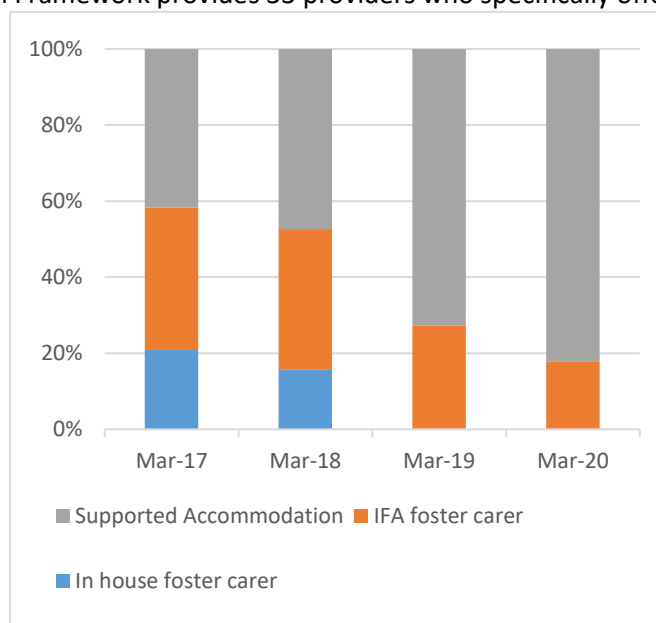
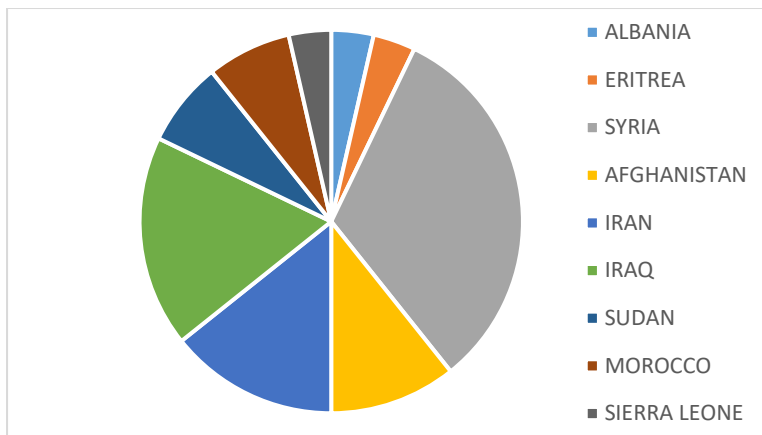


Table 9

Placement type	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20
<i>Placement with in house foster carer</i>	5	3	0	0
<i>Placement with external / IFA foster carer</i>	9	7	6	5
<i>Supported Accommodation</i>	10	9	16	23

At March 2020 Peterborough’s Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People originated from a number of countries, with 32% of young people from Syria. It is of note that there are no clear trends in respect of young people’s home countries.



There is a risk that young people may experience social and cultural isolation, and as such there is a need for providers to be active in supporting the development of safe supportive links for these young people.

“ I will move soon as well.
Thanks a lot guys for everything,
you are the best ”

Peterborough City Council utilise a variety of tools to promote the cultural needs of our unaccompanied young people to support access into the local community. Examples of this include



5.8 Care Leavers

Peterborough is committed to ensuring our Care Leavers feel supported. Peterborough’s Local Offer details the support that is available for young people who are leaving, or have left the care of Peterborough City Council, and encompasses the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Accommodation
- Education, apprenticeships and employment
- Relationships
- Getting ready for adulthood, and
- Being part of the community

“ 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. ”

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

Peterborough’s Care Leaver Population has increased significantly since 2017 to 245 at March 2020.

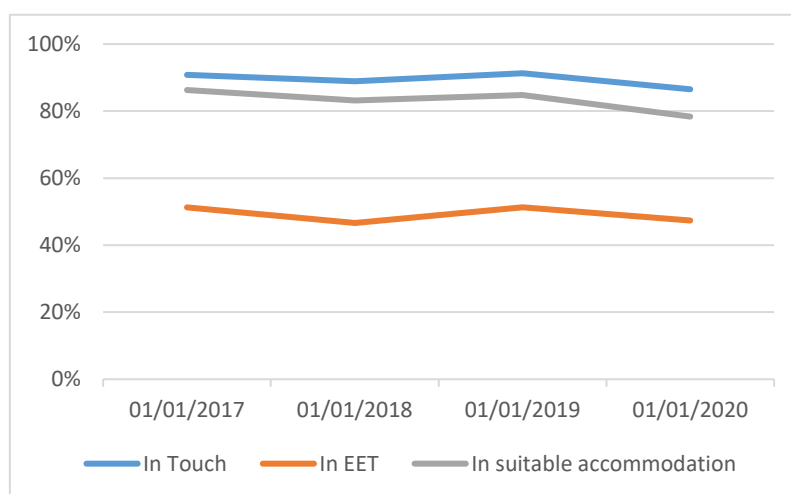
Table 10

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Number of Care Leavers	197	208	230	245

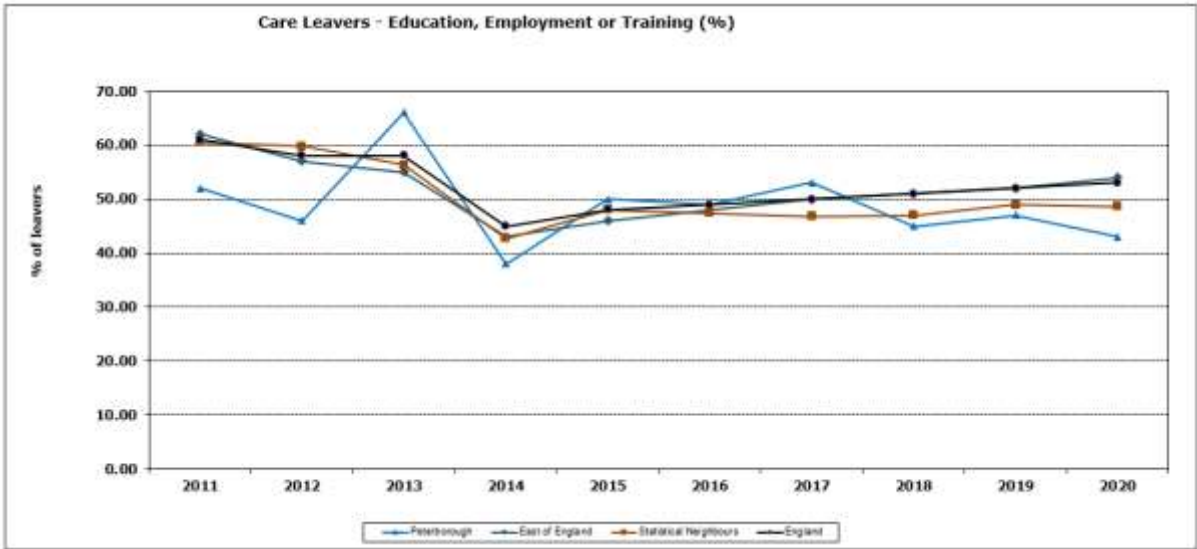
87% of Peterborough’s Care Leaver Population are in contact with Children’s Social Care; a slight decrease from 91% in 2017.

Similarly, the proportion of Care Leavers who are living in suitable accommodation has reduced since 2017.

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.



Peterborough’s Care Leaving population’s engagement in EET similarly reduced from 2011 to 2015, but unlike national comparators it has continued to reduce in subsequent years; in 2011 52% of our care leavers were engaged in EET, reducing to 49% in 2016, and further reducing to 43% in 2020. EET continues to be a priority for Peterborough for our Care Leavers; Peterborough’s Local Offer includes a focus on supporting Care Leavers to engage in education, employment and training.



5.9 Summary of findings, actions required and impact:

Summary 4

Composition of Population	
<p>Challenges/Gaps</p> <p>Increase in children under 5 coming into care Higher proportion of Children in Care are male; particularly in residential children's homes Increased availability of good quality, local provision Increase the number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation, and in education, employment or training Almost 50% of children and young people are in care for less than 2 years</p>	
<p>Actions Required</p> <p>Review support in early years to families where there are vulnerable children. Continue to recruit foster carers/ providers able to care for boys. Ensure availability of local, good quality, residential accommodation to reflect the gender split. 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. Review post care placement for those leaving care in under 2 years</p>	<p>Impact</p> <p>Children are able to stay with birth families wherever it is safe and possible. Provision matches gender balance of population. 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. Where children and young people are returning home safely there is knowledge on what has enabled this to happen and this can be developed further, consider further development of services to rehabilitate home.</p>

6

Recommendations

6.1 Summary of recommendations

This Strategy has identified that though much has been and continues to be done, Peterborough City 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
Fostering	<p>Continued development of Peterborough’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.</p> <p>Ensure that all local Fostering Agencies have an awareness of the DPS, how Peterborough source placements, and how to submit a tender to join the DPS.</p> <p>Engagement with those providers who offer local provision to promote exploring vacancies with Peterborough prior to other Local Authorities.</p>	<p>Increased availability of local provision, which in turn will offer greater stability to children and young people requiring short, medium or long term placements. More Peterborough children and young people living ‘in area’ close to their own communities and supports.</p>
Residential Children’s Homes	<p>Engage with current providers to scope development of services.</p> <p>Ensure that local providers, who meet quality thresholds for the DPS, are encouraged to join the DPS.</p> <p>Engage with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s).</p> <p>Improve the quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people.</p>	<p>Increased availability of good quality, local residential provision to meet the range of needs of Peterborough’s children and young people.</p> <p>Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service</p> <p>Improved understanding of the specific needs, themes and trends pertaining to this cohort of children and young people in care, which will in turn inform future commissioning activity</p>
Supported Accommodation	<p>Develop provider peer support network.</p>	<p>Providers are able to share good practice and achieve better outcomes for young people</p>

	<p>Continue to embed quality assurance processes; risk assessment tool to be developed for Supported Accommodation to improve prioritisation of visits.</p> <p>Launch of a 'Stepping Out' tool to support providers and young people in capturing independence skills, which will be used by all providers</p>	<p>Targeted use of quality assurance and contract monitoring visits, will enable Commissioning to support providers to make any necessary improvements to service delivery.</p> <p>Universal tool in place to reflect independence skills, uniformity across providers, tools can travel with young people, enabling a continuity of support relating to independence skills.</p>
Family Support	<p>Undertake full commissioning activity required to identify spend, usage, locally available providers, and potential procurement approaches.</p>	<p>Ensure quality of providers and appropriate contract management to mitigate risk. Intelligent use of resources in developing contract, reducing resource implications for the Local Authorities and providers.</p>
Transitions from CAMHS tier 4 provision	<p>Market stimulation exercise to encourage third sector and independent sector providers to develop locally based resources within the local community.</p> <p>Engagement with current providers to scope development of service, use of DPS as a mechanism where helpful.</p> <p>Engagement with regional Local Authorities to scope opportunities for locally commissioned provision(s).</p> <p>Develop quality of data recorded for this cohort of young people</p>	<p>More provision available to meet need in the provider market.</p> <p>Increased incentives for providers, and potentially reduction in financial risk, with a multi-authority commissioned service</p> <p>Improved understanding of the specific needs, themes and trends pertaining to this cohort of young people, which will in turn inform future commissioning activity</p>
Composition of children coming into care and leaving care	<p>Review supports in early years to families where there are vulnerable children.</p> <p>Continue to recruit foster carers/providers able to care for boys.</p> <p>Encourage the development of social and other housing models with associated support for young people leaving care.</p>	<p>Children are able to stay with birth families wherever it is safe and possible.</p> <p>Provision matches gender balance of population.</p> <p>There are stable and safe housing for young people to move into as they move to independence.</p>

	<p>Develop links with local colleges, employers and training providers.</p> <p>Review post care destinations of those leaving care after two years or less.</p>	<p>There are the right opportunities for young people leaving care to receive education, training and progress into worthwhile careers.</p> <p>Where children and young people are returning home safely there is knowledge on what has enabled this to happen and this can be developed further.</p>
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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 Peterborough City 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. Peterborough 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 Peterborough and Cambridgeshire's close working relationship is the opportunity to identify common areas of need across the two Authorities. This Sufficiency Statement will be considered alongside Cambridgeshire County Council's Sufficiency Statement, and where there are shared gaps and challenges we will endeavour to resolve for both Authorities, in partnership with professionals, children, young people, their families and providers.

Peterborough's commissioning intentions (collated above) are governed by the Joint Commissioning Board; a partnership body across Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. This Board is responsible for ensuring Commissioning activity is undertaken in accordance 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 through this document as necessary to ensuring that Peterborough is able to provide appropriate and sufficient provisions 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