

Notice of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date: Tuesday, 28 January 2025 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

Membership:

Chairman:

Cllr S Carr-Brown

Vice Chairman:

Cllr S Bull

Cllr O Brown
Cllr P Cooper
Cllr B Dove

Cllr E Harman
Cllr B Hitchcock
Cllr S Mackrow

Cllr D Martin
Cllr T Slade
Cllr O Walters

Parent Governor Co-opted Representatives

P Martin and S Welch

Diocesan Co-Opted Representatives

M Saxby

Youth Parliament Representatives

R Cornish and E Prentice

All Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=6311>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Democratic Services on 01202 096660 or email democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office by email at press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk or tel: 01202 118686

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

GRAHAM FARRANT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

20 January 2025

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app



Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer
(janie.berry@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

4. Minutes

7 - 18

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 26 November 2024.

a) Action Sheet

19 - 24

To consider any outstanding actions.

5. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/s2305/Public%20Items%20-%20Meeting%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is 3 clear working days before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6. Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Report	25 - 92
<p>The Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028 sets out how Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) will meet its sufficiency duty as laid out in section 22G of the Children Act 1989.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out how BCP will provide sufficient, safe, secure, and sustainable homes for Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People between 2024 - 2028. The required standard as a corporate parent is to ensure that the accommodation provision is at the level that professionals would want for their own children or family. Demand pressure and the reality that resources are finite means that sufficiency is a policy imperative.</p> <p>This briefing and attached appendices purpose is to inform the Committee of the agreed sufficiency strategy priorities between 2024 – 2028 and the progress achieved to date, alongside the immediate areas of focus during 2025 in order to mitigate any sufficiency risks.</p> <p>Progress against the six priority areas will be reported into the Children's Service's Quality, Performance and Improvement Board as per the Governance process.</p>	
7. Children's Services Capital Strategy 2025/26-2027/28	93 - 104
<p>This report set out the Education and Skills Capital Programme for the period 2025/26 - 2027/28. The report summarises available capital funding totalling £22.6 million and provides an indicative programme of investment of £21.4 million set against key budget headings aligned to improvement priorities across the service. The planned expenditure of available capital is set out in this report and shows a balanced budget.</p>	
Items for Information	
8. School Admission Arrangements 2026/27	105 - 132
<p>BCP Council administers admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools. There is a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation.</p> <p>There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year from those which were publicly consulted upon and determined by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p>The local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2026/27 academic year.</p>	
9. IRO Annual Report 2023-2024	133 - 168

The IRO annual report sets out information in respect of BCPs Children in Care and the performance of the IRO Service. The summary gives a short overview of service progression and areas for development going forward.

10. Portfolio Holder Update

To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

11. Health Representation on the Children Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

For the Chair to discuss with the Committee her proposal to include a representative of NHS Dorset at its next meeting.

Verbal
Report

12. Work Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

169 - 202

13. Exclusion of Press and Public

In relation to the items of business appearing below, the Committee is asked to consider the following resolution: -

‘That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.’

14. Children's Social Care Improvement Journey Update

Verbal
Report

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

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BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 November 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Carr-Brown – Chair

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr O Brown, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr E Harman, Cllr B Hitchcock,
Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin, Cllr O Walters and Cllr T Slade

Co-Opted Members: R Cornish, P Martin, R Simpkins and S Welch

28. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bobbie Dove, Cllr Phillip Broadhead, Mark Saxby and Elliot Prentice.

29. Substitute Members

Cllr Toby Slade substituted for Cllr Bobbie Dove.

30. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Simon Bull declared an interest in relation to agenda item 7 as a family member was in receipt of an EHCP.

31. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024, were confirmed as an accurate record.

32. Action Sheet

The Chair advised the Committee that a review of the actions on the action sheet would take place, with an update to be provided at the next meeting on 28 January 2025.

33. Public Issues

The following questions were heard by the Committee with responses provided at the meeting by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

The following questions were received from Mr Sofianos:

Q1

The SEND scorecard reveals a significant change in the SEND workforce between May and September this year.

Agency workers rose from 16% to almost 27% of the team.

Permanent case officers in post fell from 56% to 38%.

And the proportion of EHCPs having a change of case officer in September soared to 30%.

This comes as PCT member parents have been advised directly by Parent-Carers Together (but not by the Council itself) that case officer teams have been restructured.

What are the causes of these changes, and how will the Council reassure parents – and inform them all – moving forward?

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

Thank you, Adam, for your question

These figures are due to the SEND restructure staff changes which is now being implemented and is part of our wider improvement work.

This is a significant planned change to the system involving the reallocation of over 4000 children and case allocation structures/teams.

Many of these changes are a direct response to requests by our Parent Carers Together (PCT) and Parent Carers Foundation (PCF) Forums for new posts in the system e.g.

- Co-production Officer,
- Education Inclusion Officer (to support families and a setting when a no to assess is given),

This is to ensure more caseworkers so that the service can support children and families' needs better. This evidences that we are committed to co-production and working together better.

Throughout the summer we have shared these plans with PCT, Schools and wider settings and to ensure that families are aware of these changes. Unfortunately, as explained to the two Parent Carers Forums we have current systems limits which means that we cannot do this automatically for our parents.

To this end we have reached out in partnership with PCT and PCF to help disseminate this change and ask for parents to access the Local Offer site to find who their new Case Officer is.

We recognise that our system needs to improve, and this will be addressed in future systems development work.

Q2

AP settings have a mixed record.

A recent national survey found that in 2022/23, AP pupils missed a staggering 42% of sessions overall. 38% of pupils missed 50% or more sessions.

AP pupils travelled almost 3 times as far to school as mainstream peers – almost 9km on average. 25% of these live more than 10km from the setting.

And although by law, 100% of excluded pupils should be placed with an AP within 6 schooldays, the national success rate remains for lower.

What is the current overall rate for APs within BCP, for:

- i) sessions missed,
- ii) pupil distance travelled,
- iii) pupils allocated places within 6 schooldays of exclusion?

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

In relation to elements i and ii I am not able to provide a response in the short space of time before the O&S Committee takes place.

The MIT Team is working on this data area for me, and we would look to provide a further update for the next O&S Committee once this information is clearer. **ACTION**

In relation to element iii., in June of 2024 it was reported that 1.3% of children (1 out of 77) who had experienced a Permanent exclusion were allocated within 6 days.

From March 24 a task and finish group was in place to understand the systemic issues causing this poor performance, lead through our improvement work in Education.

This position identified that this was due to delays in the commissioning process in arranging placements and not having an online tuition element able to provide appropriate education while an in-person placement was arranged, as is practice in many other Local Authorities.

Urgent remedial action was put into place from this point to address the delays and lack of online tuition.

Positively, as a result for the academic year of 2024-25 currently 68% of pupils who have experienced a Permanent exclusion have been allocated within 6 days of the exclusion. This is 15 out of 22 children and represents a significant improvement from 1.3%.

For the 7 children who have not been allocated within 6 days this has been due to them either being too young to access the online provision or not being able to access the online provision.

While this figure represents a significant improvement from previous performance, BCP will continue to work to improve this system to ensure that all children are able to receive provision within the 6 day time limit.

This will include further improving commissioning processes and ensuring sufficiency of provision available to be able to allocate places to children in a timely manner.

Q3

The child testimonies in this paper are heartbreaking. Many speak of their struggles in hostile or unsupportive environments, particularly for SEND children – such as one child placed in isolation for wearing the wrong socks.

This follows recent media stories featuring local schools: a girl suspended for leaving a lesson to use the toilet during a heavy period flow, a boy isolated for a week for having a short haircut.

Across BCP, in 2022/23, 53% of all permanent exclusions were given by just 6 schools. Suspension rates are similarly skewed. Some schools appear to use isolation as a tool; others don't.

High-control settings are a barrier to inclusion. What is Council doing to challenge the way some schools design and apply their internal rules? And how will it interrogate and address the rise in suspensions and exclusions across BCP?

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

BCP Council has inclusion and belonging as one of its highest priorities.

BCP already challenges schools on non-inclusive practice, including working pro-actively with them to avoid exclusions wherever possible. In addition, a new co-produced Belonging Strategy will be launched as part of a suite of strategies before Christmas that emphasises the importance of children and young people having that sense of belonging in their school setting and the impact that has on their outcomes.

Moving forwards, a new Information Sharing Agreement is currently being signed up to by all schools to enable transparent and open sharing of school level data in relation to exclusions, suspensions, attendance and the like to enable constructive but challenging conversations to happen between BCP and all schools in relation to their performance in this area.

This transparency and ability to openly interrogate data with all schools in the room together will enable BCP to lead the challenge and discussion,

and also enable peer challenge between schools, with their data open for them to all see and challenge – a position we have not previously had in BCP.

Alongside this, the final proposals for the use of the £2.8 million Inclusion Innovation fund will be discussed at Schools Forum in January 2025.

Once approved this will create increased capacity for BCP to support and challenge mainstream schools with their systemic practices and approaches to inclusion.

Inclusion Consultants (ICONS) will be assigned to schools and will provide support, guidance and challenge to their schools in relation to their SEND systems in school and how they provide support to their pupils.

This fund will also provide further training to schools and increase the specialist offer of Outreach Support and BOOST training from our special schools, to provide further expert support and guidance to our mainstream settings on how to support their pupils.

Finally it will also offer schools the opportunity to bid for Innovation funding to enable them to put further support in place in their own setting for their cohorts of children with SEND. Schools will be invited to bid for this funding once the fund has been signed off by Schools Forum.

The following questions were received from Ms Stockwell:

Could the work plan please include the following-

Ensuring suitable emergency accommodation is available when police make place of safety orders for people under 18 soliciting for sex in a public place, who cannot be returned home because this would place them in danger and cannot be charged with soliciting because of their age.

Ensuring the work of the LADO includes investigating licensed sex establishments which pose a risk of harm to children. The Sex Establishment licensing regime does not include a safety of children requirement. Although entry to premises is forbidden to children, marketing through websites and window displays will reach children and case law also says that they will risk attracting people of dubious morals into an area so putting children at risk.

34. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Committee was provided with a verbal update on the work of the Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) including an update regarding their campaigns.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- The Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People praised the work done by the Members of Youth Parliament at the Knife Crime event and urged them to reach out to them if they needed any assistance with their campaigns.
- The Committee encouraged the MYPs to engage with youth workers and informed them of secondary school youth surgeries run by members that could assist them with their work regarding mental health for young people in schools.
- The Members of Youth Parliament raised a question regarding the £200,000 funding designated to address homelessness in BCP, specifically regarding how much of that amount would be allocated to combat youth homelessness. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People agreed to look into this issue and provide feedback to the Committee. **ACTION**

35. SEND Improvement Update

The Department for Education (DfE) advisor for the BCP Council gave the Committee a verbal update regarding the Children's Social Care Improvement journey.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- In response to a question regarding the root cause of the failure and the subsequent improvement journey, the Committee was informed that the focus of Children's Services Social Care had been lost due to several factors related to the restructuring of BCP Council. The Committee was also advised that the senior leadership team now in place would significantly influence the improvement and success of Children's Services.
- The Committee was informed that, as part of the improvement journey, BCP Council needed to address the funding challenges related to SEND that were linked to the high needs funding issue. The DfE advisor commended the work done in the allocation and investment of resources within the service on a systemic level. They explained that efficient management of these resources would have benefited the service and positively impacted the improvement journey for Children's Social Care.
- In response to a query raised regarding other local authorities that have a successful Children's Social care service and whether those authorities tend to outsource their requirement or own the services they provide the Committee was advised that in some instances the skill of commissioning is dependent on expertise in delivery and the further Local Authorities come from direct delivery the less skilful they become in skilful commissioning. Although there was no direct analysis on performance on this issue the balance in BCP Council was strong.

The Department for Education (DfE) advisor for the BCP Council gave the Committee a verbal update regarding the SEND Improvement journey.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- The Chair highlighted the potential benefits of adding a health representative to the Committee and agreed to explore that possibility. **ACTION**
- In response to a query raised regarding the confidence of parents and carers, and what the service could do to reassure them in the future, the Committee was advised that there was a challenge. However, they believed that implementing a system that instilled more confidence would help reassure parents. This included improving response times and ensuring that the local authority, the school, and the health service communicated effectively and with one voice.
- In response to a query raised regarding the government's planned funding for SEND the Committee was advised that while nothing had been confirmed at that time, it was assumed that the funding would be allocated through the direct schools grant to support the high needs block.

The Interim Director for Education and Skills presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The paper provided an update on the progress to date and work being carried out across the BCP place with regards to the improvements required in the Local Area SEND system. It provided an update of work across the partnership with regards to the SEND Improvement Plan and associated Performance Scorecard.

The Performance Scorecard would both identify and evidence the performance areas and improvement metrics that can demonstrate that the partnership was making sustainable improvements.

The report also outlined the current funding position for SEND services, for the Council.

The Committee discussed the report and presentation, including:

- In response to a query about the increase in requests from parents and carers, the Committee was informed that these requests often fluctuated throughout the year. They typically rose in August and September due to students transitioning while schools were closed. In October, the requests were at approximately 45%. This situation was being monitored, and the service hoped that the number of requests would decrease once children and young people returned to their school settings.
- In response to a query about the rate of EHCPs being granted when requests were submitted by schools versus those submitted by parents or carers, the Committee was informed that the service would investigate this matter and provide an update at their next update to the Committee. **ACTION**

- In response to a query regarding the recent events in the locality and how the service ensures that all individuals who could benefit from the events were informed about them the Committee was advised that Children's Services collaborated with the parent/carer forum, Parent and Carers Together and through the school system to make sure everyone was aware of the events. Additionally, they organised online events for those who were unable to attend in person.
- The Committee was advised that the service had been developing an information-sharing agreement with schools. This agreement would provide Children's Services with more information on referrals and behavioural patterns. By doing so, the service would be able to identify trends in referrals and parent/carer engagement across different localities.
- In response to a query about students with EHCPs not receiving adequate support in sixth form provisions, the Committee was advised that a sufficiency strategy was being developed to aid post-16 provision and identify improvements that had to be made.
- The Committee was advised that a restructuring was implemented to help the service better address the backlogs in EHCP annual reviews. The new structure, which included assistant positions, provided additional support and addressed issues identified in the processing system.

36. Linwood Special School SEND Post 16 Provision at Ted Webster

The Head of School Place Planning, Admissions and Capital presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

In accordance with the council's improvement agenda and priority action to reduce high needs expenditure, this project increased the availability of local SEND places and achieved cost avoidance in the high needs budget.

The council experienced a significant increase in the number of children requiring an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) over the last 3 years. Sustained growth resulted in a greater use of independent specialist school places and a shortage of specialist provision locally. This increased unit costs of provision and intensified budget pressures in the dedicated schools grant high needs funding block. As part of the council's response to growth and improvement in the system, the council developed a draft Sufficiency Strategy. The Sufficiency Strategy was a key part of the council's work to deliver a sustainable system, working collaboratively with partners to ensure that the needs of children and young people were met without escalating costs, and supporting delivery of the DSG Recovery Plan. A key area of focus for the strategy was to develop and expand the Post 16 offer locally. In delivering the priorities identified in the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, additional Post 16 specialist provision was planned and commissioned in collaboration with Linwood Special School.

The report contained a proposal to expand Linwood Special School on a satellite site hosted at the former Ted Webster Children's Centre. The

project provided a total of 60 specialist post-16 places with a focus on supporting young people in transitioning into an independent, healthy adulthood. Capital investment was required to refurbish and remodel the existing buildings to deliver a high-quality, accessible teaching and learning space. The new facility was scheduled to open in September 2025. By increasing the availability of local specialist Post 16 places, the council estimated a cost avoidance in the region of £38K - £50K per place, per annum.

The Committee praised the efforts made in this area and acknowledged the significant investment in young people. They expressed enthusiasm for this work and its potential benefits for the students.

It was RESOLVED that

- (a) Cabinet approves the scheme to develop a satellite of Linwood School hosted at the former Ted Webster Children's Centre providing a total of 60 Post 16 places including the associated capital investment necessary to develop the scheme as contained in Appendix 1 (Exempt). The scheme is fully funded from the council's grant allocation of High Needs Provision Capital and will progress in line with the project programme set out at paragraph 12.**

37. Alternative Provision Update

The Interim Head of School Inclusion presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report was received as evidence of the work currently being undertaken across the wider partnership within BCP to secure improvement and transformation across Alternative Provision to support mainstream inclusion and contribute towards a sustainable SEND system and positively impact the trajectory of high needs expenditure.

The report provided an overview of the work undertaken by the School Inclusion Service/local area partnership aligned to progress of implementing our Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.

In the last 6 months, an Alternative Provision Improvement Plan and Oversight Board have been established to drive and monitor improvements in the Alternative Provision area. This update provides a narrative on the initial progress and priority areas of work, as well as the lived experience of children and young people going through the system from a permanent exclusion perspective.

The Committee discussed the report and presentation, including:

- In response to a query about how children and young people were ensured access to the necessary alternative provision, the Committee was informed that the service was aware of the existing

issues with the system. Efforts were underway to improve access, although it had been noted that not all children currently had access to the online services. The inclusion team was actively working to address this problem wherever possible. While the number of children receiving the provision within six days had increased, it was still not at 100%.

- The Committee was advised that the service intended to decrease the number of children needing alternative provision through inclusive practices that had been implemented in mainstream settings.
- In response to a query raised regarding how to motivate schools to keep the most vulnerable young people in the educational setting, the Committee was informed that reframing the OFSTED scorecard could have a national impact. An increased emphasis on inclusion within this framework would serve as a valuable tool for local authorities when assessing efforts related to inclusion. Furthermore, the ongoing peer challenge initiative would enable schools to engage with one another, allowing them to share insights and strategies for achieving their inclusion goals.
- In response to a query regarding the mental health of children and young people and the work being done in this area within the alternative provision the Committee was advised that the service had collaborated with their Integrated Care System colleagues to assess the range of needs throughout the system. While mental health issues were a national concern, it was essential to address them locally.
- The Committee was advised that throughout the improvement journey in Children's Services, there had always been an opportunity to explore different approaches and find ways to make a meaningful impact. However, this would need to be supported by ensuring that the foundations were strong enough to foster innovation.

It was RESOLVED that The report is received as evidence of the work currently being undertaken across the wider partnership within BCP to secure improvement and transformation across Alternative Provision to support mainstream inclusion and contribute towards a sustainable SEND system and positively impact the trajectory of high needs expenditure

38. School Attainment and Progress 2023/24 and Co-production of pathways

The Committee was advised that this was an information only item and that a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

39. High Needs Schools Grant Expenditure Forecast

The Committee was advised that this was an information only item and that a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

40. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People provided a verbal update which included:

- An update on the outstanding Cabinet recommendation from previous meetings related to knife crime and drug/alcohol use in schools. The Education Improvement Service collaborated with police and community groups to gather data on school programs addressing these issues, but challenges remained in obtaining detailed information.
- OFSTED had recommended that schools incorporate local safeguarding issues, such as knife crime, into their curriculum. There are current resources available for Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education, with additional materials being sourced from providers attending conferences. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People highlighted that he also found free resources online through organisations like the DfE.
- Advised that he is now the Chair of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education.
- In response to the Cabinet recommendations around earlier age-appropriate education. There was a need to assess existing educational initiatives related to this at both primary and secondary levels regarding knife crime awareness.
- Advised of upcoming events including webinars and community events focused on knife crime and related issues.
- Confirmed the appointment of the new Director of Education and Skills, providing an update on her background in education that had prepared her for this role.
- The upcoming OFSTED inspection of local authority Children's Services was viewed positively and seen as an important opportunity for improvement within the service.

41. Work Plan

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee was asked to consider and approve the updated Work Plan following the results of the top priority survey.

As part of this item, the Committee was asked to consider recommendations from the O&S Board meeting on 18 November. The recommendations were made during the consideration of the conclusions from the Overview and Scrutiny Budget working groups and are provided at Appendix 'F'.

It was RESOLVED that the Committee considered, updated and confirmed its Work Plan and was asked to:

- **Agree to hold informal briefing sessions as discussed at the work planning session; and**
- **Agree membership for the working group regarding Family Hubs across BCP**

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

CHAIR

ACTION SHEET – BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE CHILDREN’S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Updated – 30 July 2024

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Outcome (where recommendations are made to other bodies)
21 November 2023				
	Young Peoples Mental Health Services – Your Mind, Your Say	Decision Made: A Committee member highlighted, that it would be beneficial to be updated regarding the updated business model. It was confirmed that an update would be circulated by email outside of the meeting including the updated business model. Action – Officers aware and update requested		
	Building Stronger Foundations Business Case - Children’s Services Transformation	Decision Made: The Chair advised the Committee that this item would be considered again in March where there would be more information to scrutinise. Action – add to Forward Plan		This is on the CS Updated Workplan but was not chosen as a priority by Committee members.
23 January 2024				
	Speech and Language Therapy Service	Decision Made: The Chair requested contact details for the managers to be passed to Democratic Services to be passed to any parents with issues.		

		Action – Officers aware – DS chasing response.		
	School Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions	<p>Decision Made: The Committee notes the work that is being done in this arena and is encouraged by the co-production between headteachers and the council in developing pathways and action plans and requests an update on the progress in this area come back to the Committee in September.</p> <p>Action – add to Forward Plan for September Committee.</p>		
19 March 2024				
	Children’s Services Early Help System	<p>Decision Made: A Task and Finish group was proposed concerning the Early Help Service. It was agreed that the scope be considered outside of the meeting and would report back to the Committee at a later date.</p> <p>Actioned –scrutiny request on Forward Plan item for 24 July 24.</p> <p>Decision Made: For Officers to invite Committee Members to visit the 333 Hub.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware and update requested</p>		Family hubs working group work has started
	Statutory direction in relation to special educational needs and disability services (SEND) issued 26 February 2024	<p>Decision Made: An item for the forward plan was proposed concerning the improvement of communication with the families in BCP and parent/carer forums. It was agreed the scope would be considered outside of the meeting</p>		Scrutiny request for working group added to the Work Plan – Working group will be organised once

		and would come back to the Committee at a later date. Action – Sctutiny request received and added to the work plan 26 Nov 24.		Family hubs working group has finished
24 July 2024				
	SEND Progress Update re SEND Improvement Plan and Safety Valve	Decision Made: The Committee was advised that more work can be shared with the Committee in a future meeting relating to young carers, inclusivity and the Early Help offer. Actioned – Officers aware and update requested		
19 September 2024				
	Children's Services Budget Update	Decision Made: The Committee was advised that officers would provide a breakdown of agency staff and their positions within the service to the Committee. Action – Officers aware The Committee requested an opportunity to discuss the High Needs Block forecast report that was due to go to Cabinet on 2 October at the November meeting of the Committee. Actioned – Added to agenda of November 2024 meeting		High Needs Block Forecast report came 26 Nov 24 meeting This is on the CS Updated Workplan but was not chosen as a priority by Committee members.

	Work Plan	<p>Decision Made: The Chair advised the Committee regarding proposed items for the November meeting and highlighted the necessity for a reactive scrutiny item, suggesting the High Needs Block Forecast report discussed earlier.</p> <p>Actioned – Added to agenda of November 2024 meeting</p>		<p>High Needs Block Forecast report came 26 Nov 24 meeting</p> <p>This is on the CS Updated Workplan but was not chosen as a priority by Committee members.</p>
26 November 2024				
	Public Issues	<p>Decision Made: What is the current overall rate for APs within BCP, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) sessions missed, ii) pupil distance travelled <p>The MIT Team is working on this data area for me, and we would look to provide a further update for the next O&S Committee once this information is clearer.</p> <p>Action – PH aware</p>		
	Members of Youth Parliament update	<p>Decision Made: The Members of Youth Parliament raised a question regarding the £200,000 funding designated to address homelessness in BCP, specifically regarding how much of that amount would be allocated to combat youth homelessness. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People agreed to look into this issue and provide feedback to the Committee.</p> <p>Action – PH aware</p>		

	SEND Improvement update	<p>Decision Made: The Chair highlighted the potential benefits of adding a health representative to the Committee and agreed to explore that possibility.</p> <p>Actioned – Health rep to come to next meeting Jan 2025</p> <p>Decision Made: The officers are to come back with data regarding the rate of EHCP requests that are granted when the original request is submitted by a parent compared to when submitted by the school.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware and update requested</p>		Health representative to be discussed at January meeting
	Work plan – CS Budget Working Group	<p>Decision Made: That the O&S Board recommends that Children's Services Officers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase awareness of school transport options through engagement and co-production with parents and carers, in order to reduce the impact on the school transport budget wherever possible. <p>Action – recommendation sent to officers and update requested</p>		

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Report
Meeting date	28 January 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028 sets out how Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) will meet its sufficiency duty as laid out in section 22G of the Children Act 1989.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out how BCP will provide sufficient, safe, secure, and sustainable homes for Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People between 2024 - 2028. The required standard as a corporate parent is to ensure that the accommodation provision is at the level that professionals would want for their own children or family. Demand pressure and the reality that resources are finite means that sufficiency is a policy imperative.</p> <p>This briefing and attached appendices purpose is to inform the Committee of the agreed sufficiency strategy priorities between 2024 – 2028 and the progress achieved to date, alongside the immediate areas of focus during 2025 in order to mitigate any sufficiency risks.</p> <p>Progress against the six priority areas will be reported into the Children's Service's Quality, Performance and Improvement Board as per the Governance process.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Committee acknowledges and understands the Children's Services statutory responsibility to produce a Sufficiency Strategy in relation of the accommodation needs of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People.
Reason for recommendations	For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be aware of The Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council Sufficiency

	Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 – 2028 and associated action plan taking note of the progress against the agreed priorities.
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Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley - Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	Sarah Langdale – Head of Children's Commissioning
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

1. Background

The Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028, fulfils BCP Council's Sufficiency Duty in respect of Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in Care within their local area. Each Local authority has a duty, under section 10 of the Children Act ('the 2004 Act') to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. This Duty was further outlined in statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2010 which made explicit the requirement for local authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that plans to meet this duty were included in relevant commissioning strategies.

There are a range of legal duties associated with an overall 'Sufficiency Duty' on local authorities as part of the Children Act, 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care within the local authority area.

The strategy seeks to address the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of appropriate accommodation provision, which will support the best possible outcomes for our children and young people by ensuring there is a range of accommodation provision that supports cultural diversity and meets the individual needs of each child or young person, as well as seeking value for money within the available resources.

The views, desires, and aspirations of our children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be sought through Unite and Insight, to ensure they have been listened to, heard, understood and that the sufficiency of accommodation meets their needs.

2. Consideration of National and Local Strategies

- 2.1 Stable Homes Built on Love - following an Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the government published a new strategy 'Stable Homes Built on Love' (February 2023) which outlined six pillars to transform Children's Social Care.
- 2.2 Corporate Parenting Strategy Brighter Future for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 -2026.
- 2.3 Early Help Partnership Approach and Strategy 2024 – 2026
- 2.4 Children's Services Self-Assessment April 2024 / Childrens Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan and SEND Improvement plan.
- 2.5 Children and Young People plan 2021 – 2024, a new five-year Children and Young People's Partnership Plan will be launched in 2025 and is an important statement of BCP's commitment to children and young people. It will provide clarity in respect of new priorities and how they will be delivered and achieved.

3. Key Sufficiency Pressures

- 3.1 Through the robust analysis of Children's Services data (summarised within the Sufficiency Strategy (Appendix 1) the following key sufficiency pressures have been identified.

Children In Care	Care Experienced Young People	Children's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing number of children in Care, rate higher than national average Higher proportion of children placed in residential settings Too many children placed out of area because of insufficient suitable placements within the BCP area Limited choice of local or national placements for children with complex needs Understanding the quality of provision through robust monitoring and contract management practice Too many other local authorities placing young people in supported accommodation which impacts future housing sufficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint planning between Children's Services and Housing preparing young people for independence Lack of affordable move on accommodation due to economic position of BCP Council; for example, rental market is competitive with student accommodation and lack of social housing Suitable accommodation for young people being released from custody Young people's ability to live independently and maintain tenancies e.g. financial pressures No high support accommodation post 18 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial pressure due to the rising costs of placements Insufficient Short Break provision to meet need Lack of consistent engagement with providers which impacts on market sufficiency within the BCP area Placement of UASC by the Home Office

4. Agreed Priorities 2024 - 2028

- 4.1 As a result, the following 6 key priorities have been agreed to ensure BCP council has sufficiency of local accommodation provision.

Priority 1 - Ensure there is sufficient local family-based care available in the BCP area, so more children can live within a family home.

Priority 2 - When children need to live in a residential home, ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot, or chose not to, live in a family setting.

- Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision and further develop a sufficiency model which offers a range of provision models (high to low support) so children and young people have a choice to move through a pathway of services, offering a range of homes across the BCP area which shall prepare them for independence.
- Priority 4 - Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children's Social Care and Commissioning, focusing on the Joint Housing priorities for Care Experienced young people.
- Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement in order to further develop services to meet the needs of BCP council's children and young people.
- Priority 6 - Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks to ensure compliance and support strategic decision making in the future.

5. Measuring Success

- 5.1 Whilst there are high level success measures detailed in the Sufficiency Strategy; more detailed measures will be monitored via a Commissioning scorecard and robust governance arrangements.
- 5.2 The Commissioning Service have an action plan developed which is updated monthly to evidence progress against the agreed Priorities. The action plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it responds to emerging needs, trends, and legislation.
- 5.3 Progress to date

Priority 1 - Local family-based care available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-House Fostering Service 'Recruitment and Retention Strategy drafted. • Collaboration with regional arrangement – South West Foster Carer Recruitment Hub • Ofsted registration of in-house supported lodgings scheme underway • Dedicated Senior Commissioning Officer attending all Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Framework partnership quarterly meetings – annual data informing sufficiency planning

<p>Priority 2 - Sufficient locally based residential provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Episode Gateway data dashboard developed which provides a better understanding of sufficiency challenges • All residential providers located within BCP have been mapped, number of beds, voids and BCP usage is collated on a quarterly basis to inform sufficiency planning • 1 existing provider has opened a new home within BCP specifically for Children in Care who have a learning disability, increase of 2 beds. • Ofsted ratings of all commissioned provision is known and monitored. • Short Breaks Position Statement produced and signed off by Children's Services Senior Leadership Team – July 2024, all commissioned services are known and mapped.
<p>Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All providers located within BCP have been mapped, number of beds, voids and BCP usage is now collated on a quarterly basis to inform sufficiency planning. • 1 new provider and 2 existing providers have opened new homes within BCP within the last 18mths, increasing sufficiency by 17 beds. • Collaboration with an existing external provider has resulted in a new 6 bed unit within BCP being commissioned for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people.
<p>Priority 4 - Re-establish positive internal partnership and collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) accommodation tender supported by Children's Commissioning (19 units in total, 12 shall be supported). 2024/2025 - Q3 Care Experienced Young People accommodated 13 units (81%) • Diagnostic review of all commissioned accommodation provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people has been completed. • Named link worker for Care Experienced Young People in Housing. • Care Experienced Young People identified as target cohort for Homewards Project in BCP. • All housing commissioned supported accommodation provision has been mapped, number of beds, voids and Care Experienced Young People placed is now captured at the end of each quarter • Joint 16/17 Homelessness / Housing Assessment training delivered across Children's Services and Housing. • Reduction in use of B&B, assisted by robust joint working with housing and fostering.

Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person visits to commissioned Provider homes has commenced, 5 providers across 12 homes have been visited to date. • 3 x providers are planning to open registered children's homes within BCP during Spring 2025, supported by Children's Commissioning, based on sufficiency need. • Provider Forums planned to commence January 2025. • Attendance at Independent Fostering Agency and Residential Framework provider event (October 2024). • Initial scoping for a Supported Accommodation framework has commenced, contractual documentation has been reviewed, links with other Local Authorities has been established and documentation has been shared. • Visits to local providers for Quality Assurance compliance assurance have commenced. • Monitoring of Ofsted Improvement Plans for requires improvement and inadequate rated providers is now embedded, supported by commissioning.

Priority 6 - Embed Governance / Quality Assurance Frameworks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Framework produced, final draft to be signed off by agreed governance January 2025. • The ofsted ratings of all BCP providers are known and logged. Those with a rating of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' have been contacted and improvement plans obtained. • Contracts pipeline data collation has commenced, enabling central procurement services to upload onto the corporate register. • Established links in place via monthly meetings with Corporate Procurement colleagues continues. • Review of existing contractual arrangements with spot purchase care and education providers has commenced with a view to embedded corporate terms and conditions. • Consideration of new procurement regulations, due to be implemented in early 2025. Initial training has been provided to the team by the corporate team. • New internal Service Level Agreement template has been produced and is now embedded practice.

6. Assessment of Risk Areas 2025/2026

- 6.1 The **overarching Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 – 2028** Action Plan details the priorities and the workstreams allocated. The areas documented below require immediate focus to minimise sufficiency risk.

Priority 1 - Local family-based care available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of the 63 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) beds located within BCP currently being commissioned by other Local Authorities, re-building partnerships, notification of new carer registration or existing carer vacancies to aid matching. • Embed the In-House Fostering Recruitment Strategy priorities. • In-House Fostering recruitment strategy to include Ofsted registered supported lodgings carers specifically for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. • In-House Supported Lodgings Recruitment strategy aims to increase the number of carers within BCP

Priority 2 - Sufficient locally based residential provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued partnership working with external registered providers (White Trees Group, Wild Orchard, Libre Living) to ensure the proposed development of registered children's homes within BCP continues, proposed to open Spring 2025 and beds are secured for BCP children. • Ongoing planning with the provider Developing Lives Services in respect of building of registered provision for children with complex needs, based on the Trevone House model, planning has been submitted – Summer 2027. • Accurate reporting and utilisation of voids and planning to effectively use the provision located within BCP.

Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate reporting and utilisation of voids and planning to effectively use the provision located within BCP. • Additional provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children required within BCP to ensure cohort requirements under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) are achieved. • Partnership working with local registered providers (International Care Network (ICN) / Valiant Homes) to open two new supported accommodation homes by the Spring of 2025.

Priority 4 - Re-establish positive internal partnership and collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the recommendations of the accommodation review completed by Commissioning, Housing and CSC in respect of current commissioned services, alongside ongoing accommodation needs analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Work with internal Housing partners to consider the impact post 18 accommodation sufficiency with other Local Authority children eligible under local connection. ➢ Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People accommodation needs to be effectively mapped into an accommodation pathway. ➢ Complete review the CEYP who are continuing to live in CSC funded provision post 18yrs, understand the cohort needs. ➢ Better understand why a low % of CEYP are accessing housing supported accommodation

- Support the delivery of the Council's Housing strategy – with a focus on CEYP accommodation needs.

Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers

- Raising the profile of BCP within the South-Central IFA Framework partnership arrangements.
- Work with the South-Central Residential Framework to increase access to local and national sufficiency of provision.
- Provider Forum's to be established with local providers during Q4 of 2024/2025, sharing of sufficiency data to inform market development.
- Developing the local market to meet the needs of sibling groups and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) identified as cohorts being placed out of area.

Priority 6 - Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks

- Ensure approval of the draft quality assurance framework through governance arrangements.
- Continue to update the existing contracts pipeline for children's services, thus informing the strategic commissioning plan and assurance in respect of procurement compliance
- Work in partnership with providers to regularly monitor all provision rated 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate,' ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children to allow them to remain in their home.

7. Consultation / Participation

- 7.1 All members of the Children Services Extended Leadership Team have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy, and to comment on it prior to it being formally signed off.
- 7.2 Comments and suggestions received during the consultation period were considered and either reflected in the final version of the strategy or embedded within the 'action plan.'
- 7.3 Each strategic lead – for the Strategy - will have their own mechanisms to enable participation and to gather views and feedback, finding out what children and young people views are in respect of the accommodation, care and support available. These views will inform the monitoring and commissioning of providers and the provision they offer and develop.

8. Summary of financial implications

- 8.1 The reduction in Local Authority funding means that even greater focus needs to be given to delivering value for money in the commissioning of accommodation provision for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People. The challenge for BCP Council, as with all other Local Authorities, is to continue to improve and sustain high quality accommodation provision and services whilst also delivering efficiencies.

- 8.2 The Competitions and Markets Authority completed a market study into children's social care in England, Scotland, and Wales in March 2021, this was in response to 2 major concerns that had been raised about how the commissioned care and support accommodation provision market is operating.
- That Local Authorities were too often unable to access appropriate placements to meet the needs of children in their care.
 - That the prices paid by Local Authorities were high and this, combined with growing numbers of Children in Care, was placing significant strain on Local Authority budgets, limiting their scope to fund other important activities in children's services and beyond.
- 8.3 A number of recommendations were made which included:
- Setting out what minimum level of activity must be carried out collectively. This should include an appropriate degree of activity in each of the key areas of forecasting, market shaping and procurement.
 - Ensuring that there is a set of bodies to carry out this collective market shaping and procurement activities, with each Local Authority required to participate in one of them. We expect sub-national bodies to be appropriate for England.
 - Providing an oversight structure to ensure that each body is carrying out its functions to the appropriate level. This should involve an assessment of the extent to which sufficiency of placements is being achieved within each area.
- 8.4 Janet Daby, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Children and Families) states the Children's Wellbeing Bill will 'return the sector to providing high-quality outcomes at sustainable cost to the taxpayer', as Ofsted seeks new powers to regulate children's care providers. A number of measures are set to be announce, designed to reduce the financial burden on Local Authorities. Companies providing children's care placements will be required to share their finances with the Local Authorities. The proposals would put a limit on the profit providers can make "if providers do not voluntarily put an end to profiteering."
- 8.5 Children's Commissioning have a duty to consider the recommendations made by the Competitions and Markets Authority and strive to achieve best value. Through regional collaboration market intelligence is being collated which shall inform sufficiency planning and market shaping based on an analysis of the assessed needs of children entering Local Authority care. Furthermore, the monitoring of Provider fees, the implementation of improved provider financial accountability and transparency is a key focus and an expansion of corporate parenting responsibilities.

9. Summary of legal implications

- 9.1 Although the sufficiency duty lies with each Local Authority, the duty can be implemented most effectively through a partnership between the authority and its partner agencies. Each local authority has a duty, under section 10 of the Children Act ('the 2004 Act') to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area.
- 9.2 The guidance is therefore issued under two provisions:

- section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which requires local authorities, in the exercise of their social services functions, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State; and
- Section 10 (8) of the 2004 Act, which requires all local authorities in England and each of their relevant partners to have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State when exercising their functions in relation to their duty to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children in the local area.

10. Summary of human resources implications

Not applicable

11. Summary of equality implications

- 11.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) report, action plan and screening tool has been produced and has been considered by the Equality Impact Assessment panel, discussions continue. Now that a final draft of the Sufficiency Strategy has been produced it shall be shared with the EIA Panel for further discussion with a view of obtaining sign off by the 31st March 2025.
- 11.2 Most children in care and care experienced young people have experienced inequalities during their upbringing, coupled with adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). Many will be experiencing continuing inequalities, either as a result of disability, exploitation or extra health and educational needs, for example. The Strategy will need to make progress on reducing all inequalities as far as can be done within this specific remit. For example, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) children should be offered placements that are culturally competent and sensitive. Girls who have suffered abuse or been exploited should be offered accommodation provision with appropriately trained staff who can meet specific identified needs.
- 11.3 The Sufficiency Strategy Strategic Leads will ensure that data is analysed and continues to inform all areas of accommodation provision and support services which are commissioned, and which may affect children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, mental health, stability, and choice.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Children in Care (CiC) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028

Appendix 2 - Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028 Action Plan

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BCP Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care & Care Experienced Young People

2024/2028

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1. Introduction

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 – 2028 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation. It also sets out how the strategic priorities will be realised and the actions that will be taken to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children and young people are achieved. Whilst 'placements' are referred to it is recognised that for our children and young people this is where they live, this is about their home while they are in our care and ensuring it is right for each and every one of our children and young people, as they are a priority for us.

Sufficiency of provision will ensure that children and young people can access the right placements, which will support them to achieve positive outcomes and prepare them for adulthood.

BCP Children's Services is committed to providing the right service at the right time for children, young people and their families, recognising that at times additional support may be required to help them stay together. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs the local authority does. If it is not safe for children to stay at home then services will intervene and strive to ensure they are given the care, support, and stability that they deserve.

This strategy is informed by what our children and young people tell us individually and collectively through Unite and Ignite, our Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People forums, our promises as corporate parents, our statutory duties and what is known from our data including the analysis of our Children in Care population.

Children and young people have told us they want to feel safe in their placements and able to talk to their carers. They have worked with us on developing their vision and identified their priorities.

Children and young people's vision:

BCP is a great place to live, where all children and young people have the best possible opportunities in life and are supported by the community to flourish and grow in order to succeed.

Children and Young Person's priorities are:

- *Safe and protected*
- *Resilient*
- *Offered opportunities*
- *Happy and healthy*
- *Supported to achieve*
- *Heard and recognised.*

With these priorities identified, our ambition is to ensure that wherever possible children and young people are able to remain safely within their own families. As such, all the partnerships serving BCP children and young people are working together to provide a range of coherent preventative and early help services to address issues quickly and effectively.

When children do need to come into Care, BCP Children's Services is committed to ensuring they are placed in family settings within the BCP area wherever possible. Carers and externally commissioned providers are supported to provide the care and support that BCP Council as Corporate Parents strive to achieve for our children and young people.

BCP strives to improve the quality of care for our most vulnerable children and young people, and is committed to ensuring everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all as set out in BCP Council Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2028.

The data provided in this report is as of 2023 and annual updates will be published.

For clarity, Adoption and Special Guardianship is not covered within this document. A separate report with their strategic intentions is available from the Aspire Adoption Agency.

2. The Sufficiency Duty

This document fulfils BCP Council's Sufficiency Duty in respect of Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in Care within their local area. Each Local authority has a duty, under section 10 of the Children Act ('the 2004 Act') to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. This Duty was further outlined in statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2010 which made explicit the requirement for local authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that plans to meet this duty were included in relevant commissioning strategies.

This guidance is issued as part of a suite of statutory guidance documents which, together with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), set out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for Looked After children.

The guidance also highlights the importance of partnership working between local authorities and partners. This Sufficiency Strategy should therefore be seen as closely linked to other local planning documents, the BCP Children's Services Self-Assessment, the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2024, Early Help Partnership Approach and Strategy 2024 – 2026 and Corporate Parenting Strategy Brighter Future for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 –2026.

There are a range of legal duties associated with an overall 'Sufficiency Duty' on local authorities as part of the Children Act, 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care within the local authority area:

- Section 17(1) sets out the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need and their families in a local area that are appropriate to their needs
- Section 20 requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within the area if they appear to require accommodation
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are remanded or who are subject to a criminal court order

- When deciding on the most appropriate placement, Section 22 requires a local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent
- Section 22C sets out additional factors which must be taken into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - allowing child to live near their home
 - not disrupting child's education/training
 - enabling the child and other sibling to live together
 - meeting the needs of disabled children
 - providing accommodation in the local authority area unless that is not reasonably practicable
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extends the duties on all local authorities to have regard to a set of Corporate Parenting Principles when exercising their functions in relation to children in Care and Care Experienced young people up to the age of 25.

3. National and Local Strategies

3.1 National Strategy:

Stable Homes Built on Love - following an Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the government published a new strategy 'Stable Homes Built on Love' (February 2023) which outlined six pillars to transform Children's Social Care:

- Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families
- Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system
- Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks
- Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care
- Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one
- Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.

3.2 Local Strategies:

3.2.1 Corporate Parenting Strategy Brighter Future for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 -2026, outlines eight key priorities:

1. Trusted and Safe Relationships – children and young people feel valued, connected and safe and that they belong.
2. Education, Employment and Training – BCP Council holds high aspirations for its children and young people and offer children in Care and Care Experienced young people the same opportunities to achieve at school, college and university as their peers wherever possible.
3. Opportunities Growing Up – BCP Council will have high aspirations for all children in Care and Care Experienced young people; they will encourage children and young people to think big, and champion potential and celebrate successes.
4. Identify - Ensure all children in Care and Care Experienced young people have a strong sense of identity and an understanding of their Care story.
5. Co-Production - Life experiences are at the heart of how services are designed.
6. Home and Housing - children in Care and Care Experienced young people will live somewhere they feel safe and loved.

7. Health and Support - Improve health and well-being by making sure health services and health information provided are high quality.
8. Caring for those who care - children in Care and Care Experienced young people have the opportunity to thrive through the support carers and social workers give. BCP council will aim to ensure that those who support children in Care and Care Experienced young people have all the resources they need to care to the best of their ability, they will know that they are appreciated and feel supported by BCP Council.

Corporate Parenting Strategy Mission – *“to be the best corporate parents and grandparents so that our children in care and care experienced young people have bright futures; we care about you, we have high aspirations for you, we never give up and are determined to achieve the best for you”.*

3.2.2 Early Help Partnership Approach and Strategy 2024 – 2026

The partnership is committed to delivering effective services that ensure pregnant parents, babies, children, young people and their families feel happy, healthy, safe and secure within stable family and community networks. There are five key objectives to the strategy:

1. Provide access and pathways to the right people, for the right conversations at the right time, so families get the help they need when they need it most
2. Build a strong multi-agency skilled partnership that works together to support local families
3. Build resilience in families and communities, equipping them with what they need to wrap support around unborns, babies, children and young people
4. Reduce risks for our unborns, babies, children and young people who are identified as being at significant risk of harm
5. Evidence the impact the partnership is having on the work it is doing and use family voice to shape future service design.

3.2.3 Children’s Services Self-Assessment April 2024 / Childrens Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan and SEND Improvement plan

Alongside the Children’s Services Improvement Plan 2024 and the SEND Improvement Plan 2024, the Self-Assessment informs service development over the next 12 months (2024/2025). Children’s Services is working hard to ensure that core values are embedded and services ‘start with the child and stay with the child’, whether Children’s Services involvement is brief or lengthy.

3.2.4 Children and Young People plan 2021 – 2024

The BCP Children and Young People’s Partnership is an alliance of leaders from organisations across the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) area, that support children and young people to stay safe and achieve the best possible outcomes.

- Children and young people have the opportunities and are supported to achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment
- Children and young people can enjoy healthy lifestyles and make positive choices.
- Children and young people are accepted a valued members of society enabling them to achieve within, and contribute to, the wider community
- Children and young people are supported to be resilient in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A **new five-year Children and Young People's Partnership Plan** will be launched in 2025 and is an important statement of BCP's commitment to children and young people. It will provide clarity in respect of new priorities and how they will be delivered and achieved.

Key sufficiency pressures in BCP and strategic commissioning priorities 2024 – 2028

4. Key sufficiency pressures in BCP, strategic commissioning priorities and high-level success measures 2024 – 2028

This strategy seeks to address the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of appropriate placement provision, which will support the best possible outcomes for our children and young people by ensuring there is a range of provision that supports cultural diversity and meets the individual needs of each child or young person, as well as seeking value for money within the available resources.

The reduction in local authority funding means that even greater focus needs to be given to delivering value for money in the commissioning of provision for children in Care and Care Experienced young people. The challenge for BCP Council, as with all other local authorities, is to continue to improve and sustain high quality provision and services whilst also delivering efficiencies. Financial pressures at a national level will result in continued financial pressure at a local level and will mean that BCP council needs to carry on achieving value for money through commissioning.

This section of the strategy sets out how BCP Council plans to meet these challenges and pressures over the coming three years (i.e. 2024 - 2028).

4.1 Key sufficiency pressures summary

The following key sufficiency pressures have been identified.

Children In Care	Care Experienced Young People	Children's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing number of children in Care, rate higher than national average• Higher proportion of children placed in residential settings• Too many children placed out of area because of insufficient suitable placements within the BCP area• Limited choice of local or national placements for children with complex needs• Understanding the quality of provision through robust monitoring and contract management practice• Too many other local authorities placing young people in supported accommodation which impacts future housing sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint planning between Children's Services and Housing preparing young people for independence• Lack of affordable move on accommodation due to economic position of BCP Council; for example, rental market is competitive with student accommodation and lack of social housing• Suitable accommodation for young people being released from custody• Young people's ability to live independently and maintain tenancies e.g. financial pressures• No high support accommodation post 18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial pressure due to the rising costs of placements• Insufficient Short Break provision to meet need• Lack of consistent engagement with providers which impacts on market sufficiency within the BCP area• Placement of UASC by the Home Office

4.2 Key Priorities

As a result, the following 6 key priorities with actions and high-level success measures have been agreed to ensure BCP council has sufficiency of placements in the future;

Priority 1 - Ensure there is sufficient local family-based care available in the BCP area, so more children can live within a family home.

What will be done

- 1.1 Review the in-house foster care recruitment and retention strategy in order to ensure an increase in local family based provision (foster care).
- 1.2 Launch the Mockingbird fostering model through our Fostering Service.
- 1.3 Work collaboratively with regional colleagues to develop the Southwest regional Fostering Recruitment Hub with the aim of increasing sufficiency of in-house provision.
- 1.4 Continue to provide high quality training and support with the aim of retaining foster carers.
- 1.5 Review the internal 'retained carers' scheme, accessible for children in Care requiring emergency care.
- 1.6 Evaluate the internal fostering service to ensure provision is created with an aim of reducing the numbers of children going into residential care who have a Care Plan of fostering.
- 1.7 Ensure internal Supported Lodgings provision is seen as a viable option for Care Experienced young people by raising awareness of its benefits and positive outcomes.
- 1.8 Work collaboratively to register our internal Supported Lodgings Scheme in line with Ofsted guidance.
- 1.9 Once the internal Supported Lodgings Scheme is registered with Ofsted, work with Commissioning colleagues to ensure this option is explored for children in Care aged 16 years plus.
- 1.10 Develop a recruitment strategy for the Supported Lodgings Scheme.
- 1.11 Bring the Special Guardianship Service back in-house from Aspire Adoption.
- 1.12 Work strategically with the South-Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision.
- 1.13 Re-build partnerships with local on and off framework Independent Fostering Agency providers, noting the number of local foster care beds which are filled by other local authority children.

Measure of Success

Success measure – the number of Children in Care living locally in family-based care increases.

Success measure – the number of foster care households within BCP increases.

Priority 2 - When children need to live in a residential home, ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot, or chose not to, live in a family setting.

What will be done

- 2.1 Improve data reporting, analyse all cohort needs across the service, benchmark and understand trends to meet and predict demand for children requiring residential care or access to respite provision
- 2.2 Map all local residential provision, understand usage by other local authorities and impact on local sufficiency and determine need for BCP council.
- 2.3 Work strategically with the South-Central Residential Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision based on analysis of need.
- 2.4 Consider all regional framework arrangements based on national findings and provider feedback, linked to the benefits of local authority partnership working.
- 2.5 Hold providers accountable for their charges and understand the level of profit to ensure value for money and delivery of outcomes.
- 2.6 Produce a Short Breaks Position Statement, review needs and eligibility criteria, ensure local service can meet all needs. Co-produce the offer with all partners.
- 2.7 Work with regional colleagues and with local NHS partners to consider the development of a residential provision for children with complex needs.
- 2.8 Explore regional secure provision through the Southwest Sufficiency group.

Measure of Success

Success measure - the number of Children in Care placed in residential children's homes will decrease.

Success measure - there is sufficient homes locally to meet the needs of children in Care.

Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision and further develop a sufficiency model which offers a range of provision models (high to low support) so children and young people have a choice to move through a pathway of services, offering a range of homes across the BCP area which shall prepare them for independence.

What will be done

- 3.1 Understand the sufficiency and quality of local provision, through effective process and monitoring activity, for example Ofsted registration ratings and mapping of providers.
- 3.2 Implement greater oversight of young people who have high support packages, implementing regular meetings with providers and all partners.
- 3.3 Work with providers and all partners to consider preparation for independence in a timely manner and ensure support hours / packages are reasonable, in line with independence planning.
- 3.4 Seek to utilise local provision for BCP children rather than them residing out of area.
- 3.5 Develop registered supported accommodation provision locally for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care aged under 18 years.
- 3.6 Review commissioning intentions for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced young people, ensuring accommodation is suitable.
- 3.7 Work collaboratively with our external market, in-house supported lodgings scheme and housing to meet the accommodation needs of all Care Experienced young people.

Measure of Success

Success measure – young people moving into supported accommodation can live in an area of their choice within BCP.

Success measure – increase in supported accommodation with lower-level support helping young people to transition more effectively to independence.

Priority 4 - Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children's Social Care and Commissioning, focusing on the Joint Housing priorities for Care Experienced young people.

What will be done

- 4.1 Work together across all Directorates to embed a corporate parenting response to the accommodation needs of Care Experienced young people.
- 4.2 Review and map the sufficiency of supported and independent accommodation provision available across BCP council for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.3 Review and re-launch the Youth Homelessness Board.
- 4.4 Review the housing pathway and options for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.5 Consider a collaborative review of the Accommodation Planning Panel, linked to the implementation of Children's Services 'gateways'.
- 4.6 Inform the design of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision with provision identified specifically for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.7 Ensure knowledge of, and contribution to, the Homewards partnership work in the BCP area to work towards eradicating any risk of homelessness for our Care Experienced young people.
- 4.8 Embed training and share knowledge of the Joint Housing Protocols.
- 4.9 Support the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.

Measure of Success

Success measure – increase the number of good quality housing provisions available in a timely way for Care Experienced young people.

Success measure – There will be no Care Experienced young people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation or experiencing homelessness.

Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement in order to further develop services to meet the needs of BCP council's children and young people.

What will be done

- 5.1 Re-build the relationships with BCP local area providers and review the commissioning arrangements with on and off framework providers.
- 5.2 Establish quarterly provider engagement events for each care sector, seek to understand barriers, develop the market to meet all children and young people's care / support needs including those with a disability.
- 5.3 Actively engage with providers who wish to be inventive within the market.
- 5.4 Create a market development plan of provision.

- 5.5 Participate in regional collaborations to enhance learning, practice and aid the shaping of the market.
- 5.6 Develop reunification and our family support offer, consider returning children to their families where appropriate.
- 5.7 Consider the need for a Supported Accommodation framework, seek views from the market and local authorities with established framework arrangements.
- 5.8 Continue to work in partnership with our providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections between 2024 - 2028.

Measure of Success

Success measure – Provider Engagement Events are embedded, attendance and engagement by the external market creates established partnerships which improves local sufficiency. Providers feel valued.

Success measure - More children and young people successfully return to their family with a positive, wrap around package where appropriate.

Success measure – BCP Council develops trusted relationships with providers who work with the local authority to manage the sufficiency within the local and regional markets.

Priority 6 - Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks to ensure compliance and support strategic decision making in the future.

What will be done

- 6.1 Develop and embed a robust commissioning governance and commissioning quality assurance framework to understand the quality of provision and hold providers accountable.
- 6.2 Understand the trends of children in Care through the Gateway panels to ensure the right children are in our Care, e.g. legal status.
- 6.3 Update the existing contracts register for children's services, thus informing the strategic commissioning plan and assurance in respect of procurement compliance (noting the implementation of the new procurement regulations).
- 6.4 Aim to only place children in provision that is judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- 6.5 Improve data collection using current digital systems to inform sufficiency planning.
- 6.6 Work in partnership with providers to regularly monitor all provision rated 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate', ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children to allow them to remain in their home.
- 6.7 Be actively engaged in the procurement compliance planning, ensuring that commissioning of provision meets the required quality assurance and contract monitoring compliance standards.

Measure of Success

Success measure - Targeted and reactive quality assurance visits completed each month by the Commissioning and Contracts service.

Success measure - All managers, staff and partners when they visit children and young people within a placement have a clear understanding of their role in quality assuring and report any concerns through to the Commissioning team, addressing them also within the provision.

5. Evidencing delivery of the strategy and future reviews

Governance is through the overarching Children's Services governance arrangements and the Children's Services Improvement Board. Recognising the improvement work required in Commissioning, a Commissioning Improvement Board which is to be chaired by the Director of Children's Services, will oversee the delivery of this Strategy and Action Plan.

This Commissioning Improvement Board will report on progress every quarter to the Children's Services Improvement Board. This will be done through:

- Children's Commissioning highlight reports.
- Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Action Plan summaries.
- Children's Social Care and Early Help Scorecard.

Action Plan

The Commissioning Service have an action plan developed as a result of this strategy. The action plan is to be updated monthly on progress, report into the Improvement Board quarterly and be updated and reviewed annually to ensure that it responds to emerging needs, trends, and legislation.

Measuring Success

Whilst there are high level success measures detailed in this strategy, the Children's Social Care and Early Help Scorecard has more detailed measures of success to understand the impact of the delivery of the strategy, alongside an emerging dedicated commissioning scorecard to be overseen by the Commissioning Improvement Board.

Partnership Engagement

Partnership engagement with current and prospective providers of care and support for children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be essential to the delivery of this strategy.

Acting on what our children and young people tell us

The views, desires and aspirations of our children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be sought through Unite and Ignite, specific events and engagement opportunities to ensure they have been listened to, heard, understood and delivered to meet their needs.

Local Context and Data

Summary of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People in BCP and where they live

6. Local Context and data

6.1 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

BCP Council formed in April 2019. It is a local authority area that is home to over 400,000 residents and has the 8th highest population of all unitary authorities in England. The area's population is predicted to grow by 2% until 2028, this growth will be driven entirely by net migration.

There are 73,855 children aged 0-17 years living in the BCP area. 51.3% are male and 48.7% are female.

There are 555 children currently subject of a Child Protection Plan (0.8%), 19.3% of children are eligible for a free school meal, with 24.8% of families living in poverty after housing costs.

There are 98 state-funded schools, comprised of 66 primaries, 21 secondary schools, 4 all-through schools and 7 special schools. 88.7% of schools are rated Good or Outstanding for overall effectiveness. Educational attainment for all key stages is above the national average.

BCP is an area of significant disparity with areas considered to be amongst the most and least deprived in the country. Understanding where these areas are, and the types of deprivation that affects them most, is important for service planning and delivery by BCP Children's Services and its partners.

According to data from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) 8,614 children are from absolute low-income families in the BCP area (less than 60% of median income). This is 10% of those aged 0-19 and 13% of those aged under 16 – 17 years.

7. Summary of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People in BCP and where they live

7.1 Children in Care

- In 2019/20 following Local Government Reform (LGR) children entering care numbers peaked at 526, followed by a steady reduction until the end of March 2023 when it reduced slightly to 520.
- During 2022 / 2023 the children in Care figure increased by 4.6%, this is higher than the national average of 2%.
- This is equivalent to a rate of 71 children in Care per 10,000 children under 18 years, which is higher when compared to the England rate of 70 and statistical neighbours which is reported as 69.6.
- The majority (202/ 39%) of BCP Council's children in Care are aged between 10 and 15 years old, followed by children aged 16 – 18 years (156/ 30%). 296 (57%) are male and 395 (76%) are white.
- There has been a decrease of 8 (2%) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This cohort now represents 9.4% of BCP Council's children in Care population.
- 7% of children in Care left Care through Special Guardianship which is in-line with statistical neighbours (9%) but lower than national averages (12%).
- 11% of children in Care were adopted, which is higher than the previous year at 9%, and higher than statistical neighbour and England averages (10% and 9% respectively).

- 73% are living in foster families compared to Statistical Neighbours (67%) and England (68%) averages.

7.2 Care Experienced Young People

- As of 31 March 2023, the overall Care Experienced young people population was 433, with 297 (68.5%) young people in touch with the service. There are 374 (86.3%) Care Experienced young people who are in receipt of an active service.
- Of the Care Experienced young people in receipt of a service, there are 116 (31%) who are female, 254 (67.9%) are male and 4 (1%) are intersex.
- 274 (78.9%) of the 347 Care Experienced Young People who are in receipt of a service are deemed to be living in suitable accommodation.
- 83 (88.7%) Care Experienced Young People are aged 17 – 18years and 191 (89.2%) aged 19 – 21 years are living in suitable accommodation.
- 225 (60.2%) of BCP Council's Care Experienced young people are white or white British.
- There are 343 (79.2%) Care Experienced young people in Employment, Education and Training.

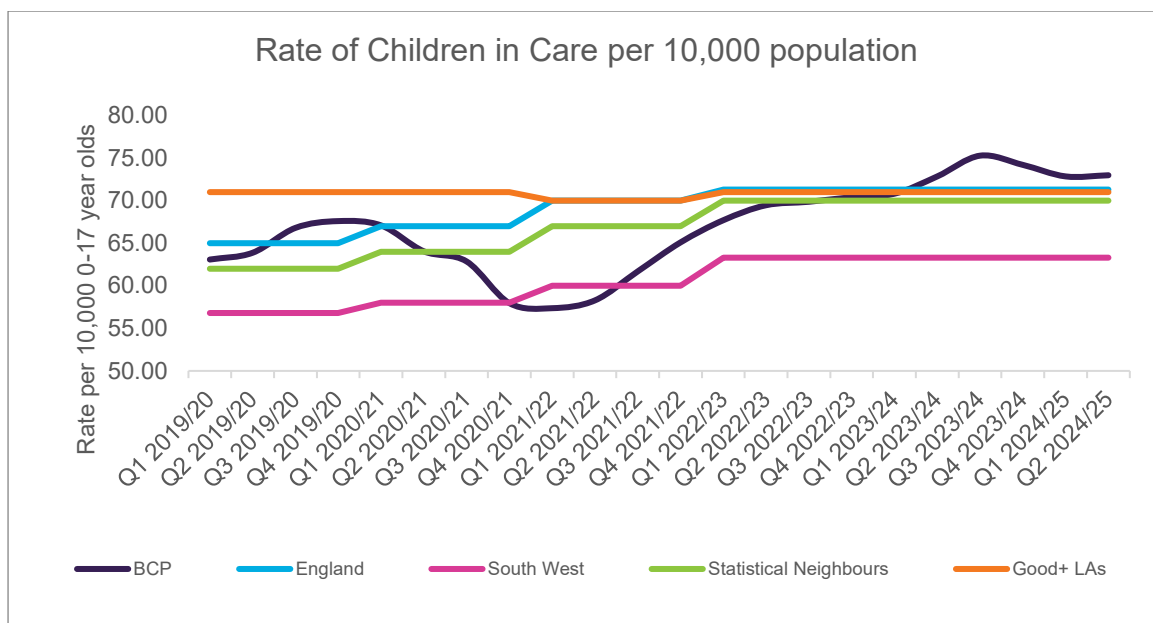
7.3 Placement Information

- The majority of our children in Care are in a placement provided by the Local Authority (235/45.19%).
- 401 (77%) are living in family settings.
- 312 (60%) of children in Care are matched to long-term foster carers.
- 384 (73.8%) of children now live within 20 miles of their parental home.
- 411 (79%) of children in Care have been in the same placement for at least 2 years.

8. Analysis of Children in Care

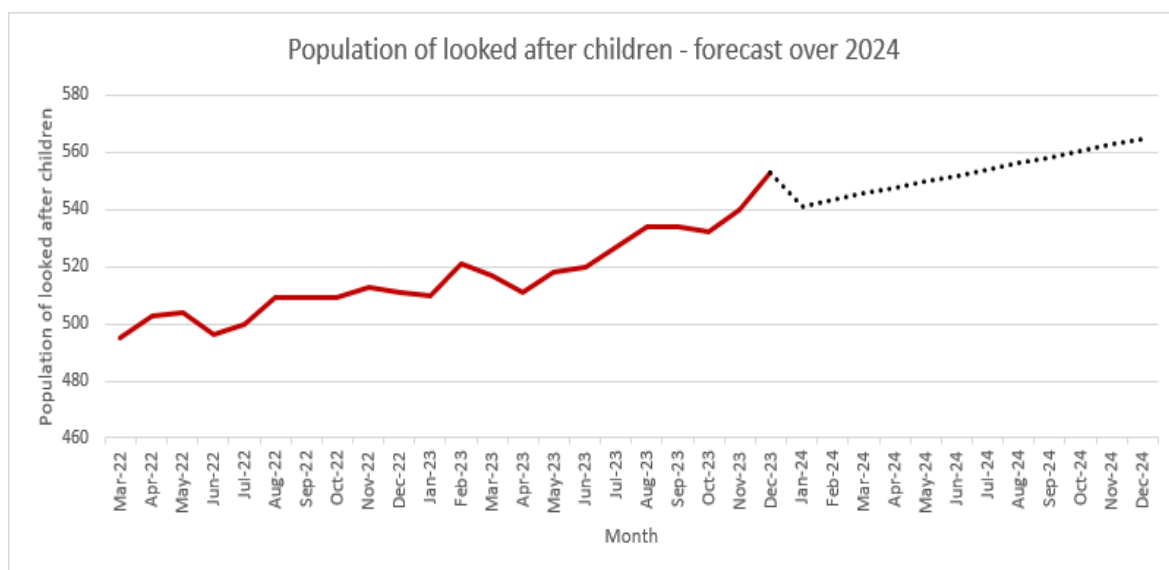
8.1 Children In Care – Population

In 2019/20 following Local Government Reform (LGR) our Children in Care numbers peaked at 526, followed by a steady reduction until the end of March 2023 when the figure reached 520. This is equivalent to a rate of 71 children in care per 10,000 children under 18years, compared to the England rate of 70 and BCP statistical neighbours which is reported as 69.6.



8.2 Population of Children in Care forecast 2022 to 2024

The below graph is a linear regression model and is only based on volume over time, commencing in 2022 which is the point where Children in Care numbers started to increase continuously.



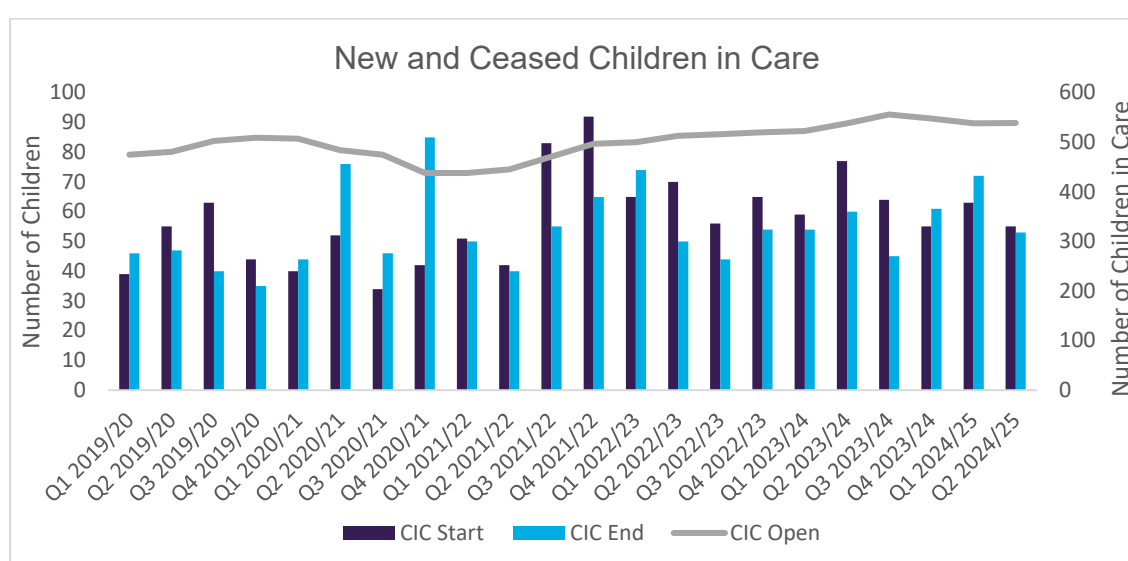
8.3 2019/2020 to 2022/2023 new and ceased Children in Care data

In quarter 4 of 2022/2023, 65 children came into Care, and 54 left Care which is an annual figure of 256 children coming into Care and 222 leaving Care. Of those who left Care, 102 children aged out of Care and 73 children were reunified.

These figures translate to a rate of 34.9 children coming into Care per 10,000 which is above the 2021/22 comparator rates of 26.0 for England, 23.0 Southwest and 28.4 statistical neighbours.

The rate for those leaving Care is 30.3%, also above the 2021/22 comparator figures of 26.0% for England, 21.0% South West and 25.6% statistical neighbours.

Numbers of Children in Care between 2019/2020 – 2022/23				
Financial Year	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Number of Children in Care	509	438	497	520
Percentage		-13%	+13%	+4.6%
Children who came into care	201	168	268	256
Children who ceased to be in care	168	251	210	222

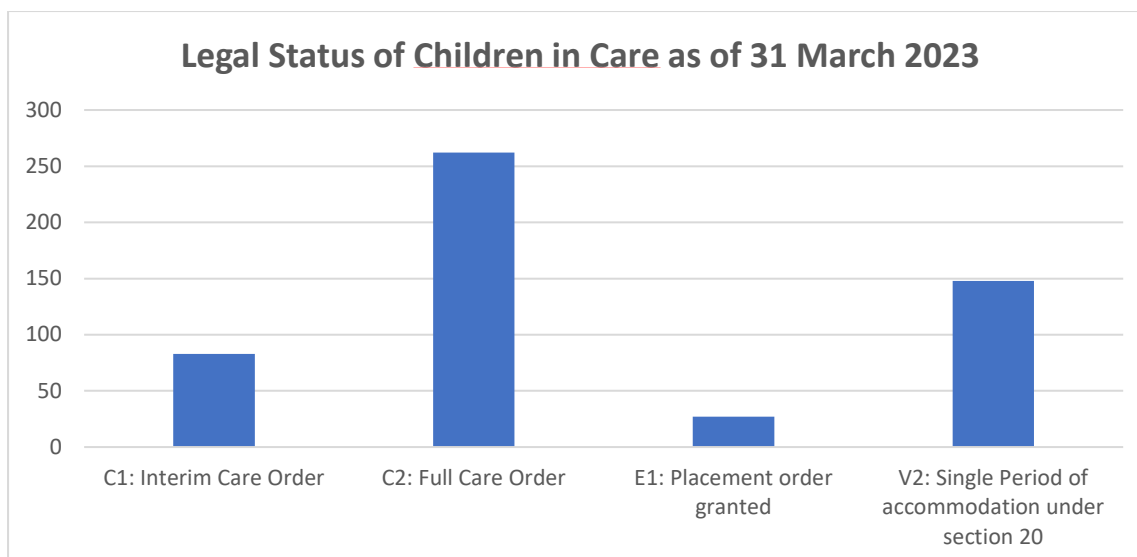


8.4 Legal Status of Children in Care

BCP Council has a high percentage of children in Care with section 20 consent and are consistently above all comparator's averages with 28% at the end of 2022/23 compared to the published national average at 17% for this period.

There are currently 107 children accommodated with this legal status for 3 months or longer (with the longest having been for over 5 years). This percentage has steadily been increasing quarter on quarter over the year.

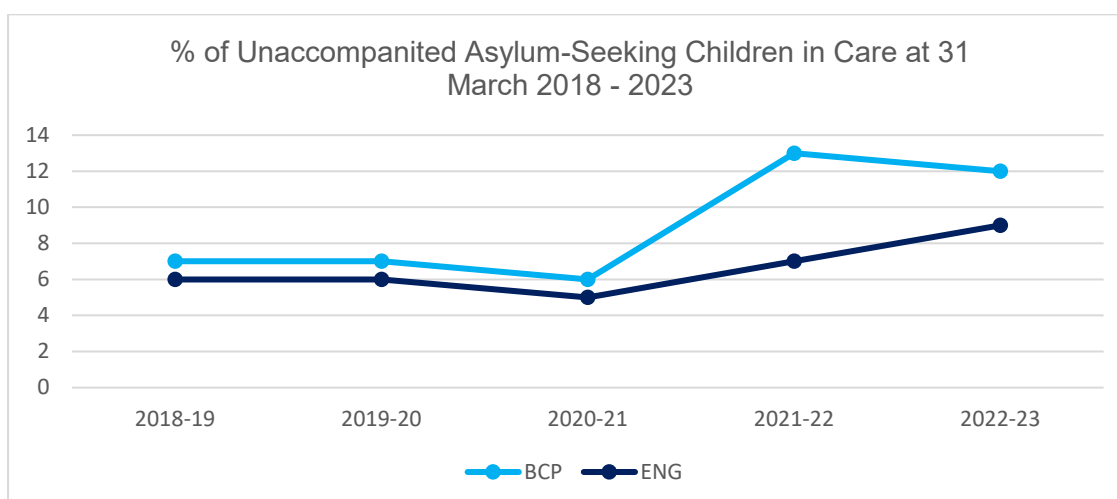
262 (50.4%) of all children in Care as of 31 March 2023 were subject of a Care Order, which is below all the comparator figures of England 58.0%, statistical neighbours 53.4%, Southwest 55.0% and Good+ local authorities 54.0%. There are currently 27 children in Care with a Placement Order, of which 9 were issued over 9 months ago.



8.5 Population of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care forecast 2018 – 2023

At the end of quarter 4 2022/2023, 49 children in Care are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (9.4% of the population of children in Care). This figure is lower than previous years; as of 31 March 2022 the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care cohort was 11.47% of the overall children in Care population.

There are difficulties in forecasting sufficiency accommodation needed for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children due to the unpredictable way they come into Care, for example in November 2021 BCP council had 40 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children enter Care due to the home office “setting up” hotels within the BCP area. At the height there were 5 hotels which formed part of The Home Office dispersal. Further benchmarking is required linked to the requirements of the National Transfer Scheme.

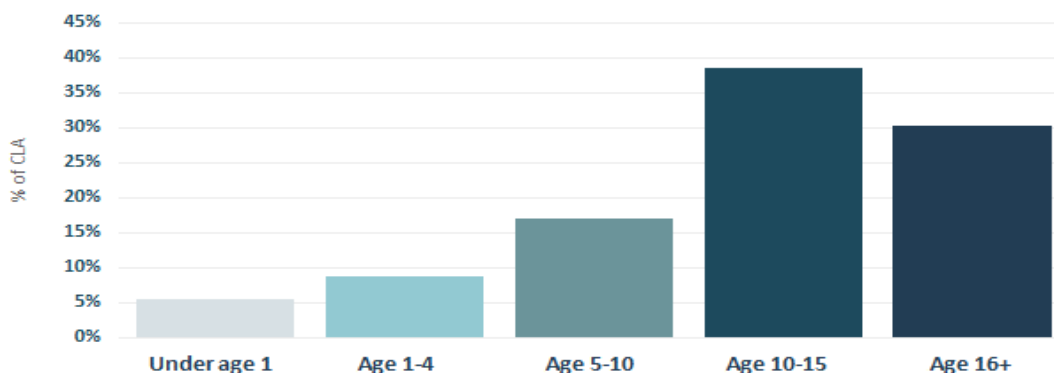


Numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care between 2019/2020 – 2022/23				
Financial Year	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care	32	23	57	49
Percentage of Children in Care Population	6.29%	5.25%	11.47%	9.42%
South West	4%	3%	6%	9%
England	6%	4%	7%	9%
Stat Neighbours	8%	6%	9%	11%

8.6 Children in Care by Age

The majority (202/ 39%) of BCP Council's children in Care are aged between 10 and 15 years old, which is slightly higher than the national average of 28.7%, followed by children aged 16 – 18 years (156/ 30%). This collective data (69%) means there is a disproportionately high number of older children in Care. This has been the case in BCP Council for the last three years. In March 2020 this cohort was 66% as a comparator.

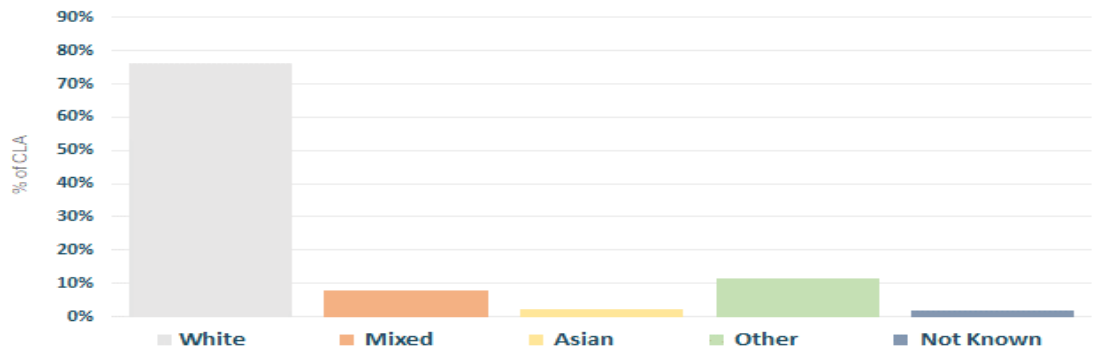
There are slight variations in each of the age brackets compared to 2020 (a slight decrease in the 0-5 (previously 35%), and an increase in the 10-15 (previously 35%).



8.7 Children in Care by Ethnicity

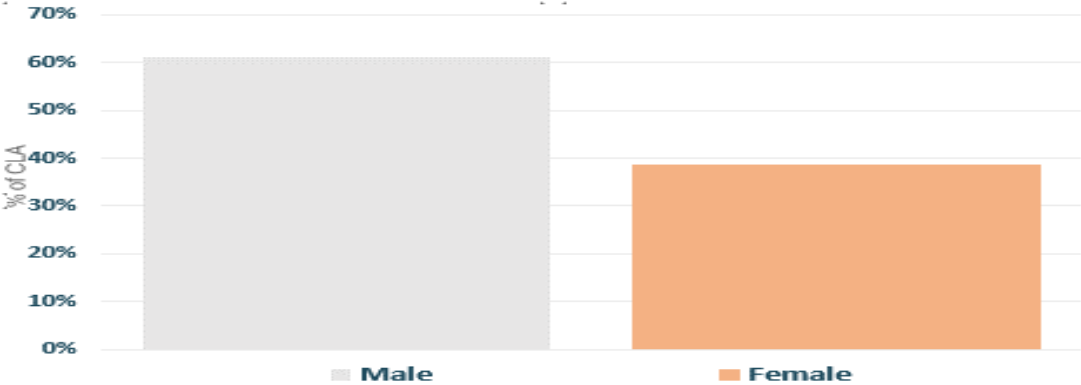
The majority of BCP Council's children in Care population are from white backgrounds (395/ 76%) followed by children from mixed heritage (47/ 9%) and other backgrounds (78/ 15%).

Comparing this to BCP Council child population data for the 0-17 population the % for those ethnicities is much lower; 14 (2.8%) mixed and 7 (1.5%) for other backgrounds.

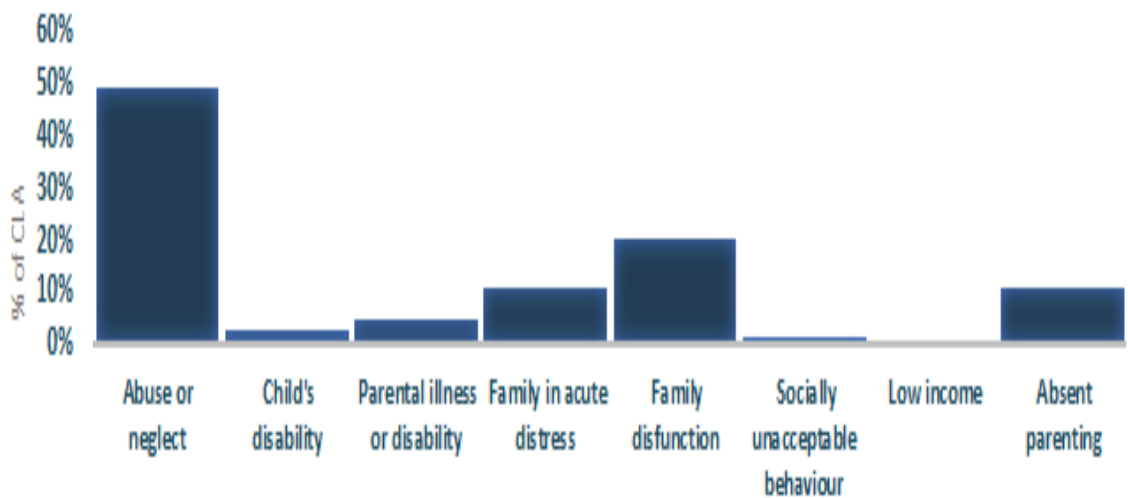


8.8 Children in Children by Gender

The gender split of children in Care tends to be more even than the national and regional picture, with 61% being male, 38% female, 1% indeterminate, compared to BCP Council's cohort of 296 (57%) male and 224 (43%) female.



8.9 Children in Care by Primary Need Category



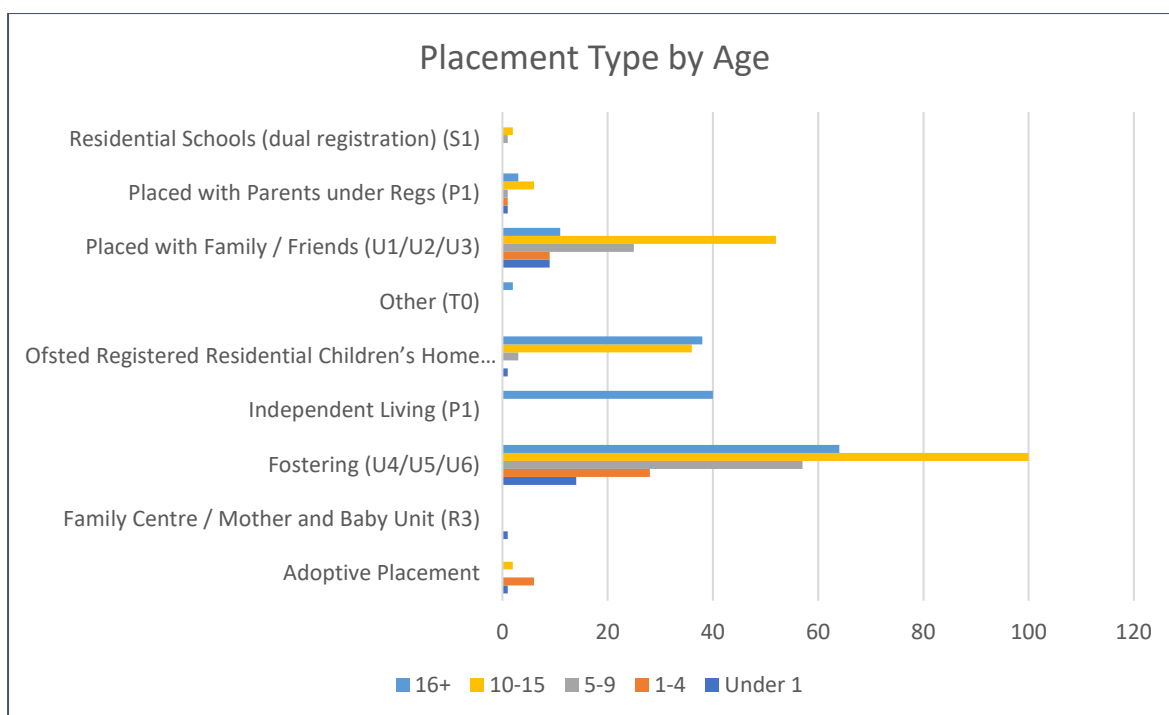
50% of children entering BCP Council’s Care have experienced abuse or neglect, with family dysfunction being the second primary need. BCP council data mirrors the findings of the National Census of 2021 which reported the most common reasons (known as category of need) for children coming into Care as abuse or neglect (43%). Around one in five (21%) of children enter Care because of family dysfunction (where parenting capacity is chronically inadequate).

8.10 Children in Care by Placement Type

The table below shows the majority (390/ 75.7%) of BCP Council’s Children in Care population are placed in family settings (Adoption / U1 / U2 / U3 / U4 / U5 / U6).

There are many children in Care (78/ 15%) living in residential care. National data reflects 19% with statistical neighbours at 22% (Good plus local authorities 20%).

BCP Council has 7 unregistered children’s home placements as of March 2023. These are recorded in the data figures presented as living in residential placements. Of the 7 children placed there are 3 females, two aged 15yrs and one aged 13yrs. 4 males, three aged 15yrs and one aged 14yrs. All children were placed outside the BCP area.



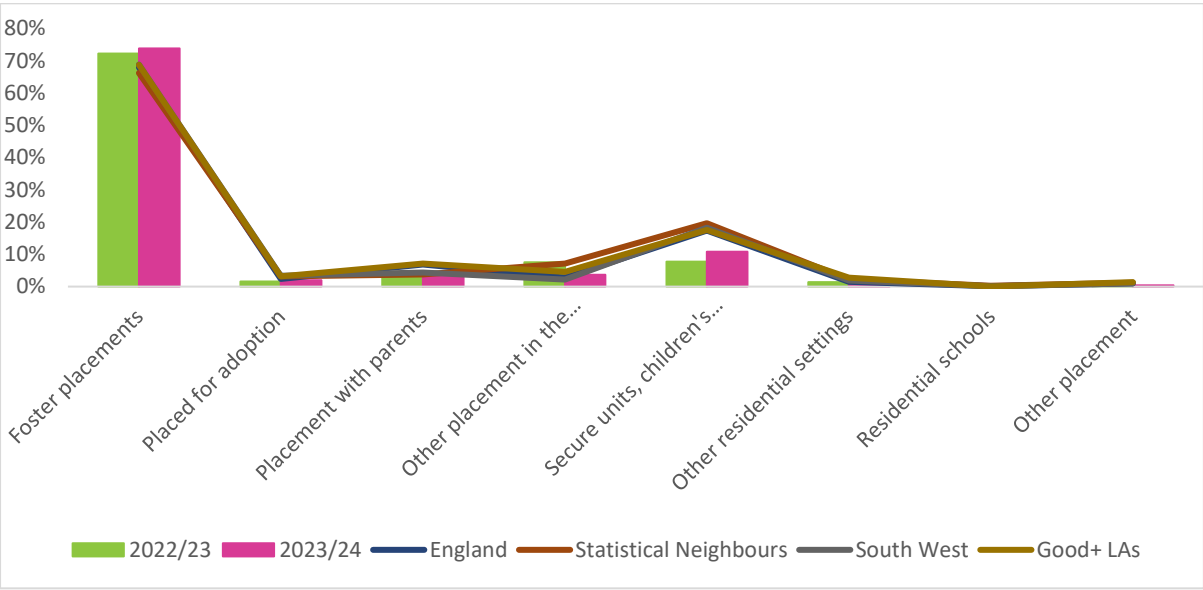
The table below shows the number of BCP Council's Children in Care population living within each placement type and overall percentage.

Placement Type	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+
Adoptive Placement	1 (3.6%)	6 (12.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (0%)
Family Centre / Mother and Baby Unit (R3)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fostering (U4/U5/U6)	14 (50%)	28 (59.6%)	57 (65.5%)	102 (51.3%)	63 (39.6%)
Independent Living (P1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	40 (20.1%)
Ofsted Registered Residential Children's Home (R1/R2/H5/K2)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.4%)	35 (17.6%)	37 (23.3%)
Other (T0)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.3%)
Placed with Family / Friends (U1/U2/U3)	8 (28.6%)	10 (21.3%)	25 (28.7%)	50 (25.1%)	13 (8.2%)
Placed with Parents under Regs (P1)	1 (3.6%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (1.1%)	7 (3.50)	3 (1.9%)
Residential Schools (dual registration) (S1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)
Total	28	47	87	199	159

8.11 Placement Type

The graph below highlights the changes in the usage of the most common placement types as of 31 March 2023.

The majority of children in Care are in a home provided by the local authority Fostering Service 235 (45.2%). 203 (39.0%) are in private provision (Independent Fostering Agency). The number of children in Care placed in foster care provision is 438 (84.2%) which is higher than the national average at 68.0% and statistical neighbours at 66.3%. 60% of our children in Care are long-term matched to foster carers.



8.12 Location of Placement

National Context

Under the Children Act 1989, accommodation provided by local authorities for children in Care must be “within the local authority's area” unless this is “not reasonably practicable.” There is, however, no provision in legislation that prohibits a local authority from placing a child out of its area (an “out of area” placement) and guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) states that an out of area placement may sometimes be most appropriate for the child.

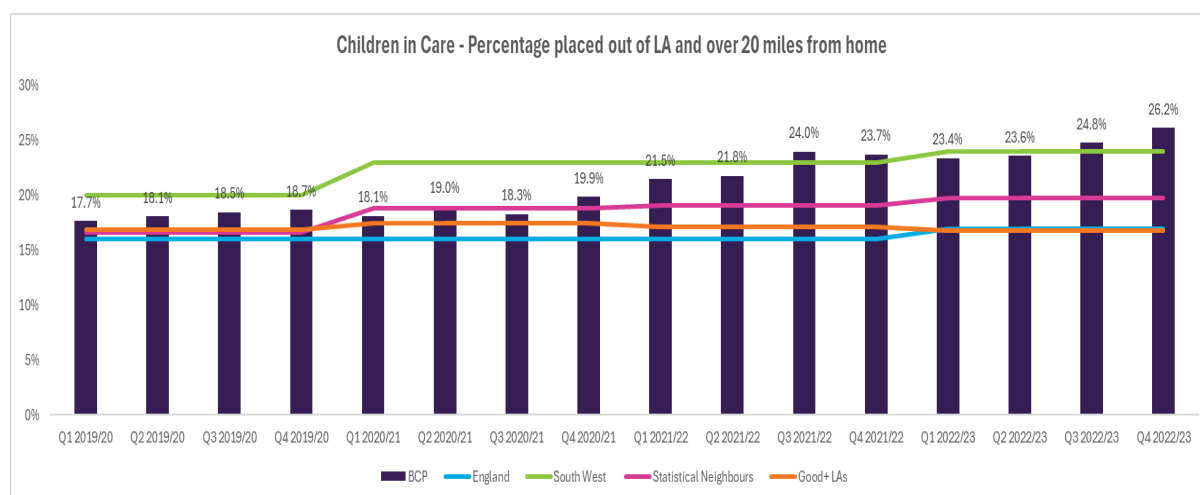
The number of children in Care placed outside their home local authority increased by around 28% between 2010 and 2020, rising from 37.0% of all placements to 41.0% over the period.

For clarity, BCP Council’s children in Care data is reported by the distance between the accommodation provision in which children or young people are currently residing and their parental home postcode; Ofsted indicator of more than 20 miles is used.

384 (73.8%) of our children in Care population reside within 20 miles of parental home postcode.

163 (31.3%) of our children in Care population live more than 20 miles from parental home address; this is higher than the national average of 17%, Southwest at 24% and statistical neighbours 19.8%. This is an increase of 2.8% since the beginning of 2022/2023.

Of the 163 placements recorded as being over 20 miles from parent's home postcode, 75 (45.7%) children in Care had been in placement for more 2 years, and 49 (29.9%) have been in placement for between 12 – 23 months. The remaining cohort had been in placement for less than 12 months. Many of these children were living with Connected carers from within their family network.



8.13 Placement Stability

Of the children in Care at the end of 2022/2023, 63 (12.1%) had been in Care for under 3 months, and 210 (40.5%) had been in Care for over 2 years. 410 (79%) of children in Care aged under 16 who have been in Care for 2.5 years or more have been in the same placement for at least 2 years. This is above all comparators.

Of the 316 (60.7%) children who had been in Care for over 12 months, 6 (1.9%) have had 3 or more placements in the last year. This is well below the England 2021/22 average of 10.0% and the Good+ local authorities average of 9.8% and a 0.3% increase on the figure at the end of the previous quarter.

In fostering the long-term matching has increased compared to the previous year. 22 children were long-term matched in 2022/23. 312 (60%) of our cohort are long-term matched.



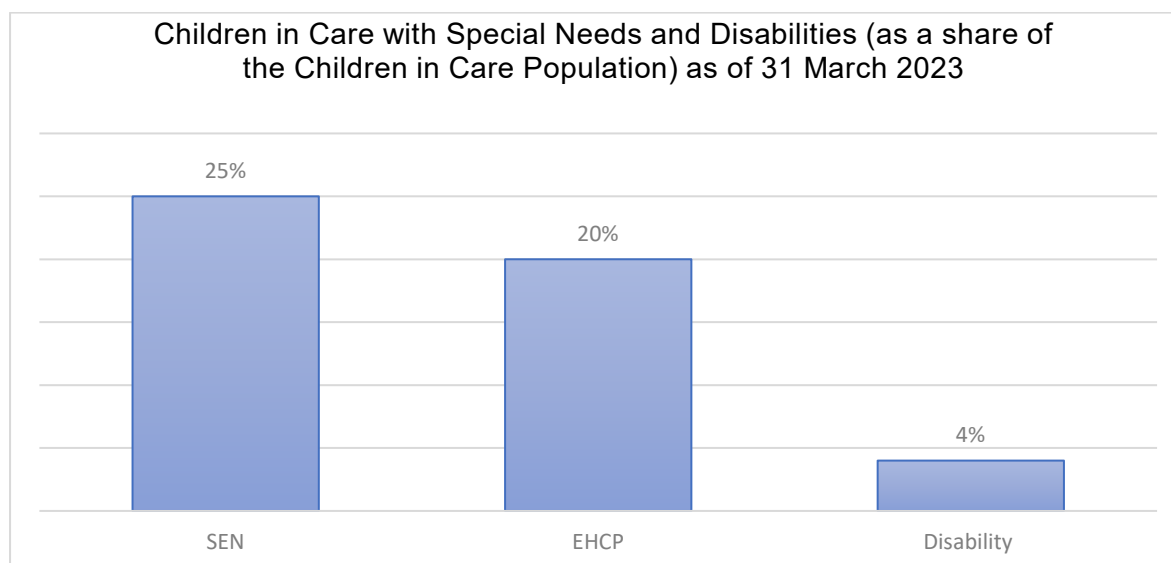
BCP Stability of placements for Children in Care	2023
% Children in Care for over 12 months	316 (60.7%)
% of Children in Care for over 12mths with three or more placements during the year	3 (1.9%)
% of children in Care continuously for at least 2.5 years aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	410 (79%)

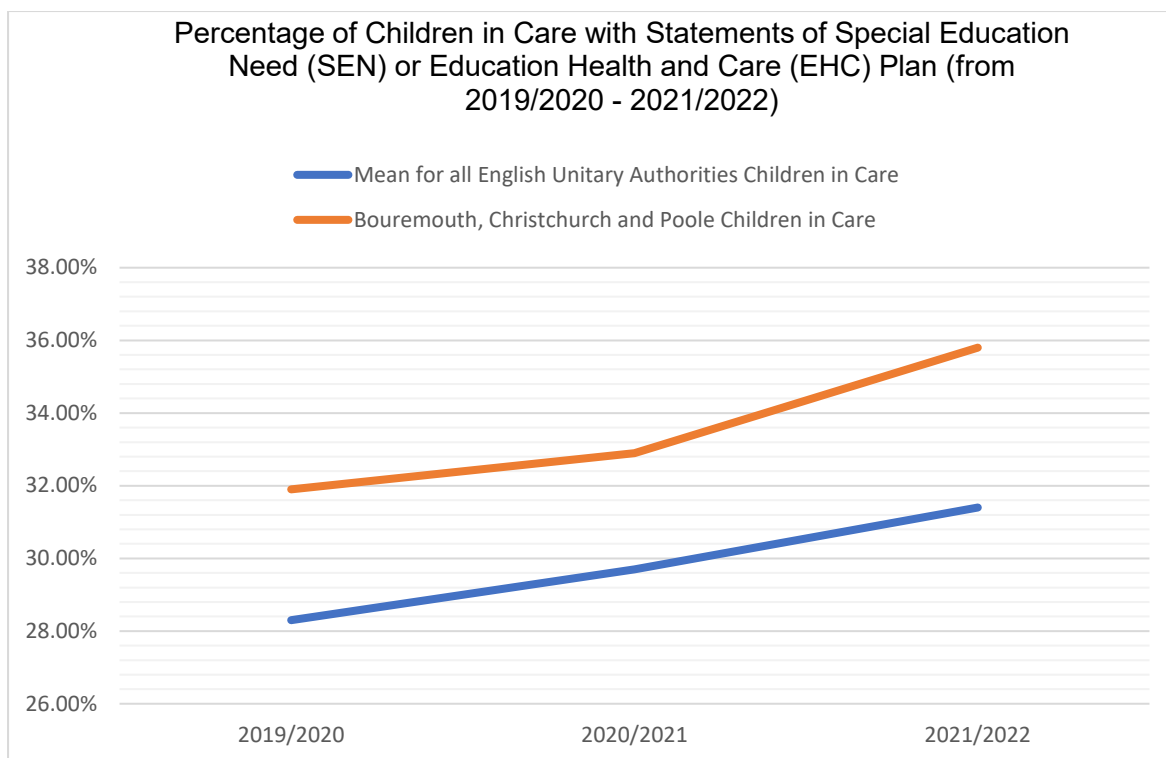
8.14 Children in Care with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

No historic comparable data is available for previous years. 2022/2023 is used as a benchmark to monitor the number of children in Care who have a Special Educational and/or Disability need.

The number of all statutory school aged with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has steadily increased since 2019/2020, by 4.1%.

The number of statutory school aged children in Care aged 2 – 17 years with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased slightly (3.9%) since 2019/2020.





9. Analysis of Care Experienced Young People

9.1 Care Experienced Young People - DfE Guidance on Reporting

For young people who turned 17 or 18 during the latest year, Care Experienced young people information is required if they left Care before or on their birthday, (for example, if a young person turned 17 or 18 in the latest year and left Care before their 17th or 18th birthday then information is required; or if a young person left Care on their 17th or 18th birthday in the latest year, then information also is required).

However, if the young person is still in Care on their 17th or 18th birthday, then Care Experienced information is not required. For example, if a young person turned 17 or 18 in the year, and was in Care on their 17th or 18th birthday but left Care the day after, then Care Experienced information is not required for this young person.

9.2 Care Experienced Young People - In Touch with the service

Care Experienced young people who are in touch with the service are aged 17 – 21 years. As of 31 March 2023, the overall Care Experienced young people population was 433, with 297 (68.5%) young people being in touch with the service. This represents an increase of 45 (17.8%) Care Experienced young people compared to 2019/20 population which reported that 252 young people were In-Touch.

	BCP March 2023	National 2022/23	Statistical Neighbours 2022/2023	Good+ LA's 2022/2023
In touch 17-18years	95%	93%	92%	94%
In touch 19-21years	91%	92%	92%	93%
EET 17 – 18years	69%	66%	66%	68%
EET 19 – 21years	49%	56%	57%	58%
Suitable Accommodation 17 – 18years	89%	91%	89%	91%
Suitable Accommodation 19 – 21years	87%	88%	87%	89%

9.3 Age of Care Experienced Young People - In Receipt of a Service

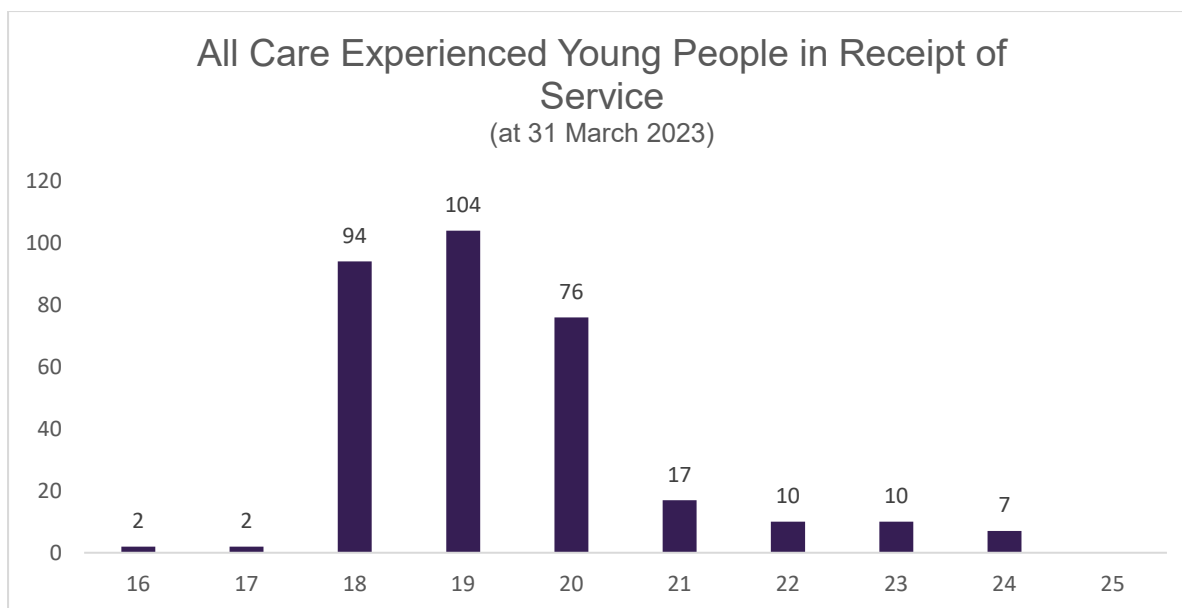
Care Experienced young people who are in receipt with the service are aged 17 – 24 years, so therefore the figures stated below will differ from those who are In-Touch with the service.

There are 374 (86.3%) Care Experienced young people in receipt of a service.

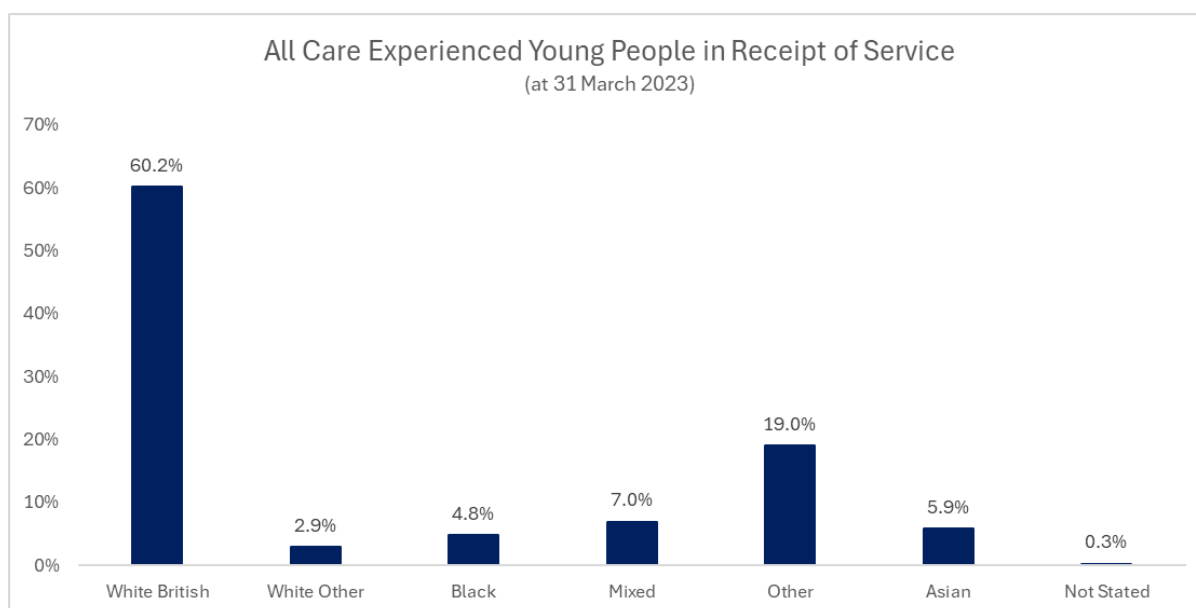
The largest cohort (27.8%/ 104) are aged 19 years, followed by 25% (94) aged 19 years, with 20% (76) aged 20 years.

The majority (274/ 73%) of Care Experienced young people are aged between 18 and 20 years old, followed by Care Experienced young people aged 21 years 4.5%. This fits with the national expectation that young people are supported by a named worker as a Duty up until they turn 21, and thereafter as an optional request from the young person.

The collective data 224 (59.8%) means there is a high number of older Care Experienced young people 19 – 24 years.



9.4 Care Experienced Young People by Ethnicity – In Receipt of a Service



Of those Care Experience young people who are receiving a service, 225 (60.2%) are White British. There are 71 (19%) who have been recorded as 'other ethnicity'.

9.5 Care Experienced Young People Living in Suitable Accommodation

The cohort is aged between 17 – 21 years, they are a proportion of those who are In-Touch with the service.

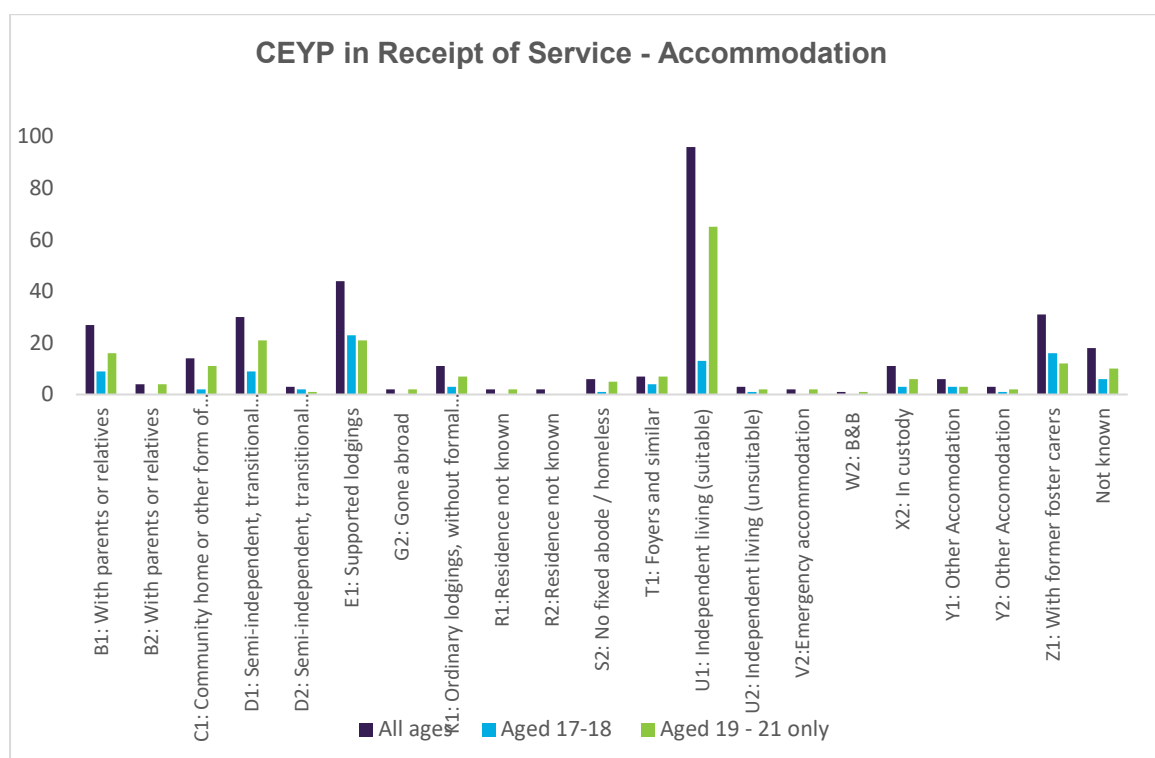
274 (97.2%) of all Care Experienced young people were living in suitable accommodation; performance is above the England rate of 88.0% of 19–21-year-old Care Experienced young

people in suitable accommodation, 89.0% in the Southwest, and 89.0% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/22.

The graph below shows the type of accommodation Care Experienced young people are residing in as of 31 March 2023.

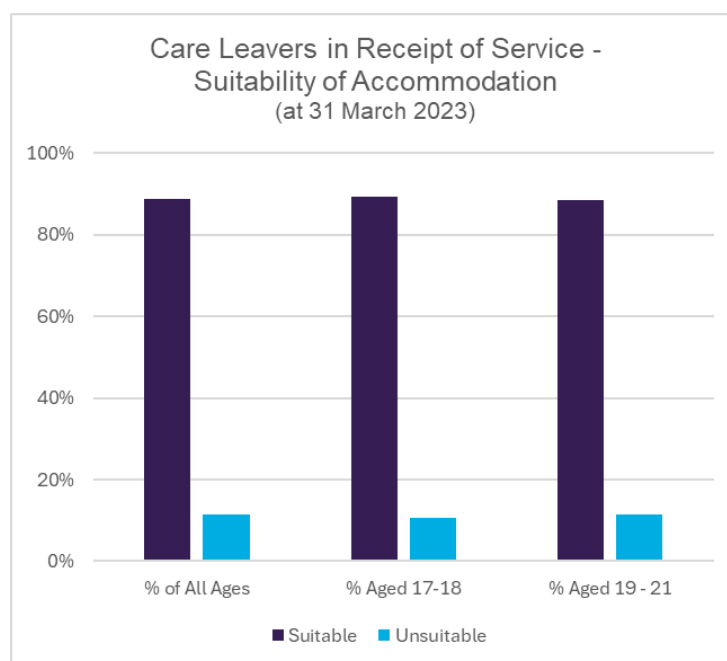
126 (45.9%) of Care Experienced young people are living in semi-independent or independent accommodation, 44 (16%) are residing in supported lodgings family-based care. There are currently 31 (11.3%) Care Experienced young people who have remained with their foster carers in a Staying-Put Arrangement.

1 (0.3%) of BCP Council's Care Experienced young people population is residing in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.



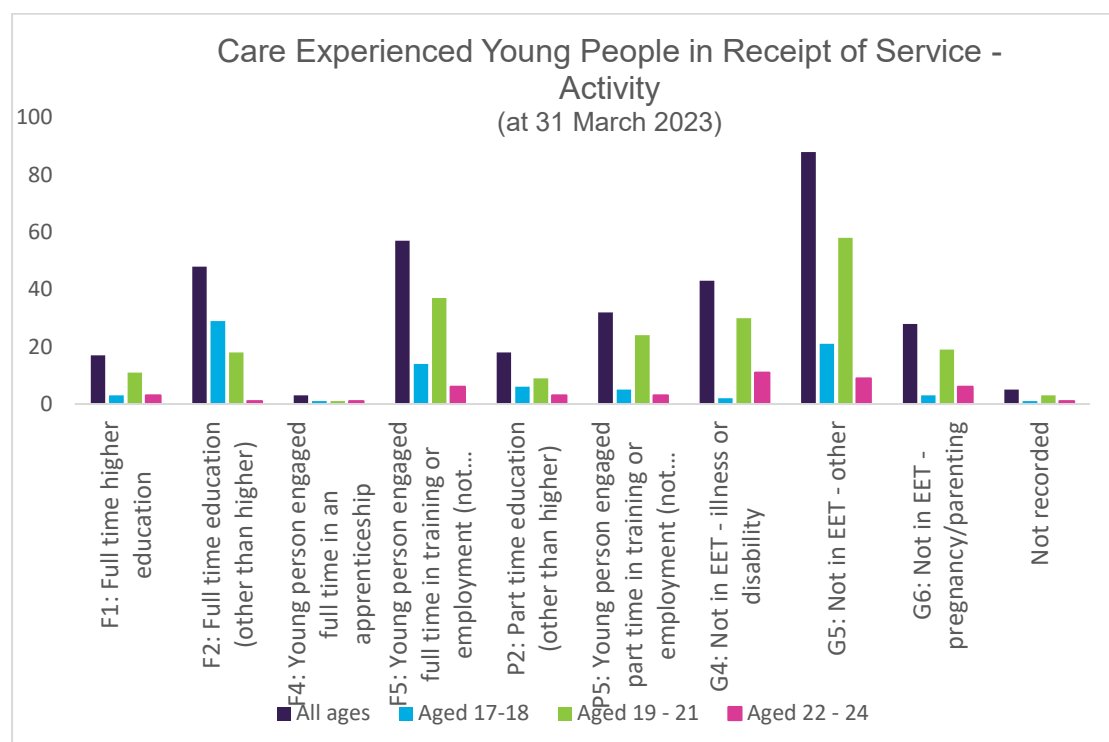
9.6 Care Experienced Young People - Accommodation Suitability by Age

Of the total Care Experienced young people cohort (274) who are deemed to be living in suitable accommodation, there are 83 (88.7%) aged 17 – 18 years and 191 (89.2%) aged 19 – 21 years living in suitable accommodation (equates to 89.0% in the Southwest, and 89.0% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/2022).



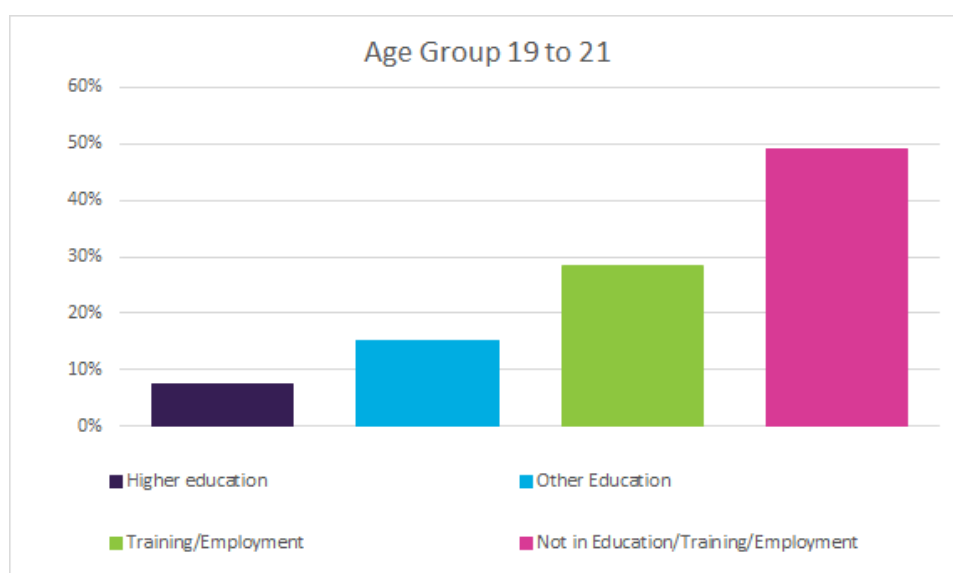
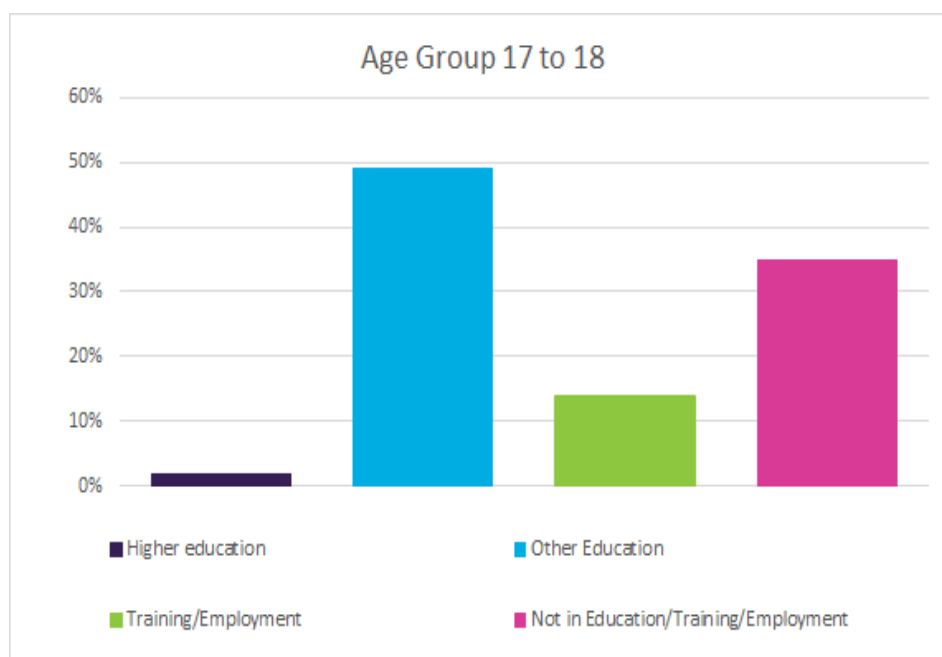
9.7 Care Experienced Young People who are in Employment, Education and Training by Education Type

Employment, Education and Training data is based on an overall cohort of 343 Care Experienced young people. Of this cohort there are 84 (53.6%) in education, employment, or training. 125 (17.2%) are in full time education, employment, or training, 59 (32%) are in part time education, employment or training. 159 (46.3%) were not in employment, education or training.



9.8 Care Experienced Young People who are in Employment, Education and Training by Age

As of the 31 March there are 184 Care Experienced young people in Employment, Education and Training; of this 61 (33.1%) are aged 17 – 18 years, 105 (57%) are aged 19 – 21 years and 18 (9.7%) are aged 22 – 24 years. This compares to an England average of 55.0%, a regional average of 56.0% and 57.7% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/22 for 19 – 21 year old Care Experienced young people.



10. Supply of Accommodation Provision

10.1 A National Picture

It is evident across England, Wales, and Scotland that there are concerns around how the children's social care market is currently operating, specifically the issue of how sufficiency continues to be a major challenge for every local authority.

On 31 March 2023: 83,840 children were in the care of local authorities, up 2% on 31 March 2022. This is contrast to the BCP Council figure which increased by 4.6%.

10.2 Registered Residential Children's Homes

As of 31 March 2023 there was a 9% increase in the number of children's homes (to 2,880) and a 7% increase in the number of places (to 10,818) compared with 31 March 2022. Of these, 81% were run for profit.

As of 31 March 2023 private companies ran 85% of children's homes (2,450), providing 81% of places (8,791). Local authorities ran 12% (333) of children's homes, providing 14% of places (1,529).

Although all regions had an increase in the number of children's homes during 2022/2023, homes are still not evenly distributed across England. Similar to 2021/2022, the Northwest accounts for a quarter of all children's homes and almost a quarter of all places.

BCP Council's sufficiency of registered residential children's home provision has increased by 2 homes in the last 12 months, existing providers offering additional capacity of 4 beds (26%).

Unregistered provision is only used by BCP in an emergency, where no suitable registered alternative provision can be found. It is recognised that often our most complex young people are the ones who are moved to these provisions. The placement search for a registered placements continues alongside weekly visits, professional's meetings and senior leadership oversight that ensures any child living in an unregistered accommodation is well supported. Any such providers are also encouraged and supported by BCP Children's Commissioning to register with OFSTED to regulate their provision.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, Ofsted carried out 2,741 full inspections of children's homes. This figure captures multiple inspections of some settings, while others were not inspected at during this period. In terms of outcomes, 73% were judged outstanding or good (8% outstanding and 65% good), with the remainder being judged requires improvement to be good (19%) or inadequate (9%).

Within BCP 2 homes were inspected during 2022/2023, both are owned by the same independent provider, 1 home saw an improvement from requires improvement to good and 1 home saw a decline in rating from good to requires improvement.

Independent providers receive many "request for placements" from local authorities across the UK and therefore have considerable options when matching against their homes' Statement of Purpose and children and young people already living within the home.

10.3 Residential Special Schools

As of 31 March 2023, there were 56 residential special schools registered as children's homes nationally, offering 1,457 places. This is a 10% decrease in the number of providers and a 7% decrease in the number of places since March 2022, when these totals were 62 and 1,573, respectively.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, nationally no residential special schools registered as children's homes opened.

There has been no growth in BCP local area residential special school provision for over three years.

10.4 Residential Family Centres

Nationally Residential Family Centres represent a small proportion of social care providers and placements overall, but saw a substantial increase compared with 2021/2022, with a 15% increase in settings (from 68 to 78) and a 20% increase in potential capacity (from 371 to 444).

There are no Residential Family Centre's located within the BCP area.

10.5 Fostering Households

At the end of March 2023, there were around 43,400 fostering households in England. This total has remained stable over the last 5 years, but the make-up has altered.

Nationally since 2019, the number of mainstream local authority households has fallen by 2,560 (11.4%), and the number of family and friend's households has increased by 1,470 (21%). The largest subset of fostering households continues to be mainstream local authority households, which currently account for 34% of the total.

As of March 2023, the Independent Fostering Agency sector reported 15,170 (34%) mainstream fostering households, although there has been a reported increase nationally of 45 households the overall percentage of the fostering market remains at 34%.

At the end of March 2023, family and friend's households (sometimes known as kinship foster care) accounted for 8,400 (19%) of all active fostering households, an increase of 1,470 (21%) households since 2019.

Overall, the local authority Fostering Service had a net gain of 14 households (28%) from 2021/2022.

10.6 Independent Fostering Agencies

The Independent Fostering Agency sector now accounts for 15,170 (34%) mainstream fostering households nationally, the percentage of the market has remained the same compared to 2019. There were also 319 independent fostering agencies operating in England on 31 March 2023; of these, 85% were run for profit.

BCP Council's local sufficiency within the Independent Fostering Agency market has seen a decline of 8 Independent Fostering Agency households (8%) during the last 12mths.

Providers now have more power in the market and can choose which children they take. This means it takes much longer to find suitable homes for children. It also means that providers are less willing to enter block contracts.

10.7 Average Cost of Care - Nationally

The Local Government Association, following a survey of all local authorities in October and November 2023, has reported that the number of children's social care placements costing £10,000 or more per week has risen in five years.

Based on the responses to this survey, local authorities across England spent approximately £4.7 billion on Children's Social Care placements in 2022/23, compared to a budgeted figure of £4.1 billion – an overspend of almost £670 million (16%).

There were 120 such placements in 2018/19, rising to 1,510 in 2022/23. For most local authorities the highest cost fell between £9,600 and £32,500 a week. Nearly every local authority (98 per cent) said a lack of choice in placements was driving the high prices.

9 out of 10 (93%) Local Authorities also highlighted children needing help with increasingly complex needs, including mental health needs or exhibiting challenging behaviours, as a factor.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care found that investment of £2.6 billion over four years was needed to reform the children's social care system and rebalancing spending towards earlier help. To date, the Government has committed £200 million over two years.

It has been reported that now more than 80% of residential children's homes in England are run to make a profit, with large, debt-laden chains owned by private equity investors increasingly taking over smaller companies.

10.8 Overview of Local Provision

The table below includes local Children's Social Care internal provision and externally commissioned provision specifically for Children in Care (under 18 years), 163 providers who offer a total of 505 beds. Please note, some providers are commissioned for more than one provision type.

Overall, 63.8% (332) of the overall children in Care population is placed in foster care (in-house and IFA) provision.

Placement Type	Description	Number of Providers in BCP	Maximum Capacity within BCP
In-House Foster Care	Foster carers commissioned by the Local Authority. (123 mainstream / 3 Parent and Child / 6 foster to adopt carers / 4 shared carers) Excludes family and friend carers.	136 (83.4%)	235 (46.5%)
Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)	Foster carers commissioned from the independent and voluntary sector.	15 (9.2%)	209 (41.3%)

Residential Children's Homes	Ofsted registered children's home run by the voluntary and independent sectors	5 (3%)	17 (3.3%)
Supported Accommodation Provision	Excludes hostel and foyer accommodation provision	6 (3.6%)	42 (8.3%)
Training Flats	Local authority owned flats, funded by Children's Social Care used by 17+ Child in Care or Care Experienced Young People preparing for Independence	1 (0.6%)	2 (0.4%)
TOTAL		163	505

10.9 Capacity within the Local Care Market for Care Experienced Young People

The table includes the number of Children's Social Care commissioned provision specifically for Care Experienced young people (over 18 years), a total of 176 beds.

This is in addition to Housing Related Support Accommodation provision which is commissioned by BCP Council's Housing Service.

Please note, some providers are commissioned for more than one property type.

Placement Type	Description	Number of Providers	Maximum Capacity within BCP
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Accommodation	Accommodation provision funded by Children's Social Care for young people who do not have leave to remain. (Housing of Multiple Occupancy)	3	30 (17%)
Independent Living Properties	Self-contained independent living accommodation for 18 years plus Care Experience Young People which is funded by Children's Social Care (Wallisdown Road, Platform House)	3	33 (18.7%)
External Supported Lodgings	Supported Lodgings Carers specifically for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	1	2 (1.1%)
In-House Supported Lodgings	Supported Lodging Carers employed by the local authority to offer accommodation and support to Care Experience Young People	29	34 (19.3%)

In-House and IFA Staying Put Arrangements	Extension of the initial fostering arrangements for Children in Care post 18 years (37 in-house / 11 Independent Fostering Agencies)	48	53 (30.1%)
Housing Related Supported Accommodation	Accommodation is available to all eligible young people residing in BCP aged 18 years plus, not just Care Experience Young People	1	30 (17%)
Independent Non-Maintained Residential Special School (INMSS)	Cambian provision for post 18years with an Education Health and Care Plans	1	28 (15.9%)
TOTAL		86	176

10.10 In-House Foster Care

In accordance with the [Children Act 1989](#) section [22C\(7\)](#), in determining which is the most appropriate placement the local authority must 'give preference to' a placement with a connected person i.e. a relative, friend or other person connected with the child, reflecting the principle that children should, wherever possible be brought up in their families and communities, if they cannot remain with their parents

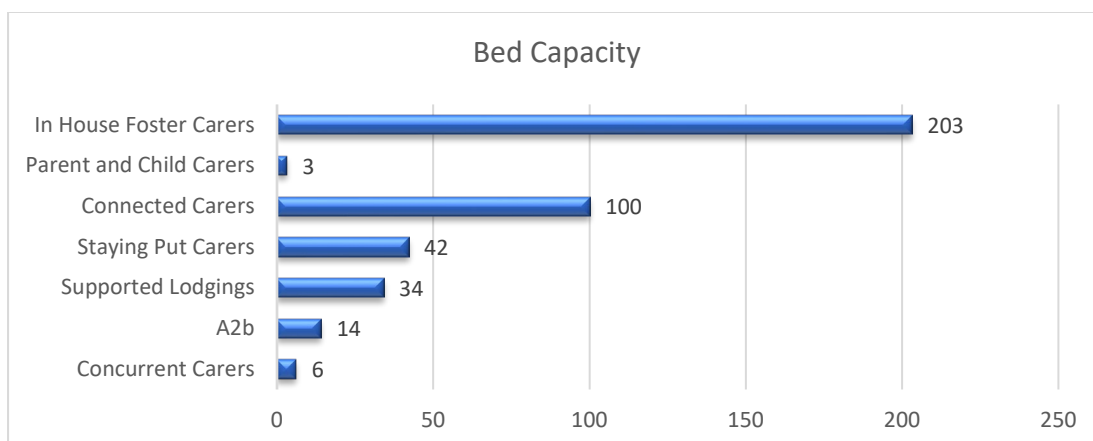
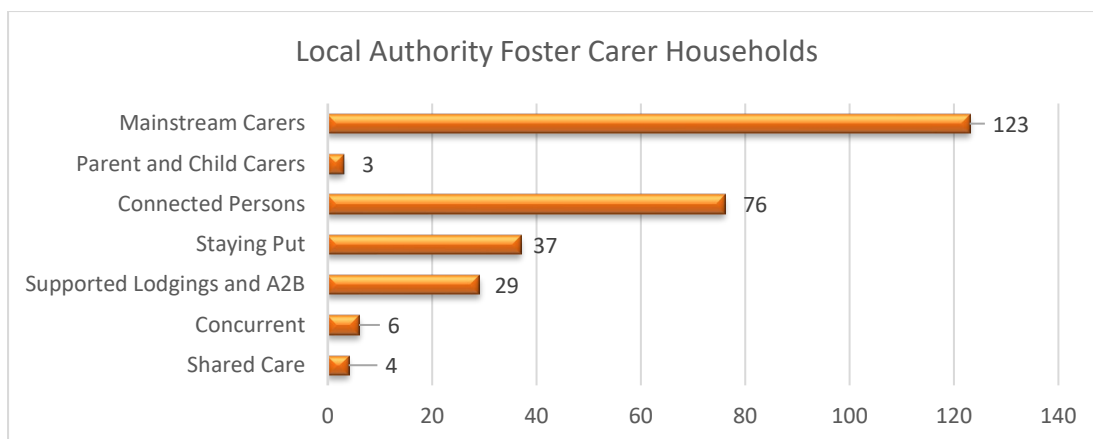
As of the 31 March 2023, there were 258 children placed with in-house foster carers, this equates to 49.6% of the overall children in Care population.

The In-House Fostering Service supported 278 fostering households, providing bed capacity for 402 children and young people. This marks an increase from last year's 369 (8%).

In the last 12 months the Fostering Service had 63 new fostering households approved (mainstream and connected carers). This is a net gain of 14 households (28%) from 2021/2022 (49).

46 fostering households resigned. 15 foster carers were mainstream, 24 were kinship carers, 1 shared carer and 6 supported lodgings carers. Reasons for resignations were not recorded.

During 2022/2023, the number of children and young people (0 – 18 years+), including Staying Put and Supported Lodgings provision has ranged from 332 to 360, which is the highest number of reported children and young people placed with in-house foster carers. This does not include the children that were placed with carers through the out-of-hours retained scheme. As of the 31 March there were 42 different Care Experienced young people in Staying Put arrangements with 37 different foster carers.



10.11 Supply of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) Placements

BCP Council works with 18 local authorities in a consortia arrangement across the South-Central region for the commissioning of Independent Fostering Agency provision. The strategic contract management function and the production of both regional and local annual sufficiency strategy provides an important insight into sufficiency planning with the external markets.

As of the 31 March 2023, there were 74 children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies, this equates to 14.2% of the overall children in Care population.

The Framework offers the following LOTs:

- Lot 1: Standard Fostering Placements (0 years +)
- Lot 2: Placements for Children with Disabilities
- Lot 3: Parent and Child Placements
- Lot 4: Enhanced Fostering Placements.

Independent Fostering Agency Framework data is taken from the South-Central Consortia Framework Sufficiency Analysis. No 2022/2023 household or bed data is available for Off Framework placement providers.

Overall, there has been a framework household reduction of 8% which equates to 10 beds.

There has also been a large reduction in the number of framework carer capacity, those who are registered for children aged 5 – 10 years (26 beds / -28%) and 11 years (30 beds / -34%).

Further analysis is required to understand the falling framework availability and if this is linked to Independent Fostering Agencies moving off the framework.

Of the number of Framework foster placements made with providers, 27 (36%) of them are within BCP, however there are 47 (64%) placed out of area.

There are 209 available placements within area the BCP area, of which only 27 (12%) are being utilised.

Summary of current IFA placements				
Within BCP		Outside of BCP		Total
27	36%	47	64%	74

Year	Households	Max Placements	Vacancies	Vacancy %
2020	88	195	23	12%
2021	98	217	37	17%
2022	101	219	24	11%
2023	93	209	32	15%
Difference	-8	-10	+8	-4%

10.12 Registered Residential Children's Homes

BCP Council works with 21 Local Authorities in a consortia arrangement across the South-Central region for the commissioning of registered residential provision.

Collaboration with the Southwest Sufficiency Project supports and facilitates regional data sharing arrangements and the potential to develop a regional commissioning network and purchasing arrangements, with a shared objective of local homes for local children.

Framework Providers

As of the 31 March 2023, there were 11 framework providers within 20 miles of BCP offering a total number of 30 homes with 119 beds. In total BCP Council has 12 children placed with 5 framework providers

2 providers are located within the BCP area.

BCP Council has 5 children placed within 20 miles and a further 7 children placed with 4 framework providers located more than 20 miles from the BCP area.

Non-Framework Providers

Within BCP there are a further 3 providers who are not registered with the framework, they offer a further 5 beds.

Summary of current Framework placements				
Within BCP		Outside of BCP		Total
5	41%	7	58%	12

Sufficiency of Provision

The number of Framework registered residential provision has decreased by 4 homes in the last 12 months, this has resulted in a loss of 20 beds located within 20 miles of the BCP area.

The number of vacancies available has decreased significantly by 6.6%.

No growth in the market was reported by non-framework providers during 2022/2023.

There are 10 framework beds available within the BCP area, of which only 50% (5) are being utilised. Overall, there are 5 providers offering 17 beds.

Summary of Framework Sufficiency within 20 miles				
Year	Registered Framework Homes	Available beds	Vacancies	Vacancy %
2020	31	138	21	15.2%
2021	29	124	28	22.6%
2022	34	139	36	25.9%
2023	30	119	23	19.3%
Difference	-11.7%	-14.4%	36%	-6.6%

Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools

BCP Council also forms part of the Southwest regional flexible framework partnership for the commissioning of Independent Non-Maintained Specialist School (INMSS) and Special Post-16

Institutions (SPI) provision for children, young people and young adults aged up to 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHP).

Important to note that one provider has a 28-bed registered Independent Non-Maintained Specialist School (INMSS) within BCP which inflates the number of beds available. BCP Council historically has not used these beds as pupils generally attend as day pupils.

10.13 Supply of Supported Accommodation

All Supported Accommodation provision within the BCP area is privately owned.

BCP Council does not own or run any Supported Accommodation provision for children in Care. All provision is spot purchased, historically there was a consortia framework arrangement in place with 6 other Local Authorities, however this ceased in January 2023.

Supported accommodation provides accommodation with support for 16- and 17- year-old children in Care, to enable them to live semi-independently. From October 2023 all supported accommodation provision needed to be registered with Ofsted.

As of 31 March 2023, BCP Council had 6 Providers offering 37 beds, in addition to this Housing Services commission a 14-bed unit specifically for children aged 16-17 years who require accommodation under Southwark (a total of 51 beds).

BCP Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People

Action Plan

2024 / 2028

Updated January 2025

Version 1

Introduction

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council Sufficiency Statement for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 – 2028 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation. Sufficiency of provision ensures that children and young people can access the right placements in the right place and at the right time, which helps them to achieve positive outcomes in care and prepares them for adulthood.

BCP Children's Services is committed to providing the right service at the right time for children and families recognising that at times additional support may be required to help them stay together. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs the Local Authorities does. If it is not safe for children to stay at home then services will intervene and strive to ensure they are given the care, support, and stability that they deserve.

The reduction in Local Authority funding means that even greater focus needs to be given to delivering value for money in the commissioning of provision for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People. The challenge for BCP, as with all other Local Authorities, is to continue to improve and sustain high quality provision and services whilst also delivering efficiencies. Financial pressures at a national level is also likely to result in continued financial pressure at a local level and will mean that BCP needs to continue to try to achieve value for money through commissioning. This Strategy sets out how the BCP Council plans to meet these challenges over the coming four years (i.e. 2024 – 2028) with annual updates.

Governance of the plan

Governance of the Sufficiency Action Plan is through Children's Services Quality, Performance Improvement Board, through a highlight report, and impacts reported to Children's Services Improvement Board. There is a named accountable senior officer to lead each of the priority areas. In discharging their accountabilities, the named senior officer will consider:

- ∞
- NS
1. Formulation of a strategic perspective
 2. The position at the commencement of the action plan
 3. The 'gap' between current position and aspirations, and identification of actions required to close this gap.
 4. In closing the gap, the named accountable senior officer will consider best practice and lessons learnt from other organisations.
 5. Synergies will be considered against other programmes, more importantly any strategy and actions will be co-produced with partners, children, and young people
 6. Performance metrics will be used to ensure the action plan is delivering the intended outcomes.
 7. The Voice of the Child informs all stages and actions.

RAG	Description	Total out of 51 actions	%
	High risk – action not started yet but expected it to have commenced / escalation required due to performance concerns /significant delay – action is a worry	1	2%
	Significant risk – plan in place, action started but further work required to ensure improvement.	33	65%
	On track – running to plan and within timescale, performance has improved against the plan	11	21%
	Actioned – implemented and embedded	0	0%
	Completed and can be removed from plan	3	6%
	Not yet started	3	6%

1. Ensure there are sufficient local family-based care available in BCP, so more children can live within a family home.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
1.1	Review the in-house foster carer recruitment and retention strategy with the aim of increasing recruited of foster carers.	Nicole Mills	30/04/2025		New in-house foster carer recruitment and retention strategy in place with clear targets and outcome measures.	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews for Recruitment & Advertising Officer taking place 21.11.24 Recruitment strategy to be reviewed once R&A Officer in post. SME support in place to support development of Service Plan. 	
1.2	Work collaboratively with regional colleagues, to develop the Southwest regional fostering recruitment hub with the aim of increasing sufficiency of in-house provision.	Nicole Mills	31/03/2025		The quality and number of enquiries from potential foster carers will increase.	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southwest Hub went live 01.05.24 Monitoring of enquiries is undertaken monthly with the Hub. The level of enquiries has been less than under previous arrangement, and quality is being challenged. Risk presented to SLT and CMB for oversight and is being monitored. 	
1.3	Continue to provide high quality training and support with the aim of retaining foster carers.	Nicole Mills	31/03/2025		Carers will remain fostering for BCP for at least 5 years post approval.	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training compliance is at 85% across all mandatory training requirements. Monitoring Retention rates through quarterly reports. 	In-House Foster Carers continue to engage in training provided, Carers skills are up to date which improve outcomes for children placed.
1.5	Evaluate the internal fostering service to ensure provision is created with an aim of reducing the numbers of children going into residential care who have a care plan of fostering.	Nicole Mills	31/03/2025		Numbers of children in Care living in a residential setting will be in-line with regional and statistical neighbours.	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering Position Statement has been completed and presented at SLT. Action plan has been agreed. 	Area of focus has been agreed and the action plan will continue to be regularly monitored for progress.
1.6	Ensure internal Supported Lodgings provision is seen as a viable option for CEYP by raising awareness of its benefits and positive outcomes. Collaborative work will ensure this option is explored for all children in Care aged 16 plus as part of our planning.	Nicole Mills	31/03/2025		IATG will consider in-house Supported Lodgings as an option for all children in Care aged 16+	Rubina Payne Jonathan Wade Nigel Burton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet started. 	
1.7	Work collaboratively to register our internal Supported Lodgings Scheme in-line with Ofsted guidance.	Nicole Mills	30/06/2025		We will have in-house sufficiency of homes for our children in Care aged 16-18 who are ready to develop their independence.	Rubina Payne Jonathan Wade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Osted Registration Application has been submitted – requires updated DBS checks for Service Manager & Named Manager –both DBS applications to be submitted by 15.11.24. 	
1.8	Develop a recruitment strategy for the Supported Lodgings Scheme once it is registered.	Nicole Mills	30/04/2025		We will have in-house sufficiency to offer homes to our children in Care aged 16+ and reduce spend on external provision	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated advertising & recruitment tools have been designed in collaboration with BCP Comm's team. The service is actively advertising for carers in preparation for Ofsted registration 	
1.9	Bring the Special Guardianship Service back in-house from Aspire Adoption	Nicole Mills	01/04/2025		SGO Assessment and Support will be held in-house, supporting the wider Kinship Strategy and delivering a high-quality service.	Rubina Payne Allan Charlton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal basis agreed and updating Inter-Agency Agreement instructed by BCP Council. First draft to be completed by 30.11.24. HR discussions with staff to begin Nov 24. Current projected time scale for the first phase of completion 17.02.24 	
1.10	Ensure BCP work regionally with the South-Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework.	Karen Starkey	31/12/2024		3-yr Commissioning Plan Procurement pipeline in place that	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Senior Commissioning Officer attending all Framework partnership quarterly meetings, from October 2024, reestablishing BCP's views in respect 	The South Central IFA Framework annual sufficiency data informs the BCP Sufficiency planning.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
					provides sufficient time to effectively engage in regional arrangements		of regional sufficiency requirements and contractual arrangements.	
1.11	Re-build partnerships with local on and off framework Independent Fostering Agency providers, noting the number of local IFA foster care beds which are filled by other Local Authority children.	Karen Starkey	31/12/2024		Fostering Sufficiency Strategy in place with clear market development opportunities	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Central IFA raw sufficiency data for 2024/2025 received in November 2024, further analysis required. Ofsted and NAFP updates to LA Partners and Provider market. 	
					Local provision is mapped and mechanisms in place to monitor this for placement finding	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024/2025 regional sufficiency strategy for Independent Fostering Agencies within BCP and South Central expected from the contract management function (Southampton). 	
					Provider Engagement events in place and well attended	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Central IFA Provider Event took place in November 2024, attended by CSC Senior Commissioning Officer. 	
					Increased use of local IFA provision for BCP children	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet started 	

2. When children have to live in a residential children's home, ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot or chose not to live in a family setting.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
2.1	Improve data reporting, analyse all cohort needs across the service, benchmark and understand trends to meet and predict demand for children requiring residential care or access to respite provision.	Karen Starkey	31/12/2024		Commissioning dashboard in place that highlights demand, need, BCP capacity, cost and quality and informs market development	Jonathan Wade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Commissioning Dashboard developed that shows demand, timelines and cost of placements Care Episode Gateway dashboard developed that shows the placements, type, moves, cost movement Independence and Transitions Gateway dashboard developed to show current situation of living arrangements from 15+; move on aspirations, numbers of CEYP and financial impact Workshop to conclude governance and reporting lines (14/11/24) High-Cost Placement Board and Sufficiency Board to be established Dec 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the challenges of meeting the needs of our CYP in a timely way

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
2.2	Map all local residential provision, understand usage by other Local Authorities and impact on local sufficiency and determine need for BCP.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Commissioning dashboard in place that highlights demand, need, BCP capacity, cost and quality	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residential providers located within BCP have been mapped, number of beds, voids and BCP usage is collated on a quarterly basis. Proactive bed and capacity tracking begun 1 existing provider has opened a new homes within BCP specifically for Children in Care who have a learning disability Ofsted ratings of all provision is known and monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local BCP residential market has increased by 2 beds (11%). The home opened in March 2024. 2024/2025 - Q3 data BCP had one CiC placed.
2.3	Work strategically with the South-Central Residential Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision based on analysis of need.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		3-yr Commissioning Plan Procurement pipeline in place that provides sufficient time to effectively review regional arrangements	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Senior Commissioning Officer allocated to South Central Frameworks ensuring oversight and regular attendance at Partnership Boards. Sufficiency data for 2024/2025 requested – confirmed completion date of December 2024, in anticipation the raw data has been requested so benchmarking can commence. 	
2.4	Consider the regional framework arrangements based on national findings and provider feedback, linked to the benefits of Local Authority partnership working.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		3-yr Commissioning Plan Procurement pipeline in place that provides sufficient time to effectively review regional arrangements	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts register identifies all framework arrangements BCP Children's Commissioning ceased the management of the South-Central Consortia Contract Management function in March 2023. Dedicated resource attending all Framework partnership events, reestablishing BCP. 	
2.5	Hold providers accountable for their charges and understand the level of profit to ensure value for money and delivery of outcomes.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Excellent Value for Money is achieved by staff who are skilled and confident in negotiating VFM and results are tracked and budget pressures reduced	Jonathan Wade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of providers backed by PETs complete Tracking of granular placement costs underway through Care Episode Gateway Development of a 'breakdown of Costs' guide in progress to inform operational and placement staff negotiations To review Individual Placement Agreement Further develop benchmarked unit costs Centralised fee uplift process in place for 2024/25 - 3% uplift position Open Book Accounting approach to higher inflationary requests informing fee negotiations Analysis of fee increase requests for 2025/2026 has commenced. Training skills analysis and plan to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of the providers who are Private Equity Trust backed informing confidence to challenge costs
2.6	Produce a Short Breaks Position Statement, review needs and eligibility criteria, ensure local service can meet all needs. Co-produce the offer with all partners.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Children with SEND inform a new offer that reduces risk of family breakdown and entry to care	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Breaks Position Statement produced and signed off by Children's Services Senior Leadership Team – July 2024 Co-Production Implementation Group Terms of Reference produced and meetings to commence in November 2024. Providers of Short Break Services have been visited in person and contract monitoring meetings have taken place. Procurement advice sought in respect of historic Short Break Framework arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All BCP Short Break commissioned services are known and mapped.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
2.7	Work with regional colleagues and with local NHS partners to consider the development of a residential provision for children with complex needs.	Nicole Mills	01/02/2025		Children with complex needs are supported closer to home	Sarah Langdale Sam Best Aleksandra Zabielska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working with a local specialist provider continues, development of a provision for children with complex needs – planning application submitted Initial meeting with Gloucester colleagues to take learning from Trevone House model. DfE Capital funding launched in November 2025, initial working group established to consider BCP position. Data collation has commenced. Tier 4 cohort is being mapped 	
2.8	Explore regional secure provision through the Southwest Sufficiency group.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		BCP secures favourable options and unit costs for BCP children in the SW region	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts with the South West Sufficiency Project established, current focus is on residential sufficiency. 	

3. Increase supported accommodation provision and further develop a sufficiency model which offers a range of provision (high to low support) so children and young people have a choice to move through a pathway of services offering a range of homes across BCP which shall prepare them for independence.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success Measure	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
3.1	Understand the sufficiency and quality of local provision, though effective process and activity, for example through monitoring Ofsted registration and mapping of providers.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		The commissioning cycle is given sufficient time and resources for the 'Analyse/Review' stages to aid effective planning	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All providers located within BCP have been mapped, number of beds, voids and BCP usage is collated on a quarterly basis. 1 new provider / 2 existing providers have opened new homes within BCP Location of all supported accommodation provision across BCP is known Ofsted ratings of all provision is known and monitoring. Robust monitoring and reporting of provider Ofsted registration status is known and monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Providers located within BCP are mapped in respect of location. Increase of capacity within BCP, 17 beds 5 Beds identified as low support for preparation to independence. BCP usage of local provision is known and mapped.
3.2	Implement greater oversight of young people who have high levels of support packages, implementing regular meetings with providers and all partners	Karen Starkey	31/05/2025		The needs of children are adequately met through robust funding agreements achieving VFM	Jonathan Wade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of 'Care Episode' Gateway (CEG) Implementation of High-Cost Placements Board Weekly review at CEG Dual and Tri-partite funding agreements Exploration of an all-age hub for CYPCC/CHC MARP S117 tracked 	
3.3	Ensure preparation for independence is planned and managed in a timely manner and ensure support hours / packages are reasonable, in line with independence planning.	Nicole Mills	31/03/2025		Earlier independence and transition planning enables less restrictive options and high cost	Jonathan Wade Nigel Burton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of 'Independence and Transition' Gateway Care Episode Gateway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateway dashboard data demonstrating a longer term planning horizon is beginning to take effect.
3.4	Seek to utilise local provision for BCP children rather than them residing out of area.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Local provision is mapped and mechanisms in place to monitor this for placement finding	Jonathan Wade Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All provision within BCP is known, data of voids is shared with the Placements Team and Children's Social Care. Providers are requested to complete a weekly data return of local vacancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local capacity is known and there are processes in place to monitor and utilise more effectively.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success Measure	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
3.5	Develop registered supported accommodation provision locally for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care aged under 18yrs.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2027		A new UASC intake plan is in place that provides holistic support	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial discussions have taken place with two providers (Valient Homes and Pivotal Homes), provision needs to be Ofsted registered. Links with existing providers shared for learning. 	
3.6	Review commissioning intentions for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced Young People, ensuring accommodation is suitable.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		A new UASC intake plan is in place that provides holistic support	Sarah Langdale Nigel Burton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagnostic review of all Children's Social Care commissioned provision has been completed. Partnership with Housing has been established. Contractual documentation has been shared with Housing colleagues for review Cohort or provider data collated and shared with Housing Application to Building Stronger Foundations Board (BSF) transformation programme for funding of officer to support with the development of this workstream. 	
3.7	Work collaboratively with our external market, in-house supported lodgings scheme and housing to meet the accommodation needs of all Care Experienced Young People	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Forward plan of engagement events drives high levels of engagement and co-production	Sarah Langdale Rubina Payne Nigel Burton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) accommodation tender supported by Commissioning in the evaluation process and award process. Centrepont were successful. (additional accommodation available for all young people including Care Experienced) Collaboration with external provider (Valiant Homes), resulted in a new 19 bed unit opening at the end of 2022/2023. An additional 4 bed unit has been offered and is currently being considered based on sufficiency needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 19 units across BCP for young people. Additional 12 units across BCP which shall be supported by the in-house fostering service 'Always There' scheme

87 4. Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children's Social Care and Commissioning, focusing on the Joint Housing priorities for Care Experience Young People.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
4.1	Work together across all Directorates to embed a Corporate Parenting response to the accommodation needs of Care Experienced Young People.	Nicole Mills	31/03/27		Young people will live in safe, suitable accommodation which meets need.	Nigel Burton Sarah Langdale Ben Tomlinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagnostic review of all Children's Social Care commissioned accommodation provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced Young People has been completed. Updating Sufficiency Strategy in process of being completed. Dedicated CSC housing workers (x 2) recruited via DfE funding to support Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in young people (0-25yrs). Named link worker for CEYP in Housing. CEYP identified as target cohort for Homewards Project in BCP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving shared oversight of planning for young people leaving our care leading to better outcomes. Referrals for Joint Housing Assessment now being made as our Children in Care turn 17, supporting earlier planning. Plans are ratified through established panels, ensuring oversight and reducing any delay. Young people are more informed about their options and move on plans for independence. Reduction in use of B&B, assisted by robust joint working with housing and fostering. Young people at risk of homelessness identified at an earlier stage. The number of homeless CEYP has reduced and the overall cohort of YP in suitable accommodation is now consistently over 90%.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
4.2	Review and map the sufficiency of supported and independent provision available across BCP for Care Experienced Young People.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Local provision is mapped and mechanisms in place to monitor this for placement finding	Sarah Langdale Tracey Kybert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All supported accommodation provision has been mapped, number of beds, voids and BCP children placed is captured at the end of each quarter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All supported accommodation provision across BCP is known, informing sufficiency planning.
4.3	Review and re-launch the Youth Homelessness Board.	Kelly Deane	31/12/2024		Governance structure in place to oversee planning and provision for YP in the BCP area	Ben Tomlinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference are in process of update and on target to support re-launch in December 2024. 	
4.4	Review the housing pathway and options for Care Experienced Young People.	Nicole Mills	31/10/2024		All housing options for UASC and CEYP are arranged in a timely way	Nigel Burton Sarah Langdale Ben Tomlinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation provision commissioned by Children's Social Care has been mapped, data has been shared with Housing. Sufficiency data for Housing commissioned services has been provided for mapping. Cohort data has been received, detailing the number of Care Experienced Young People residing in Housing commissioned provision – to inform the sufficiency planning. Needs analysis of young people housing accommodation, commissioning plan and strategy workstream will commence in December 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence and Transitions Gateway is beginning to take a longer term view of the aspirations for independent living options for CEYP. Those 18+ with LTR are prioritised for move on support
4.7	Embed training and share knowledge of the Joint Housing Protocols.	Nicole Mills	31/03/24		Staff will understand and follow Protocol to ensure our young people in/ leaving Care have somewhere safe to live	Nigel Burton Tracey Kybert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint training delivered across Children's Services and Housing. Plan in place to deliver rolling training programme. Work underway with Comms colleagues to deliver online training recording for easy access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in Care being referred for Joint Housing Assessment (JHA) at age 17, reducing delay in planning for their independence. IATG in place, monitoring progress of plans from JHA. Increase of Care Experienced YP living in suitable accommodation to over 90% as at Oct 2024.
4.8	Support the delivery of the Council's Housing strategy.	Karen Starkey	31/03/24		Young people moving on to independence have a range of living options available that are planned in a timely way	Sarah Langdale Ben Tomlinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current version of the Housing Homelessness Strategy requested Independence and Transitions Gateway is beginning to take a longer-term view of the aspirations for independent living options for CEYP. 	

5. Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement in order to further develop services to meet the needs of BCP children and young people.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
5.1	Re-build the relationships with BCP providers and review the commissioning arrangements with on and off framework providers.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		A trusting relationship that enables BCP to secure favourable options and unit costs for provision in BCP area	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person provider visits to homes has commenced, 4 providers across 6 provisions have been visited to date. A further two homes have planned visits in November 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes visited meet the QA standard and are homely.
5.2	Establish quarterly provider engagement events for each care sector, seek to understand barriers, develop the market to meet all children and young people's care needs including those with a disability.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Forward plan of engagement events drives high levels of engagement and co-production	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in Care population data is known, further analysis is required in respect of population need. 	
5.3	Actively engage with the right providers who wish to be inventive within the market.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Commissioning principles that encourage the right providers and values to develop caring, safe and effective services for BCP children	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacity to increase provider engagement and relationship building 1 x provider has successfully submitted planning for a 3 bed home located in Christchurch, this shall be for children with complex needs. Conversations continue with x 2 existing providers who wish to expand within BCP, discussions continue in respect of sufficiency need. Initial discussions with x 2 new providers who have expressed an interest in opening homes within BCP. Further conversation required about location and ability to meet need. 	
5.4	Create a market development plan of provision.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Providers know how to engage with BCP council on market development opportunities	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet started 	
5.5	Participate in regional collaborations – to enhance learning, practice and aid the shaping of the market.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		BCP Children's Commissioning options are informed by best practice/benchmarking	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated commissioning resource has been assigned to attend all regional collaborations (South Central and Southwest). Regional meetings being attended, focus as of Q3 is planning for fee increases. 	BCP cohort and finance data has been shared with regional colleagues in order to develop a regional sufficiency statement which shall inform the market of sufficiency need.
5.6	Develop reunification and a family support offer, consider returning children to their families where appropriate.	Juliette Blake	31/10/2024		Reunification and support offer is in place and effective at returning more children to their families	Pippa Emmerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate (BCP) has been commissioned to deliver family therapy for reunification of children in care. The service commenced in Q3. £81k of funding for 2024/2025, funding will be carried over into 2025/2026. Commissioned on behalf of Early Help. Contract monitoring meetings will be arranged. Diagnostic review of reunification commissioned services has been completed – links with Service Manager of Early Help planned in order to understand contractual arrangements and impact. 	To be determined over the contract period, the aim is to reunify child home and reduce the number of children in care. Contract monitoring has commenced.
5.7	Consider the need for a Supported Accommodation framework, seek view from the market and Local Authorities with established framework arrangements.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		10 year view of accommodation and support options aids transition to independence and commissioning strategy	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation needs pipeline (age 16-18+) produced and informing discussions at I&T Gateway Initial scoping for a framework has commenced, contractual documentation has been reviewed, links with other Local Authorities has been established and documentation has been shared. Focus in on quality monitoring of spot purchase arrangements and consideration Identified that further monitoring of providers is required in order to ensure independence skills are embedded within practice alongside the children in care service. 	All CEYP who have LTR have been prioritised for move on for accommodation (18+)

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider event will be arranged for Q4 2024/2025. 	
5.8	Continue to work in partnership with our providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections between 2024 - 2027.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Registered Providers in BCP area achieving Good or Outstanding judgements	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted ratings of all local providers have been mapped. Monitoring of Improvement plans shall commence in Q3 of 2024/2025. Regular engagement with providers and forums will improve learning across the market in respect of Ofsted inspections. 	

6. Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks in order to ensure compliance and support strategic decision making in the future.

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
6.1	Develop and embed a robust commissioning governance and commissioning quality assurance framework in order to understand the quality of provision and hold providers accountable.	Karen Starkey	31/12/2024		Provider compliance and quality is understood through clear governance board arrangements and reporting of KPIs	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance Framework currently in final draft and shared with Governance colleagues for comment. Commissioning Governance has been proposed and is awaiting sign off. 	The principles and governance detailed within the Quality Assurance Framework have been embedded within operational practice, leading to improved compliance standards
6.2	Update the existing contracts register for children's services, thus informing the strategic commissioning plan and assurance in respect of procurement compliance (noting the implementation of the new procurement regulations).	Karen Starkey	31/12/2024		A single, comprehensive view of spend that informs the 3-yr Commissioning Plan Procurement pipeline and opportunities for joint commissioning with Health	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft contracts register has been produced – further work required to populate key areas of data Commissioning and Contract Officer leads assigned Inclusion of NHS Dorset contracts and Public Health Contracts Initial training with procurement on the new regulations 	
6.3	Ensure there are sufficient placement provision within BCP available to only place children in provision that is judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Children are only placed in good and outstanding homes in a timely way	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ofsted ratings of all BCP providers are known and logged. Those with a rating of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' have been contacted and improvement plans obtained. Regular monthly monitoring meetings shall commence from December 2024. 	

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
6.4	Improve data collection using current digital systems to inform sufficiency planning.	Karen Starkey			Commissioning dashboard in place that highlights demand, need cost and quality	Jonathan Wade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placements and Process Improvement project underway Mosaic Development and CAS reconciliation project underway Contracts register baselined 	
6.5	Work in partnership with providers to regularly monitor all provision rated 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate', ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children to allow them to remain in their home.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		Children live in good or outstanding homes	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted rating of all commissioned providers is now collated within a centralised spreadsheet. Improvement plans have been requested and regular monitoring meetings will commence in Q4 Quality Assurance Framework shall include a flow chart for the escalation progress of 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' provision to Children's Services colleagues. 	Providers Ofsted Improvement Plans are regularly monitored leading to improved reassurance in respect of service quality and progress. Ability to inform Service colleagues if providers are not achieving the required progress.
6.6	Be actively engaged in the procurement compliance planning ensuring that commissioning of provision meets the required quality assurance and contract monitoring compliance standards.	Karen Starkey	31/03/2025		3-yr commissioning plan in place that ensures timely procurement activity and pipeline	Sarah Langdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts baseline and timelines for re-procurement Established links in place via monthly meetings with Corporate Procurement colleagues continues. Review of existing contractual arrangements with spot purchase providers has commenced with a view to embedded corporate terms and conditions. Consideration of new procurement regulations, due to be implemented in early 2025. Initial training has been provided to the team by the corporate team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Contracts and Commissioning Team are sighted on the new procurement regulations, these are being considered in respect of service planning. New internal Service Level Agreement template has been produced and signed off.

END OF PLAN

This section keeps a record of **COMPLETED ACTIONS** removed from main plan

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
1.4	Review the internal 'retained carers' scheme, accessible for children requiring emergency care.	Nicole Mills	31/10/2024		Emergency Care will be provided through in-house carers.	Rubina Payne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review report written and shared with DCS. Next steps identified, to be progressed within recruitment and retention work. 	Review completed, identified actions to be monitored and the service developed in order to meet cohort needs.
4.5	Consider a collaborative review of the Accommodation Planning Panel, linked to the implementation of social care 'gateways'.	Nicole Mills	30/11/24		Streamlined decision making and timely provision of housing options	Nigel Burton Tracey Kybert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One panel now in place overseeing both aspects of the Independence and Transitions Gateway (IATG) and the Accommodation Planning Panel is transitioning into the IATG. Smoother progress through to Housing
4.6	Inform the design of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision with accommodation identified specifically for Care Experienced Young People	Karen Starkey	31/05/2024		Sufficiency Strategy informs the Housing Strategy	Sarah Langdale Tracey Kybert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active involvement in the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision tender process to identify a Provider. Co-production of the contractual documentation to ensure Care Experienced Young People's accommodation needs are considered. Centerpoint appointed for the delivery of supported accommodation provision. Units will start to become available in Q2 of 2024/2025. Q2 = 10 units. Q3 = 16 units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 27 units across BCP for all young people. 12 of the additional units shall be supported by the in-house fostering service 'Always There' scheme, replicating a 'staying close' model. 2024/2025 - Q2 Care Experienced Young People accommodated 100% of the 10 units available. 2024/2025 - Q3 Care Experienced Young People accommodated 13

Ref	Priority	SRO	Target Completion Date	RAG	Success measures	Accountable Officers	Progress to date	Impact to date
								units (81%)



Report subject	Education and Skills Capital Programme
Meeting date	5 March 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report set out the Education and Skills Capital Programme for the period 2025/26 – 2027/28. The report summarises available capital funding totalling £22.6 million and provides an indicative programme of investment of £21.4 million set against key budget headings aligned to improvement priorities across the service. The planned expenditure of available capital is set out in this report and shows a balanced budget.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <p>agrees the capital programme as set out in the report, including the budget allocations set against the capital funding available for the period 2025/26 – 2026/27.</p>
Reason for recommendations	Utilising investment in the school estate to discharge the council's statutory duties to delivery good estate management and secure sufficiency of places aligned to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Wraparound and Expanded Entitlements Delivery Plan, SEND Sufficiency Strategy, Belonging and Improvement Strategy and DSG Recovery Plan.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Skills)
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley (Director of Children, Young People, Education & Skills)
Report Author	Tanya Smith - Head of Service Place Planning and Admissions
Report Contributors	Jason Moors – Schools Capital Programme Manager Anna Fresolone – Finance Manager Hammad Majid – Capital Accountant
Wards	<u>Council-wide</u>
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. The Council's Constitution sets out the budget and policy framework. The Council is required to calculate budget requirements for each financial year and to set a balanced budget. The Capital Programme supports the delivery of the Council's strategic Asset Management Plan and is consistent with the Medium-Term Financial Plan and with Children's Services strategic plans for the provision of sufficient and well-maintained education infrastructure.

2. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the Council i.e. buildings, vehicles and equipment and spending on non-current assets i.e. buildings not owned by the council (academy schools where the trust holds the freehold) and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.
3. The programme was last approved in February 2022 which set out the priorities for the period of 2022/23 – 2024-25. The updated programme for the period 2025/26 – 2027/28 includes details of the progress of schemes previously approved and new proposals for investment summarised under strategic headings.
4. Academies, Free Schools, and Voluntary Aided Schools are directly allocated condition funding through the Education and Skills Funding Agency, so maintenance works in these types of establishments are not part of this capital programme. The Council funds sufficiency works at Academies and Free Schools (as well as at maintained schools) in order to ensure there are sufficient school places, and sufficient and suitable provision for SEND.
5. **Sources of [Estimated] Funding:** The estimated capital funding sources available for the 2025/26 Capital Programme are contained in Table 1. Including the estimated allocations for future years, the total amount of capital available for the financial years 2025-28 is £22.9 million. This is made up of the following sources of funding:
 - Basic Need Grant estimated funding for the supply of new school places - £0.91 million
 - School condition allocations (SCA) for school estate related works (SCA) - £5.6 million
 - SEND High Needs Funding – specialist provision capital estimated at £15.4 million
 - Wraparound Care & Expanded Entitlements Grant – £0.42m of expected £0.57 million
 - The remaining £7k is Healthy Pupils Capital Grant Funding that was allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2017.

Table 1: Capital Funding Sources

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Basic Need	349	561	0	0	910
SCA	4,394	511	522	531	5,958
High Needs Capital Grant	12,401	1,000	1,000	1,000	15,401
Early Years Expansion	277	146	0	0	423
Other	7	0	0	0	7
Total Funding Received	17,428	2,218	1,522	1,531	22,699

**Funding is estimated based on current data and previous allocations*

***In the last financial year, two schools that were previously maintained by the Local Authority, Poole High School and Christchurch Infant School, have converted to academy status and this will result in a commensurate reduction in the School Condition Allocation that BCP Council can expect to receive from the DfE*

Issues

6. **Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28:** For ease of reporting, the proposed capital programme for the period 2025/26 – 2027/28 comprises schemes grouped under two headings as follows:
 - **Schemes with Prior Approval:** these include carried forward amounts from schemes with prior approval that are currently in progress.
 - **New schemes requiring Approval:** details of schemes and priority budget allocations requiring approval necessary to maintain the school estate, deliver new school places and expand access to childcare.
7. **Schemes with Prior Approval:** Schemes with prior approval nearing completion total £2 million with spending profiled across financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27. Details of schemes are contained in **Appendix 1**.
8. **New Schemes Requiring Approval:** New schemes requiring approval set out a proposed investment in the school estate totalling £19.1 million - see Table 2. A commentary for each of

the headline budgets is set out below. Further details of schemes funded by the School Condition grant are contained in **Appendix 2**.

Table 2: Proposed New Schemes for Capital Programme 2025/26– 2027/28

Headline Budget	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Basic Need (mainstream school places)	50	50	50	150

Planned Repairs and Maintenance	3,565	200	200	3,965
Urgent Works sub total	100	100	100	300
Condition Surveys	50	50	50	150
Climate Change/Low Carbon Reduction	550	50	50	650
Total School Condition Allocation (SCA)	4,265	400	400	5,065

SEND Advanced Design Fees	200	200	200	600
SEND Adaptations: Access	100	100	100	300
Specialist Places 0-19	Individual cost of schemes to be developed in line with the timeline of relevant bid process.			
Alternative Provision and Inclusion Models				
Specialist Provision Capital (High Needs)	8,300	5,000	300	13,900
Total Commitment Proposed	12,615	5,750	750	19,115

+ Best endeavours have been used to estimate costs based on existing data but due to construction inflation since the surveys were complete, availability of labour and materials and the potential for surveys to uncover additional issues, these costs may increase. These figures should not be viewed as final at this early stage.

9. **Basic Need:** A budget headline referring to basic need is in anticipation of accelerated in-year pressure for places as the academic year unfolds. In order to respond to localised pressures, proposals to increase the supply of primary and secondary school places will be developed working with school leaders. This work depends on a change to the Council's revenue growth funding policy. At the time of writing this report, details were due to be reported to the Schools Forum at their meeting in January 2025. Associated plans for investment will follow in future report where approvals for budget allocations will be sought in line with BCP Financial Regulations. In the meantime, it is proposed that a budget of £50k pa is allocated for surveys, feasibility investigations and design works required to develop the brief for projects to deliver mainstream places.
10. **School Condition Allocations:** Priority works for investment in the maintained school estate are proposed under 3 categories as follows:
 - **Planned Repairs and Maintenance:** Proposed allocations of £3.9 million are based on a robust analysis of condition surveys conducted over the last 5 years and consultations with school leaders. The programme will address building elements identified as necessary to address condition and areas of compliance within the next year
 - **Urgent Works:** A budget of £300k is set aside in order to address urgent works identified during the course of the year which cannot be anticipated or otherwise planned in the R&M programme. Further details of urgent works are provided in **Appendix 3**.
 - **Condition Surveys:** Condition surveys will continue to be carried out for maintained schools every five years in line with the School Capital Team policy. A budget of £150k has been recommended to fund condition surveys in line with the programme agreed with BCP Facilities Management.
 - **Climate Change/Carbon Reduction:** The Capital Programme will contribute £650k to the Council's carbon emission reduction targets and to the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy by reducing using capital funding to install carbon reducing systems that benefit schools and pupils. Opportunities to include renewable energy and energy efficient systems as part of the planned repairs and maintenance programme will be identified. As

part of this process, the School's Capital Team will look to support schools to apply for a Salix energy efficiency loan and where suitable may be asked to contribute a proportion of the total cost of any funded using over a period of 8 years.

11. **Specialist Provision (High Needs Capital):** Sustained growth in the number of children with complex needs in the BCP area has resulted in a shortage of specialist and alternative provision locally. This has increased unit costs and intensified budget pressures. Actions contained and delivered in the Council's SEND Improvement Plan include a SEND Sufficiency Strategy and a Belonging Strategy. Both strategies set out short to medium term priorities to increase the availability of local specialist and alternative provision places and shape and inform investment decisions in our school estate. For this purpose, investment is proposed as follows:
- **Development of Specialist Places:** In line with the continuum model of provision contained in the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, it is planned to invest in the development of specialist places. This includes informal and formal legal models of provision including Bespoke, Resource Base Provisions and SEND Satellite sites. Capital funding will support the development of SEND spaces and accommodation necessary. Projects will address short-medium term priorities identified in the SEND Sufficiency Strategy. Investment will comprise several schemes identified following a bid process and will be brought forward for approval in line with the delegation thresholds contained in the Financial Regulations.
 - **Development of Alternative Provision & Inclusion Models:** It is planned to invest in the development of schemes that deliver alternative provision and inclusion models. Work is underway with Academy Trusts to discuss innovative models of provision to better manage demand for alternative provision. It is anticipated that capital investment will be necessary to support inhouse models of provision based on evidence of what works and working in partnership with our local school partners. Investment will comprise several schemes identified following a bid process and will be brought forward for approval in line with the delegation thresholds contained in the Financial Regulations.
 - **SEND Advanced Design Fees:** To develop schemes that have been identified as having the potential to substantially address BCP SEND sufficiency needs, it is recommended that a budget of £ £600k is allocated for the professional fees and surveys associated with the development of schemes. These relate to the costs necessary to progress feasibility studies and produce business cases to ensure schemes are viable and affordable. Budgetary approval for any schemes developed in this way will be sought in line with BCP Financial Regulations.
 - **SEND Adaptations - Access:** A budget of £300k is set aside to deliver access works necessary to facilitate access in the exception. Access to the fund is determined by the Council and typically supports the admission of children with complex needs who otherwise may require non local or higher cost provision. It is recommended that this budget is put in place for the next 3 financial years. Note: The fund is not available to support reasonable adjustments to school premises in line with normal duties and responsibilities contained in the Equality Act 2010.
12. **Wraparound Care and Expanded Entitlements:** Further expressions of interest are being sought from providers and capital funding will be awarded on a project-by-project basis in line with the agreed process. It is planned that the majority of the unallocated capital will be spent by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, but some spending may fall into the 2025/26 financial year and will be dictated by the efficiency of individual setting providing the necessary documentary evidence to facilitate the reimbursement of funding.
13. **Other Sources of Funding - Central Government Capital:** BCP Council has submitted successful bids for the 3 projects to be delivered by central government since the capital strategy was last reported. Updates from the DfE are anticipated containing the details of these schemes and the proposed programme for delivery. They are as follows:
- Somerford Primary School was accepted into the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) in 2022. The DfE has stated that it will engage with the Local Authority in 2025 to develop and deliver this scheme.

- Winchelsea School was accepted into the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) in 2022. The DfE has stated that it will engage with the Local Authority in 2025 to develop and deliver this scheme.
- In May 2024, the DfE announced that BCP Council was successful in its application to open a new special free school in the area for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

- Healthy Pupils Capital:** There is £7k of Healthy Pupils Capital Grant Funding that was allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2017. It is recommended that this funding is allocated to the Planned Repairs and Maintenance programme for resurfacing play surfaces in accordance with the grant conditions.
- Summary Position:** Table 3 shows the balance of grant funding remaining taking account of total grant income, the cost of pre-approved schemes and schemes for approval as contained in this report. The majority of Grant funding remaining includes basic need funding (used to support the provision of mainstream places) and condition funding. It is prudent to retain basic need to coincide with the development of specific proposals as the academic year progresses. The remaining condition funding will be utilised to meet the delivery costs for the client project team.

Table 3: Balance of Capital Grant Funding

	Basic Need £,000	SCA £,000	High Needs £,000	Early Years Expansion £,000	Other £,000	Total £,000
Allocation	910	5,958	15,401	423	7	22,699
Pre-Approved	0	542	1,490	277		2,309
Requiring approval	150	5,065	13,900			19,115
Total Investment	150	5,607	15,390	277	0	21,424
Grant Funding Remaining*	760	351	11	146	7	1,275

**Grant Funding Remaining: This includes funding necessary to support the development of works and schemes following receipt of updated information and data about the needs of the school estate. This includes admissions data on in year pressures for places and updated condition and works surveys.*

Summary of financial implications

- This report sets out the financial position in respect of the spending of grant funding allocated to the Local Authority by the Department for Education.

Summary of legal implications

- This report sets out the current position of the capital programme. The contracts and funding agreements that Children's Services enters into as client for the projects that form part of the capital programme will be drafted and signed in conjunction with Legal Services. Capital funding is allocated to projects in line with the published terms and conditions.

Summary of human resources implications

- The commissioning of Children's Services capital projects rests principally with the Director of Education staff within the directorate. This includes client-side project management. Technical project management is provided by or commissioned through the Council's Facilities Management Team. The ongoing staffing of schools and academies is the responsibility of governing bodies and academy boards, with day-to-day professional leadership and management provided by headteachers and school staff. During the delivery phase of a capital programme additional technical staff, such as surveyors, may be required: such costs are generally capitalised.

Summary of sustainability impact

19. Any new project will take account of sustainability at the design stage as set out above. A discrete budget has been set aside to fund condition works to the maintained school estate more sustainable.

Summary of public health implications

20. Children with special educational needs and disabilities often have associated health needs, in some cases lifelong medical needs. The health needs of children will be taken into account as part of the options appraisal and design works for any project. This would include, for example, the provision of hygiene and first aid rooms. The provision of outdoor play space and facilities for physical education will be considered as part of any project in line DfE Building Bulletin design guidance, as will the promotion of walking and cycling to school by the provision of appropriate facilities. An approach to SEND which enables more children to attend a school in their local community will reduce journey times and distances and potentially reduce emissions.

Summary of equality implications

21. All proposed capital projects will be developed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Policy. Children with SEND often have a range of disadvantages, such as economic deprivation. Better SEND provision is a means of mitigating these disadvantages and enabling children to achieve more. Some types of SEND affect either boys or girls disproportionately. Proposals for new SEND accommodation will help to address any such disadvantage. An equalities impact assessment conversation screening tool has been completed and sent to panel to the EQIA Panel for review and discussion.

Summary of risk assessment

22. This report sets out recommendations for budgetary approval for a number of schemes that will require further definition before final costs are known both as part of the SEND Sufficiency strategy and Planned Repairs and Maintenance Plan. The main risks and mitigations provided at Appendix 4.

Recommendation

23. It is recommended that Cabinet:

Agrees the capital programme as set out in the report, including the budget allocations set against the capital funding available for the period 2025/26 – 2026/27.

Spend profile - schemes in progress with prior approval

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Hillbourne – New School	374	0	0	374
Winchelsea Temporary Office Space	27	27	0	54
Poole High Planned Maintenance	50	0	0	50
Winchelsea Interim Accommodation	32	32	0	64
School Condition Allocation – sub total	483	59		542

Broadstone First School Resource Base	68	0	0	68
Link Building at Bourne Academy	5	0	0	5
Parkstone Grammar School – SEND Facility	252	0	0	252
Canford Heath Schools – SLCN Bases	75	0	0	75
Victoria Education Centre – ASC Base	90	0	0	90
Linwood Post-16 Satellite Ted Webster Centre	1,000	0	0	1,000
SEND High Needs Sufficiency sub total	1,490	0	0	1,490

Expanded Entitlements Capital Projects	272	0	0	272
Wraparound Care Projects	5	0	0	5
Early Years Programme of Expansion**	277			277
Total allocated to pre- approved schemes	2,250	59	0	2,309

Note: Early Years Programme of Expansion: The Wraparound programme consists of two distinct pieces of work seeking to increase the availability of childcare, these are:

- **Workstream 1:** Expanded Entitlements (EE) providing 15 hours of funded childcare for working parents of children aged two years old from April 2024 and from nine months old from September 2024. An increase to 30 hours of funded childcare for this group from September 2025.
- **Workstream 2:** Wraparound Childcare (WAC) providing access to wraparound childcare from 8am-6pm for all primary school aged children by September 2026 on a fee-paying basis.

The Wraparound Care Project Team has set up a panel of key stakeholders to review and approve the bids that providers have submitted for this funding. 8 Early Years projects have been approved to create 67 new places, with 3 further projects creating 146 new places conditionally approved pending confirmation of planning permission. In addition, 3 Wraparound Care projects have also been approved to create 31 new places.

Proposed Basic Need Capital Programme 2025/26– 2027/28

Name of Project/Budget	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Burton Primary School+	370	As we work with the schools and appointed contractors to develop these schemes further, we will understand the works that need to be programmed into future years.		370
Christchurch Learning Centre+	180			180
Highcliffe St Mark+	480			480
Linwood+	1,070			1,070
Mudeford Infant School+	330			330
Mudeford Junior School+	110			110
Somerford Primary School+	200			200
Winchelsea School+	125			50
Planned Repairs and Maintenance	3,565	200	200	3,965

+These are planned repairs and maintenance works. Best endeavours have been used to estimate costs based on existing data but due to construction inflation since the surveys were complete, availability of labour and materials and the potential for surveys to uncover additional issues, these costs may increase. These figures should not be viewed as final at this early stage.

Urgent Works

- Urgent Health and safety issues which could otherwise prompt an unplanned school closure or harm to life.
- Use of the emergency out of hours Property Maintenance Team where minor works are commissioned and resolved and subject to approval of the Schools Capital Team. Work will be funded from schools' devolved capital in the first instance.
- Safeguarding and security of premises issues arising from risk assessments.
- Mechanical and electrical components which are otherwise unaffordable by school use of DFC.
- Fabric of the building elements otherwise unaffordable provided that schools are able to demonstrate good estate management including an Asset Management Plan of priorities for which their DFC is used to contribute.

Project Risks and Mitigations

- a. **Risk:** Project costs exceed the approved budget:

Mitigation: condition projects are based on condition surveys undertaken by building professionals. Budgets take into account recent price inflation in construction industry, statutory fees and surveys and allocate a contingency to mitigate project specific risks. Where cost information is not available, in-depth feasibility work will be carried out to provide greater cost certainty and further approvals will be recommended in line with BCP Financial Regulations.

- b. **Risk:** the project is not delivered on time.

Mitigation: all projects will have a project plan setting out the timescale for critical products and will be managed in accordance with the governance procedures overseen by the Children's Services Capital Board.

- c. **Risk:** the project is not delivered to the quality expected.

Mitigation: all projects will have a clear specification in terms of service outcomes (usually defined within Children's Services), and technical specifications (that will be determined by specialists within the Facilities Management Team or 3rd party consultants as appropriate)

- d. **Risk:** the project does not deliver facilities that are required.

Mitigation: Condition works have been agreed in consultation with school senior leadership teams and professional building surveyors. All projects that propose to provide sufficiency places will have a business case that clearly sets out the rationale for the project and the results that are expected from it.

- e. **Risk:** there is not a clear understanding of the respective responsibilities of the council and academy trusts in the delivery of a project on an academy site.

Mitigation: a development agreement, or memorandum of understanding, or "letter of comfort" will be agreed for every scheme to ensure responsibilities are understood and agreed.

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	School Admission Arrangements 2026/27
Meeting date	28 January 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>BCP Council administers admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools. There is a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation.</p> <p>There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year from those which were publicly consulted upon and determined by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p>The local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2026/27 academic year.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet consider any comments from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if any, concerning Schools Admissions Arrangements 2026/2027 for community and maintained schools; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet support the determination of the arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>BCP Council is legally required to determine admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year for all maintained schools for which it is an admission authority and to agree coordinated admission arrangements for all admission authorities in the area. Arrangements must be determined by BCP Council by 28 February 2025.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton – Portfolio Holder, Children’s Services
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley – Corporate Director, Children’s Services
Report Authors	Sharon Muldoon – Interim Director of Education and Skills, Children’s Services
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council and schools which are deemed to be an ‘admission authority’ are required each year to set arrangements explaining how and when they will decide to offer school places.
2. The Council is required to have an admissions policy for its maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools located in Christchurch.
3. The Council must also set an administrative scheme setting out for parents and schools how the application and offer process will be co-ordinated.

Admission arrangements and published admission numbers

4. The admissions arrangements must explain how to apply for a school place and, once an application is received, how it will be processed. The policy must contain clear oversubscription criteria should there be more applications for places than there are places available. The number of places available at a normal point of entry for each school – the published admission number – must also be set and included in the policy for parents.
5. The proposed admissions policy is attached at appendix one. Minor date alterations have been made. All other areas of the arrangements (catchments, supplementary information form, policies for service families and for requests for applications for a place in a year group different to that determined by date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children) remain the same.
6. As there are no changes to the proposed arrangements, the Council is not required to publicly consult.
7. Proposed published admission numbers (PAN) for 2026/27 are attached at the end of the admissions policy attached at appendix one. They remain the same as the 2025/26 academic year.

Coordinated Scheme

8. The Council is required under paragraph 2.22 of the Department for Education’s School Admissions Code 2021 to set a coordinated scheme for the processing of school applications for entry to school in September 2026.
9. The scheme recommended and attached at appendix two is a single scheme for the whole of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. The scheme is in principle

the same as that set by the Council for the 2025/26 academic year with minor date alterations.

Options Appraisal

10. The existing arrangements cannot continue as the Council has an annual statutory requirement to determine the admissions policy. Taking no action is therefore not an option.
11. There is no requirement to amend the arrangements that were in place for 2025/26 as they continue to meet the needs of families who wish to apply for a school place for September 2025.
12. It is recommended that the Council determine the arrangements and the coordinated scheme.

Summary of financial implications

13. The admissions function is entirely funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Therefore, there are no wider revenue budget implications to the Council. The recommendations set out above are intended to be accommodated within the existing budget allocated from within the DSG for this purpose.

Summary of legal implications

14. The Council must determine the coordinated scheme, admission arrangements and published admission numbers no later than 28 February 2025.
15. If no action is taken the Council will not meet its statutory duty to have admission arrangements which meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Summary of human resources implications

16. There are no anticipated changes to human resources from determining the policy and coordinated scheme.

Summary of sustainability impact

17. BCP Council is committed to encouraging children and young people attend their nearest or catchment school.
18. The draft admissions policy includes oversubscription criteria that gives high priority to children living in their school's catchment area. Attendance at a local school provides families with greater opportunity to travel to school on foot or by cycling, scooting or using public transport in line with the Transforming Travel agenda.

Summary of public health implications

19. Ensuring families are able to apply for a school place supports the health and wellbeing of children and young people by enabling them to attend school.

Summary of equality implications

20. An equality impact assessment screening tool was completed and considered at the equality impact assessment panel on 4 December 2024. It is attached at appendix three.

21. The admissions policy and co-ordinated scheme will be accessible online for all BCP Council residents and paper copies will be provided on request.
22. School applications will be assessed using the policy oversubscription criteria. Where the child/young person and/or their family have additional needs or requirements these will be considered in line with the policy.
23. Families will have the opportunity to access an independent appeal process if they are unhappy with the school offered.

Summary of risk assessment

24. If BCP Council do not determine admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools by 28 February 2025, the Council will not have met its statutory duty as defined in the School Admissions Code 2021 and the Department for Education may impose arrangements upon the Council.

Background papers

[School Admissions Code](#) – Published works

[School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) – Published works

Appendices

Appendix one – BCP Council admissions policy 2026/27

Appendix two – BCP Council coordinated scheme for 2026/27

Appendix three – equality impact assessment conversation screening tool



Community and voluntary controlled infant, junior and primary schools admissions policy 2026-2027

Admissions policy 2026-27

The admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled mainstream schools in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area is the local authority.

This policy applies to applications for school places starting in September 2026 and should be read in conjunction with the parents' guide available at bcpCouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions from 12 September 2026.

Children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) issued by a local authority naming a school where a child should receive their education will be admitted to that school before preferences are considered for admission in September.

Where there are more applications than places available the following criteria will be used, in numerical order, to decide the priority list for the offering of places up to the school's published admission number:

1. "Looked after children" or "previously looked after children" (note one) including children who appear to have been in state care outside of England (note two).
2. Children who BCP Council accepts have an exceptional medical or social need and where there is a need for a place at one specific school (note three).
3. Children who live in the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission (note four).
4. Children living within the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application (note five).
5. All other children who live in the school's catchment area.
6. Children who live outside the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission (note four).
7. Children living outside the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application (note five).
8. Children living outside the school's catchment area and whose parents wish them to attend a Church of England voluntary controlled school on denominational grounds (note six).
9. Children of staff where the member of staff has been employed for two or

more years at the school applied for at the time the application for admission is made or who have been recruited to a vacancy to meet a demonstrable skills shortage as at the date of application (in year) or relevant closing date under the local authority co-ordinated scheme (normal year of entry) and who still intend to be employed at the school at the time of the child's admission (note seven).

10. All other children who live outside the school's catchment area.

If a school is oversubscribed in any of the categories above, children in the oversubscribed category who live closest to the school will be given priority (notes eight, nine and ten).

If the distance measurement is equal for two or more applicants, the place will be allocated by the drawing of lots (note eleven).

Please ensure you read notes one to eleven and the remainder of this policy for further information.

Admission arrangements

Admission will be in accordance with the agreed scheme for coordinated admission arrangements 2026-27.

Starting reception in 2026-27

All children can start in reception on a full-time basis in September 2026. Parents and carers may discuss with the headteacher whether their child should start on a part-time basis. The final decision will rest with the parent or carer of the child.

Delayed or deferred start

For children born between 1 September and 31 March, parents and carers can delay their child's start date until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age (i.e., by the start of the term following their fifth birthday). For children born between 1 April and 31 August, parents can also delay their child's start date; but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year (i.e., the term that starts after the Easter/Spring holidays).

The school place offered cannot be delayed until the following academic year – it must be taken-up in the academic year for which it is offered. Parents and carers who do not take-up the offer of a place during the reception year will need to re-apply for a school place the following year. Places offered but not taken-up by the beginning of the final term (i.e., the term that starts after the Easter/Spring holidays) will be withdrawn.

If parents and carers want to apply for the following year, they would normally apply for a place in year one. Parents and carers need to be aware that year one in the school they were previously offered could be full at this stage.

Applications for a place in a year group different to that determined by date of birth, including delayed entry to reception for summer born children

Applications for children to be educated in a year group different to that determined by their date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children, will be considered on their individual merits by a specialist panel.

Details of what you need to do to apply for a different year group can be found in the policy document “Policy for responding to parental requests for admission to community and voluntary controlled schools to a year group different to that determined by their date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children” available online at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions or from the school admissions team.

Parents and carers considering this should contact BCP Council at the earliest possible opportunity (preferably before 30 November 2025) to ensure a decision is made before the national closing date for applications.

Excepted pupils for infant classes (Years R, 1 and 2)

Infant classes must not contain more than thirty pupils with a single schoolteacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an ‘excepted pupil’ for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- children admitted outside the normal admissions round with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) specifying the school
- looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round
- children admitted after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process
- children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal
- children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance
- children of UK (United Kingdom) service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round
- children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil
- children with SEND who are normally taught in a SEND unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

In year fair access

All the admission authorities in BCP Council have established an in year fair access protocol. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that – outside the normal admissions round – unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are provided with a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.

Cases are considered by a panel comprising Headteachers and/or their representatives. When seeking to place a child, the panel will consider all schools in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. Decisions of the panel may mean that individual schools admit children above the published admission number. Admission authorities will not normally be asked to admit a child to an infant class where there are already thirty children in the class.

In year admissions – looked after children

A looked after child (see notes) may be admitted to a school above the published admission number if it is felt by the local authority that a particular school is the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of the individual child. BCP Council has adopted a protocol for dealing with in year admissions of looked after children.

Home address

The home address where a child lives is a residential property that is the child's main or only address during term time.

Applicants can be asked to provide additional evidence to verify addresses and/or other details provided. It is at the discretion of the local authority what evidence is required (evidence may include, but is not limited to, child benefit, GP (general practitioner) registration, evidence of home ownership/tenancy etc.). The final decision on the home address of a child will be made by BCP Council. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged by the local authority to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, BCP Council may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.

Applications from separated parents and carers

Only one application can be accepted for each child. Where parents and carers are separated, it is essential that agreement is reached by both parties concerning the nominated preferred schools.

Where a child spends part of their week with one parent or carer and part with the other, only one address can be provided. This must be the address at which the child spends most of their time during term time.

If a child spends equal time with each parent, both parties must come to agreement about which schools to include on their application and the order of the preferences.

Where more than one application is received for an individual child, the Local Authority will contact all parties to inform them that the applications will not be processed and advising

that a single application agreed by both parents, must be submitted. We will ask all parties who originally applied to confirm that they are in agreement with the new application. If this single application is submitted after the closing date, it will be treated as a late application.

Where parents are unable to reach an agreement, applications will not be progressed and the dispute will need to be resolved through the courts prior to a new, agreed application being submitted. Evidence showing agreement may be requested by BCP Council before progressing the application.

Applicants can be asked to provide additional evidence to verify addresses and/or other details provided. It is at the discretion of BCP Council what evidence is required (evidence may include, but is not limited to, Child Benefit, GP registration, evidence of home ownership/tenancy etc.). The final decision on the home address of a child will be made by BCP Council. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged by to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, BCP Council may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.

Changes of address

When applying for point of entry, BCP Council will not accept a change of address once the National Closing Date has passed.

The National Closing Date for point of entry year groups (Reception, Year 3, and Year 5) is 15 January 2026. This means if your moving date is after 15 January 2026, we will use your old address to categorise your application.

You will need to tell us your new address so we can update your child's record.

If you move house after you have submitted your application but before the National Closing Date, you **must** inform us **before** the 15 January 2026 to ensure your application is considered from your new address.

Applicants can be asked to provide additional evidence to verify addresses and/or other details provided. It is at the discretion of BCP Council what evidence is required (evidence may include, but is not limited to, Child Benefit, GP registration, evidence of home ownership/tenancy etc.). The final decision on the home address of a child will be made by BCP Council. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged by to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, BCP Council may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.

Application for children of multiple births

If there are insufficient places to accommodate all the children of a multiple birth (i.e., twins, triplets etc.) in any year group and one child can be admitted, the other siblings of the multiple birth will be admitted over the school's published admission number. If it is in an infant class (Years R, 1 and 2) the additional children over the published admission number will be considered as excepted pupils for the entire time they are in an infant class at the school or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit in accordance with the school admissions code.

Waiting lists

BCP Council maintains waiting lists for its schools. When a child is added to the waiting list it must be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or when their name was added to the waiting list.

Parents and carers can apply to have their child's name placed on a waiting list for the academic year for which the school place was refused. If parents or carers wish to keep a child on a waiting list beyond this term, they will need to submit a new school application form for the new academic year. There is no guarantee of a school place by remaining on the waiting list.

Appeals

If the local authority is unable to offer a place at a school that has been applied for, the parent or carer has the right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details will be included in the letter refusing the school place. The decision of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

Notes

1. A "looked after child" means any child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989. A child who was "previously a looked after child" means a child who after being looked after, became subject to an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976 or under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a Residence Order or Child Arrangement Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or Special Guardianship Order under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989. Applicants can be asked to provide additional evidence to verify the previously looked after status of a child. It is at the discretion of BCP Council what evidence is required. The final decision will be made by BCP Council. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, BCP Council may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.
2. A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Applicants can be asked to provide additional evidence to verify the previously looked after status of a child. It is at the discretion of BCP Council what evidence is required. The final decision will be made by BCP Council. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, BCP Council may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.
3. If applying under medical or psychological grounds, written advice from an NHS consultant (for medical grounds), or an NHS consultant psychiatrist (for psychological grounds) that documents the child's medical or psychological needs must be included with the application. Children will only meet this criterion if the school(s) named on the application form is assessed by BCP Council to be the only school(s) that can meet

any specific medical or psychological needs identified.

4. "Sibling" means:
 - a full brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
 - a half-brother or half-sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
 - an adoptive brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
 - a foster brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
 - non-blood related children who, together, all live with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.

For Mudeford Infant School the sibling link will apply to Mudeford Junior School and vice versa.

5. Children who are on roll at the recognised feeder infant school and are applying to the recognised receiver junior school. This applies to Mudeford Infant and Junior Schools only.
6. To qualify for consideration under this category for Burton CE Primary School, parents and carers will need to show that at least one adult family member and the child to whom the application relates to have been attending their local church at least once a month for a minimum of a year prior to the closing date for applications. The application must also be supported by a supplementary information form signed by the vicar/priest/minister or leader of the church confirming this.

If during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or relevant place of worship or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

7. Staff are defined as all teaching and support staff employed at the preferred school. 'Children of staff' refers to situations where the staff member is the natural parent, the legal guardian, or a resident step-parent. If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion, then a letter from the headteacher confirming the criterion applies to the applicant must be provided at the time of application.
8. The distance between the child's home and preferred school will be determined by the shortest straight-line measurement calculated using the local authority's geographical information system in use at the time of allocation. The system at the time of setting the policy is Servelec Synergy and it takes the measurement between the address mapping points of the school and the applicant's home. Please note that eligibility for school transport assistance is based on walking distance measurements.
9. If there are insufficient places to accommodate all applicants and the distance criterion is used, BCP Council will use random allocation for the remaining places.

This can apply to applicants living an equal distance from the school (up to three decimal points) or at the same address or in the same block of flats. Applicants will have their names drawn as lots to see who should be offered the place(s). The person drawing the names will be an officer within BCP Council who is not involved in the school admissions process.

Published admission numbers 2026-27

School Name	Published Admissions Number 2026/27
Burton CE Primary School	45 – possible reduction to 30 (to be amended if consultation goes ahead)
Mudeford Community Infant School	60
Mudeford Junior School	66
Somerford Primary School	30

BCP Council School Admissions and Transport Team

school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

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Admission Arrangements Coordinated Scheme 2026-27

Coordinated Admissions Scheme 2026-27

All schools in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together with the Local Authority have, in accordance with statutory requirements, agreed to coordinate the main entry admission and transfer process for 2026-27. The agreed scheme enables an application to be made on a single application form.

The coordinated scheme applies to the following admission points of entry:

Point of Entry	Apply from:	National Closing Date (Applying on Time)
Entry in Reception at all First, Infant Primary and All-Through schools	1 November 2025	15 January 2026
Entry into Year 3 at Junior schools	1 November 2025	15 January 2026
Entry into Year 5 at Broadstone Middle School	1 November 2025	15 January 2026
Entry into Year 7 at all secondary schools with the exception of Corfe Hills School and LeAF Studio School	1 September 2025	31 October 2025
Entry into Year 9 at Corfe Hills School and LeAF Studio School	1 September 2025	31 October 2025

BCP Council will coordinate with other local authorities to ensure that a child receives only a single offer of a school place. It will seek to offer the highest preference able to be agreed subject to the receipt of information in sufficient time and the other local authorities' schemes providing for this.

Parents/carers should complete an application and name four different schools in the order they would like their child to attend. Parents/carers must submit their application to their home local authority by the published closing date specified in the table above.

Preferences on faith grounds

Parents and carers expressing a preference on faith grounds must check the relevant school admissions policy to find out how to provide evidence of religious faith and practice. Parents and carers may be required to complete a supplementary information form and submit the form before the published closing date. Where baptismal evidence is required, parents and carers must check how this is provided to the school. All relevant evidence must be submitted before the published closing date. The supplementary information forms can be downloaded from the BCP Council website or from the relevant school website.

Changes to or applications made after the national closing date

Applications or any change of preference received after the national closing date will be considered as a late application unless otherwise specified within the school's admissions policy.

Applications that are considered late will be processed after all on-time applicants have been notified of their result. Late applications received before the published late closing date will be processed in accordance with the timetable (see below).

Any applications received after the published closing date for late applications will be processed as quickly as possible after the timetable (see below) has been completed. Once processed, they will be immediately added to the waiting lists if a place is not available.

Living or applying for schools outside of BCP Council area

Parents and carers who live outside of the BCP Council area who wish to apply for a school will need to complete their home local authority's application form in accordance with timescales published in that local authority's scheme.

BCP Council will send a list of all applicants to all school admission authorities within the council's area. It will send applications for schools in other local authorities to the relevant local authority to administer.

Information from other admission authorities

Where a parent or carer lists a school which is its own admission authority, or a school in another local authority as one of their preferences, information is electronically transferred to the relevant school or local authority. The admission authority will then be required to rank in order the applications they received in accordance with their admission arrangements and decide whether they can offer the child a place.

Once the decisions have been made by the relevant admission authority, they are returned to the local authority (LA) by the deadline specified (see timetable below). The LA then compares the ranked lists; if a child's name appears on more than one ranked list, the LA will then refer to the preference order on the parent/carer application to see which school the family wants the most. Then, in accordance with the order of preference on the application form, the child's name will be retained on the list of the highest preference school able to offer a place and removed from the lower preference schools lists.

Places freed up by this process will then be offered to applicants who are next on a school's ranked order of priority.

When preferences cannot be met

For those applicants who are not able to be offered any of their preferred schools and do not have the opportunity to remain at their current school:

- if they are resident in BCP Council, they will be offered a place at the nearest school to their home address which still has places available with agreement from the relevant admissions authority; or
- if they are resident outside of the BCP Council area, they will be referred to their own local authority to discuss schooling.

Those applicants who apply after the national closing date go through a similar process again, resulting in further offers being made in accordance with the agreed late application timetable.

Outcome of applications

BCP Council will advise parents and carers who applied online by uploading the outcome to the online system. Parents and carers will be able to view the outcome of their application online on the relevant national offer date. BCP Council will issue letters to all parents on the national offer dates.

Waiting lists

The length of time a child's name is on the waiting list cannot be considered when places become available. Places are offered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria in the school's published admissions policy.

Waiting lists for the point of entry must be held until 31 December 2026. Not all schools hold waiting lists after this time. Parents will receive information in their notification letter about how the waiting lists are managed.

All waiting lists held for the full academic year 2026-27 will expire on 31 August 2027. Parents/carers must submit a new school application form for 2027-28 and any subsequent years. Applications can be submitted from 1 June 2027.

Timetable for on-time applications

	Secondary	Junior/Middle	Infant
Opening date for applications	01/09/25	01/11/25	01/11/25
Closing date for applications	31/10/25	15/01/26	15/01/26
BCP Council to exchange applicant information received with other local authorities and school admission authorities in the BCP Council area by	18/11/25	03/02/26	03/02/26
Admission authorities to send electronically a list of pupils to BCP Council in the order to be considered, together with the relevant criteria for each applicant by	13/01/26	10/03/26	10/03/26
First exchange of offers between BCP Council and other LAs for applicants resident in their respective areas by	27/01/26	17/03/26	17/03/26
Deadline for final exchange of offers between LAs for applicants resident in their respective areas	10/02/26	31/03/26	31/03/26
BCP Council to inform other admission authorities of final allocation of places by	24/02/26	10/04/26	10/04/26
BCP Council issues notification letters to all applicants and on-time notifications to be uploaded on	02/03/26	16/04/26	16/04/26

Timetable for late applications

	Secondary	Junior/Middle	Infant
Late applications submitted from	01/11/25	16/01/26	16/01/26
Closing date for late applications	23/01/26	06/02/26	06/02/26
BCP Council to exchange applicant information with other school admission authorities in the BCP Council area by	10/02/26	10/03/26	10/03/26
Admission authorities to electronically send a list of pupils in the order to be considered, together with the relevant criteria for each applicant by	27/02/26	23/03/26	23/03/26
BCP Council to inform other admission authorities of final allocation of places by	17/03/26	12/05/26	12/05/26
BCP Council to issue notification letters to all late applicants on	25/03/26	14/05/26	14/05/26
Parents accept/refuse offer by	08/04/26	28/05/26	28/05/26

Please note

At the end of the above timetable, BCP Council will continue to coordinate the allocation on a regular basis until the end of the school year.

In Year Admissions

BCP Council School Admission coordinates in-year applications for the majority of schools. This means that a single application form is available for parents to express one or more school preferences.

There are some schools that have chosen to manage their in-year admissions themselves. Parents should check bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions for further information prior to making an application.

The following information is only relevant for schools who agree to be part of the local authority's in year coordination scheme:

In Year applications for faith schools

Parents and carers applying for a church school who request a place on faith grounds may need to provide a completed supplementary information form. The supplementary information form (SIF) is available from the school or a copy can be downloaded from the BCP Council website. Details of where to return the SIF are set out in the information on each school's websites regarding their admission arrangements.

Outcomes following submission of in year applications

Parents and carers applying for schools through BCP Council's School Admissions Team should expect to receive an outcome in writing within fifteen school days. The exception to this is where a parent applies for a place in a grammar school. In these cases, the school must notify the parent in writing within fifteen school days of the date for the assessment. Information regarding schools that do not process applications in a timely manner may be passed on to the Schools Adjudicator and/or relevant Department for Education agencies (e.g. Regional Schools' Commissioner, Education, Funding and Skills Agency). The need to request direction may also be considered.

Admission appeal outcomes

All Admission Authorities will inform BCP Council of the results of any appeal hearings within two working days of the appeal outcome.

Advance applications to start in September 2027 for places in a year group different to the point of entry

With the exception of applications for Grammar Schools, applications received will not be processed until after 1 June 2027.

Applicants applying any time before 1 June 2027 for the 2027/28 academic year will be informed that their application form will be cancelled and they will need to submit a new application. This does not constitute a refusal to offer a school place at any of the preferred schools and therefore there will be no right of appeal until such time as the application has been processed.

Grammar School applications will need to be processed early to allow sufficient time for testing and, if appropriate, to allow appeals to be heard before the end of the summer term. Parents will need to contact grammar schools to find out testing dates and the earliest date they can apply from.

BCP Council School Admissions and Transport Team

school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

What is being reviewed?	School Admission Arrangements 2026/27
What changes are being made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School Admissions Code 2021 requires admission authorities for publicly funded non-special schools to consult and determine admission arrangements in readiness for future school applications. No changes to the council's admission arrangements are being made. The arrangements will be the same as those publicly consulted on and determined for the academic year 2023/24. The School Admissions Code states "If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every seven years." The requirement to consult is not needed but BCP Council must still formally determine the arrangements for 2026/27. The admission arrangements include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCP Council Community and VC Schools Admissions Policy for the following schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burton CE Primary School Mudeford Community Infants School Mudeford Junior School Somerford Primary School BCP Council Coordinated Scheme The policy only applies to the above four schools. All other publicly funded non-special schools in BCP Council are responsible for consulting and determining their own admissions policies. Further information about School Admissions for all publicly funded non-special schools in BCP Council can be found at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions Parents Guides are published annually to support parents and are available at Parents guide to school admissions BCP.
Service Unit:	Children's Services
Participants in the conversation:	<p>Angie Hill, Manager, School Admissions and Home to School Transport, Children's Services</p> <p>Tanya Smith, Head of Service – School Places, Funding and Admissions, Children's Services</p> <p>Carly Williams, Team Leader, School Admissions and Home to School Transport, Children's Services</p>
Conversation date/s:	17 October 2024, 12 November 2024
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	<p>The BCP Council Community and VC Schools Admissions Policy is for parents and carers of children aged 3-11-years-old who want to apply for a primary school in Christchurch.</p> <p>The BCP Council Coordinated Scheme is specifically for the council, schools and other local authorities to refer to in order to ensure that the administrative processes are correctly applied and timescales are followed to meet statutory application closure and notification dates.</p> <p>Both the Admissions Policy and the Coordinated Scheme will be made available on the BCP Council school admissions webpages. Current versions are available at Admission arrangements for BCP schools 2022-26 BCP. The 2026/27 arrangements will contain</p>

	<p>updated dates but the content will remain the same.</p> <p>During the 2023/24 academic year, BCP Council received approximately 9000 applications for point of entry to school (Reception, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9) and a further 4,500 (approximately) in year applications to start school during the school year. It is anticipated that there will continue to be similar numbers received during the 2024/25 academic year.</p>
<p>Do different groups have different needs or experiences?</p> <p>Age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socioeconomic status, carers, human rights</p>	<p>The policy ensures that school admission applications are considered based on the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code requires Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are prioritised.</p> <p>When there are more applications than school places available, the admissions policy includes a set of oversubscription criteria to enable fair and equitable ranking of applications. The oversubscription criteria, after allocation of placement for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (including children who were previously looked after in state care outside of England). 2) Children who BCP Council accepts have an exceptional medical or social need and where there is a need for a place at one specific school. 3) Children who live in the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission. 4) Children living within the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application. 5) All other children who live in the school's catchment area. 6) Children who live outside the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission. 7) Children living outside the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application. 8) Children living outside the school's catchment area and whose parents wish them to attend a CE (Church of England) voluntary controlled school on denominational grounds. 9) Children of staff where the member of staff has been employed for two or more years at the school applied for at the time the application for admission is made, or who have been recruited to a vacancy to meet a demonstrable skills shortage as at the date of application (in year) or relevant closing date under the local authority co-ordinated scheme (normal year of entry) and who still intend to be employed at the school at the time of the child's admission.

10) All other children who live outside the school's catchment area.

If a school is oversubscribed in any of the categories above, children in the oversubscribed category who live closest to the school will be given priority.

In the event that the last place offered is given to a child from a multiple birth, all children from the multiple birth will be offered a place over the published admission number for the school.

In the event that the criteria and distance measurement s equal for two or more applicants, the place will be allocated by the drawing of lots (note eleven).

The School Admissions Code support equality duties by placing the following restrictions on admission arrangements:

"1.9 It is for admission authorities to formulate their admission arrangements, but they must not:

a) place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements;

b) take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a named feeder school;

c) give extra priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in a particular order, including 'first preference first' arrangements;

d) introduce any new selection by ability;

e) give priority to children on the basis of any practical or financial support parents may give to the school or any associated organisation, including any religious authority. The exception to this is where parents pay optional nursery fees to the school or school-run nursery, for additional hours on top of their 15-hour funded early education, where children from the school nursery class or school-run nursery are given priority for admission to Reception;

f) give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial, or educational status of parents applying. The exceptions to this are children of staff at the school and those eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium and the service premium who may be prioritised in the arrangements in accordance with paragraphs 1.39 – 1.42;

g) take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude, or achievement, or that of any other children in the family;

h) discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children, those with special educational needs, or those applying for admission outside their normal age group where an admission authority has agreed to this under paragraphs 2.18 to 2.20;

i) prioritise children on the basis of their own or their parents' past or current hobbies or activities (schools which have been designated as having a religious character may take account of religious activities, as laid out by the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination;

- j) in designated grammar schools that rank all children according to a pre-determined pass mark and then allocate places to those who score highest, give priority to siblings of current or former pupils;
- k) in the case of schools with boarding places, rank children on the basis of a child's suitability for boarding – more information on boarding schools is set out at paragraphs 1.43 - 1.44;
- l) name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools;
- m) interview children or parents. In the case of sixth form applications, a meeting may be held to discuss options and academic entry requirements for particular courses, but this meeting cannot form part of the decision making process on whether to offer a place. Boarding schools may interview children to assess their suitability for boarding;
- n) request financial contributions (either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations, or deposits (even if refundable)) as any part of the admissions process – including for tests; or
- o) request photographs of a child for any part of the admissions process, other than as proof of identity when sitting a selection test."

The School Admissions Code also prohibits collection of the following on the application form:

"2.2 The Common Application Form (CAF) must allow parents to provide their name, their address (including documentary evidence in support), and the name, address, and date of birth of the child. The child must not be required to complete any part of the CAF.

2.4 In some cases, admission authorities will need to ask for supplementary information forms in order to process applications. If they do so, they must only use supplementary forms that request additional information when it has a direct bearing on decisions about oversubscription criteria or for the purpose of selection by aptitude or ability. Places must be allocated on the basis of the oversubscription criteria only. An applicant must not be given additional priority solely on the basis of having completed a supplementary form. Admission authorities must not ask, or use supplementary forms that ask, for any of the information prohibited by paragraph 1.9 above or for:

- a) any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates);
- b) the first language of parents or the child;
- c) details about parents' or a child's disabilities, special educational needs, or medical conditions;
- d) parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way;
- e) both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form." 130

	<p>The requirements of the School Admissions Code, our admissions policy and our application form therefore support different groups, including groups with protected characteristics applying for a school place and ensure that the allocation of school places is fair, clear and objective.</p>
Will this change affect any service users?	<p>As there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places there will be no change in how service users are affected.</p>
What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>As there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places the impact remains the same as previous years.</p> <p>The arrangements remain in line with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code and ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of places is fair, clear and objective.</p> <p>The requirement to ensure that children with EHCPs are placed before allocation of all children and the requirement to ensure all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are ranked highest using the oversubscription criteria ensures that these vulnerable groups are positively impacted by the admissions process.</p> <p>Families are asked prior to completing their application to confirm they have read the Parent's Guide to Admissions. They can also seek advice and guidance from the School Admissions Team and reminders about applying for a school place are promoted through BCP Council media channels, early years providers and schools.</p> <p>Families are strongly advised to complete all four preferences on their application form and include their nearest or catchment school as one of their preferences to ensure they have the maximum opportunity to be offered a place at their local school should one of their higher preferences be unable to do so.</p>
What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>As there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places there will be no change in how service users are affected.</p>
Will the change affect employees?	<p>Not applicable as the arrangements only apply to those seeking a school place.</p>
Will the change affect the wider community?	<p>School admission arrangements are statutorily required to be determined annually. As there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places there will be no change in how services users who need to apply for a school place will be affected.</p>

<p>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?</p>	<p>As there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places there will be no change in how service users are affected.</p> <p>In circumstances where families are not offered one of their preferred schools, we are required to allocate a school place. Families who are unhappy with their offered school can submit additional preferences and consider using their right to request an independent admission appeal.</p> <p>Advice and guidance for families wishing to apply for a school place is available at bpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Families can also email their queries to school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or talk to us by calling 01202 123222.</p>
<p>Summary of Equality Implications:</p>	<p>All school applications will continue to be processed in line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the relevant school admissions policy(s). Families are provided with advice and guidance on how to apply, deadlines for applying and information about their right of appeal should they not be offered their preferred school.</p> <p>Families will have the opportunity to access an independent appeal process if they are unhappy with the outcome of their application.</p> <p>The requirement to ensure that children with EHCPs are placed before allocation of all children and the requirement to ensure all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are ranked highest using the oversubscription criteria ensures that these vulnerable groups are positively impacted by the admissions process.</p> <p>School admission arrangements are within the domain of Education described in the Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights. They ensure access to appropriate education is provided for children and young people.</p>

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	IRO Annual Report 2023-2024
Meeting date	28 January 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The IRO annual report sets out information in respect of BCPs Children in Care and the performance of the IRO Service. The summary gives a short overview of service progression and areas for development going forward.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: Report to be discussed at the meeting.
Reason for recommendations	To obtain feedback from board members and answer any questions board members may have.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Nicole Mills
Report Authors	Nicky Campbell
Wards	Council Wide
Classification	For Information.

Background

1. The report provides an annual overview of the performance of the IRO service and BCP's Children in Care profile. The summary sets out the highlights and areas for development.

Options Appraisal

2. None.

Summary of financial implications

3. The IRO Service has a statutory service in place to monitor the local authority's performance and approach to it's children in care and care experienced young people.

Summary of legal implications

4. None

Summary of human resources implications

5. Currently none

Summary of sustainability impact

6. None

Summary of public health implications

7. None

Summary of equality implications

8. Children and young people who are in care or care experienced will be afforded the same care and opportunities as those children and young people who live with their parents or extended family. The role of an IRO and social worker, is to be aspirational for all our looked after children and care experienced young people in order for them to grow up and meet their full potential.

Appendices

Appendix 1: IRO Annual Report 2023-2024



Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service

**Annual Report
April 2023 – March 2024**

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Annual Report BCP Council - IRO Service.

April 2023 to March 2024

1. Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to provide an account of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service between 1 April 2023 and the 31 March 2024. This report analyses and evaluates practice, plans and arrangements for looked after children and the effectiveness of the IRO service in ensuring the local authority, as a corporate parent, meets its statutory responsibilities towards looked after children and care experienced young people.

2. Purpose of Service and Legal Context

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) were nationally introduced to represent the interests of looked after children. Their role was strengthened through the introduction of statutory guidance in April 2011. The IRO service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, Department for Children, Schools, and Families (2010) and linked to the revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011.

This report identifies good practice as well as highlighting areas for development in relation to the BCP IRO functioning, and its impact upon outcomes for children. The IRO has a key and statutory role in relation to the improvement of care planning for looked after children. The responsibility of the IRO is to have an overview of the child's care planning arrangements in respect of the child's wellbeing in placement, and plans for the future, as well as oversight of the child's health and educational needs. The IRO will offer constructive and targeted scrutiny and challenge regarding case management through regular statutory monitoring and follow up between children's review periods.

The IRO service is located within the quality, performance, improvement, and governance directorate and are independent of social work teams and their operational line management. A collaborative approach is in place between the IRO service, social work colleagues and partner agencies. A high challenge/high support approach is adopted by the service, with the expectation that all agencies are aspirational for the children that we work with.

3. BCP Council as Corporate Parents

Officers and Councillors of BCP council have a duty to ensure the needs of all children and young people who are in care or who are care experienced are met.

The Corporate Parenting Board strives to hold to account all departments within the council who also have a duty to these children and young people. The IRO service manager attends the quarterly corporate parenting boards. A key responsibility of the IRO service is to monitor the activity of the local authority as a corporate parent.

These responsibilities for local authorities were first laid out in the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and reinforced in the Children and Young People's Act 2008 and most recently in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The most recent legislation sets out seven Corporate Parenting principles that all councils must adhere to for children in care and care experienced young people, to ensure that their needs are met, and life chances promoted. All local authorities in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to Looked After Children, have regard to the 7 principles of corporate parenting:

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

BCP has a Corporate Parenting Board that is well attended by young people, elected members and council officers. Issues raised by young people at the meeting set the agenda for service improvements. Young people who attend the panel are well versed in their role on the board and are supported by participation officers to ensure their voice and the voice of other children and young people is heard.

4. Profile of the IRO Service

The IRO service continues to serve all children and young people living in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole areas as well as any child or young person who is looked after by BCP children's services, who is placed in other parts of the UK.

The IRO service has moved on significantly throughout this reporting period. Standards of practice continue to improve, and IRO impact is more visible and measurable. Our team is one that is unified and aspirational for the children and young people who we work with and on behalf of. Management foster collaborative working with IROs, children/young people and their families, and other professionals which has helped to create our service improvement and development plan.

The current establishment is 15 full time and two part time IRO/CP chairs. Our current ratio of permanent to agency staff is 11:6. Two permanent members of staff are due to start at the end of April and one at the beginning of May 2024 which will reduce agency staffing numbers further. Currently, we have one permanent team manager (covering children in care work) and one agency team manager (covering child protection work). A permanent child protection team manager has been appointed and will start on the 20th of May 2024.

There are 4 male and 13 female IRO/CP chairs. Nine members of staff undertake child in care work, with two carrying child in care and child protection workloads. The rest of the workforce undertake child protection work. Every attempt is made by management to allocate work based on a professional's area of strength. Some of our staff prefer a mixed workload, whilst others prefer to specialise in either child protection or children in care. Whilst we try to allocate work based on practitioners' strengths and preference area of work, the needs of the child and service demand take priority and resources are managed accordingly.

The ethnic and cultural makeup of the team is not a diverse one with all staff being white. Because of this, we are mindful that diversity training needs to be regular and ongoing. Triple P training was undertaken in 2023 which helped our staff to have a better understanding of the challenges unaccompanied minors experience when they arrive in the UK. Diversity is also a standing agenda item in staff meetings which helps us to ensure that good practice and challenges are identified, discussed and addressed, and our service meets the needs of all of the children that we work with.

There are varying degrees of experience within the team, with some staff having extensive knowledge and experience of the IRO role, whilst others are new to the role. This mix is helpful to staff development across the board. Those staff who come with recent front-line experience bring with them knowledge and experience of working more directly with children and families in a front-line team; this can bring about further learning for those members of staff who have been in the IRO role for a significant period of time. Less experienced IROs benefit from those IROs who have been in the role for a significant period of time.

Robust inductions continue to be undertaken with all new staff and a gradual increase in workload is applied. This assists new IROs to embed induction learning, observe other IROs and become familiar with the BCP system, policies and procedures. The IRO team has its own Practice Standards which sets out procedures and the expected standard of work.

5. Staffing and recruitment

Throughout this financial year, the service has had periods of staff stability and successful recruitment campaigns, as well as some unforeseen staffing issues that resulted in a reliance upon agency staff again. Recruitment in the earlier part of the

financial year was good and nine IRO/CP chairs were recruited. Four of these members of staff were agency who converted to permanent. The Team Manager posts have also been successfully recruited to. One team manager, who was an agency manager in the IRO service, has also converted to permanent. The other vacant child protection team manager post has also been recruited to. Service Manager, Head of Service and Service Director has remained the same since January 2022. As of May 2024, we will have a permanent management group.

Towards the latter part of the year, we lost three members of staff unexpectedly which increased the number of agency staff in the team again. Whilst this impacted somewhat upon service delivery, we were able to re-recruit agency staff who had previously worked in the team which helped to reduce disruption for some children.

Recruitment in the latter part of the financial year has been slower. Whilst we continue to receive applications, a large proportion of these applicants do not have the required knowledge and experience. The outstanding decision in respect of pay and reward may also be having an impact upon our recruitment.

The IRO Service has a Business Support Team that consists of three members of staff: one full time and two part time. The team is a stable one and provide good support to the IRO team and management. Monthly meetings are held with the IRO team manager and business support officers (BSO) to look at what is working well and issues that need to be addressed. BSO's have a good grasp of the work that IROs undertake and the timescales that need to be adhered to. When there have been issues due to challenges in the business support team for example a delay in minutes going out, this has been dealt with swiftly between BSO/IRO management.

6. Workload

Workloads in the team have been more stable this financial year. Despite most IROs being at the top end of their capacity, there has been no delays with the allocation of new work. Upon notification of a child or young person becoming looked after, an IRO is allocated within 24 hours of notification.

Only when there have been staffing issues have workloads increased to over what is recommended in the IRO Handbook. This was for a very short period of time until agency staff were recruited which was relatively quickly.

When looking at allocations and workloads, we now need to consider the number of children and young people who are placed out of county and how many out of county children each IRO is responsible for. A recent IRO Service workload audit identified that there was not equity across the team, with some IROs having more children out of county than others. As a result, workload cap needs to be lowered for those IROs who have a high number of children out of county to take into account travel time.

The number of out of county placements has risen considerably in BCP (and nationally) due to suitable placement shortages or a need to keep a child or young person safe due to exploitation.

7. Training, supervision and applying our learning

Learning from Practice Learning Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) and themed focus reviews is recorded and monitored in all manager and team meetings and actions for the service are tracked to completion. Dip sampling is undertaken to ensure the learning is embedded into practice and is consistent across the team.

Examples of identified learning themes for the IRO team:

- Limited use of the escalation/Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)
- Timeliness of completion of DRPs and impact
- More robust planning and monitoring for those young people who are 16 + particularly those approaching 18
- The use of mid-point meetings to track and monitor case progression
- Child participation
- Recording of visits
- Absence of social work report and care plan prior to CIC meeting

All IROs continue to progress their professional development by attending training which has included training that is specific for their role. The team have attended Triple P training, DRP training and Case Planning and Review training which links to the service development plan and areas of identified learning. Guest speakers are invited to attend team meetings which is a further learning opportunity for our staff. Peer supervision is also monthly and the feedback from this has been positive and has especially benefited less experienced IROs.

Managers and IROs receive monthly supervision. Supervision covers health and wellbeing of the practitioner as well as business matters. Practitioners have strong management support and managers know their staff well. During supervision, managers will discuss with practitioner's areas of strength and development using feedback from children and young people, parents, carers, professionals and sources such as PLRs and PowerBi. In this financial year, supervisions have focused on the use and impact of DRPs and children who do not have an achieved care plan. Participation and visits to children have also been a focus in supervision and the impact of this has been a noticeable increase in the number of children participating in the review process, attending their meetings and being visited by their IRO.

Staff inductions continue to be robust incorporating mandatory as well as role specific training and observations by new staff, of more experienced IROs. New staff are allocated a mentor when they join the team. Feedback from staff at the probationary confirmation meeting which the service manager attends has been very positive regarding inductions. There was consistent feedback from new staff that the pace that work was allocated to them, allowed them the chance to embed their learning into

practice and become familiar with the procedures, legislation and case management system.

Feedback:

Feedback from a CIC Team Manager on the IRO Service

I want to firstly share that I think you have a cohort of IRO's where child centred practice is evident. The way reviews have been adapted to maximise participation for the child is evident. The care, thought, planning, and other factors from IRO's prior to each review is very good. This is the third LA I have worked in, and I very much feel this authority has a far more child-centred approach compared to the others. In my view, your team presents to have a very committed cohort of IRO's! Therefore, please pass on my thanks and gratitude. I very much wish you all the best for the future.

Feedback from a child in care –

Yes I like my social worker, I like all of them including my foster carers supervising social worker and my IRO - nothing to improve all is ok as it is. 10/10 - couldn't improve

Feedback from a parent–

On a personal note, I'm very happy that James has you as his IRO and I feel you have been incredibly supportive of us as a family and of James.

Feedback from a child in care

I don't want anyone else to be my IRO as I don't like changes. I like when my IRO visits and he is fun, because he knows what's important and I trust him.

Learning from observations

Annual observations are undertaken with all staff and form part of the induction process for new staff.

In three observations that were undertaken with new staff post induction, it was evident that the induction training had had an impact upon their practice and had been pitched at the appropriate level. Whilst the practitioners were experienced social workers with two having a Cafcass background, all of them were new to the IRO role.

In two out of the three reviews held, the child and young person attended and was able to share their views in the meeting with the assistance of the IRO. All three IROs had met with the children and young person prior to their meeting and obtained their views which were shared at the meeting by the IRO. All of the meetings were structured and child focused. It was noted that the review recommendations for one child were SMART.

The learning from the observations was that advocacy was noted to have been discussed with one young person only. For one child, not all the review recommendations outlined verbally during the meeting, were captured in the minutes. One IRO had not completed the letter to the child within the 20-day timescale and recommendations had not been sent to the social work manager within 5 days of the meeting.

Whilst there was learning for the IROs who were relatively new in role at the time the observations took place, the learning was more around process and recording. The outcome of the meetings was in line with the child's needs which considered the views of the child, parents and other professionals involved. More reassuringly, the observations evidenced that the IRO work was child centred and had impact.

Working with social work teams

Each of the social work service areas has an allocated link IRO who works with social work teams to address any low-level concerns around process and practice. A development day for IROs and social workers has been planned to take place later in 2024.

The current area of focus between the IRO service and social work teams is to increase the number of child in care meetings that have both a social work report and care plan prior to the CIC meeting taking place. The number of meetings taking place currently without a social work report and/or care plan is too high. Our data shows that at the end of quarter 4, 85% of children and young people had an updated care plan. Whilst there has been some improvement in this area, and the data shows that we are within tolerance for the first time this year, this is still below target.

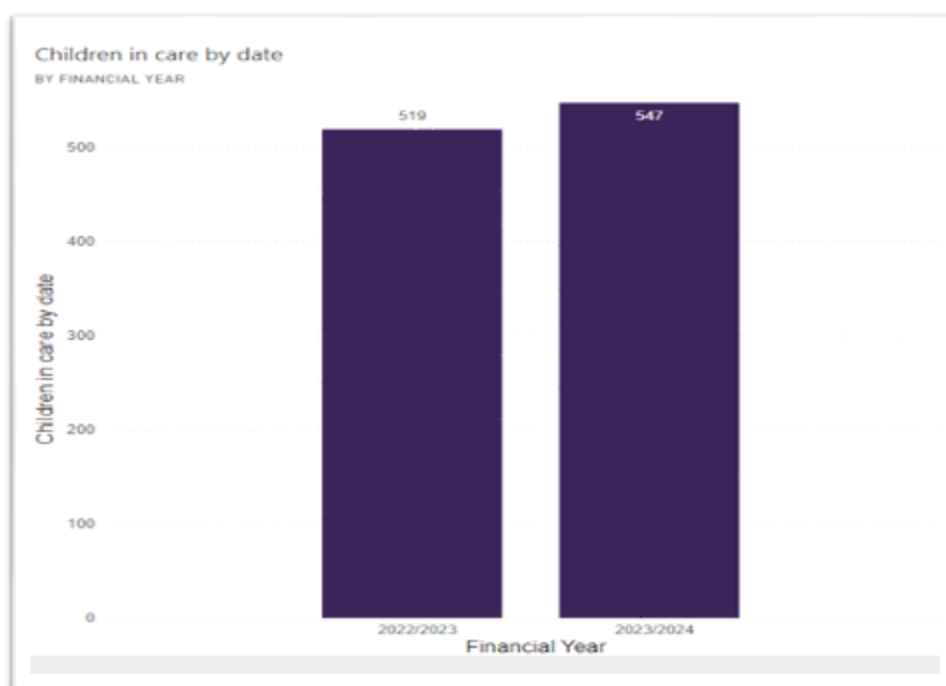
The initial approach undertaken by the IRO Service to improve this was for IROs to postpone the child in care meeting so as the social work report and/or care plan could be completed prior to the review. This had an impact upon the diary capacity of the IROs and other professionals, meaning that some meetings had to be postponed for longer than a week resulting in a three-week delay for some children. More

importantly, children and young people who had been prepared for their meeting to take place on the original date had to be told that it had been postponed which resulted in some children and young people not wishing to take part in the reconvened meeting and losing confidence in the review process.

To avoid the above, a process is now in place whereby the IRO business support team send reminders to social workers 5 and 2 days before a review takes place. The IRO will also follow up with a call to the social worker to remind them. If the paperwork is still not available 24 hours before the meeting, the service manager for the social work team is copied into a final reminder and the meeting will go ahead as planned. After the meeting, the IRO will raise a Cause for Concern notice to the social worker and team manager and requests that the report and/or care plan is updated within 5 days. The IRO will monitor this, and should the documents not be updated; a formal escalation will be raised. This is monitored by the IRO team manager who provides a weekly update to service managers of reviews that have taken place without a social work report and/or care plan.

8. Profile of Looked After Children in BCP Council

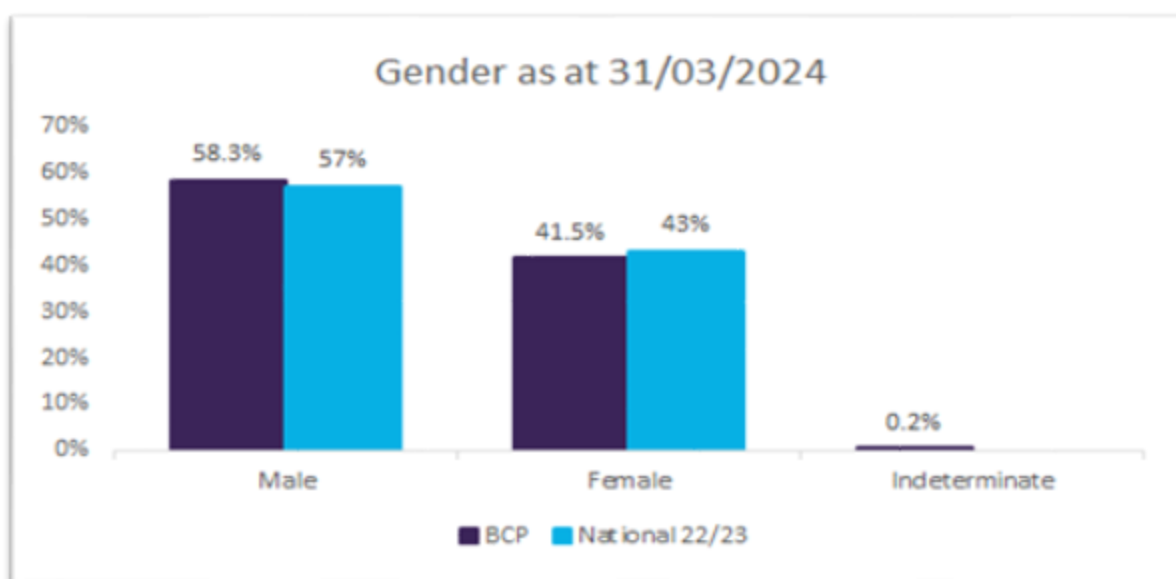
As of the 31 March 2024, there were 547 children and young people in the care of BCP Council. This is a 5% increase from 2022/23 and a 10% increase from 2021/22 which shows a continued upward trend. Of the 547 children in care, 44 were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who make up 8% of the children in care population in BCP.



The rate of children in care in BCP at the end of the financial year was 74 per 10,000 children. This is 3% lower than the national average but 8% higher than regionally and 5% higher than statistical neighbours.

On notification of a child or young person becoming looked after, the IRO Service continues to allocate an IRO within 24 hours of this notification. In times of staffing challenges, the team worked well with managers to maintain children coming into care having an allocated IRO within 24 hours of becoming looked after and the first CIC meeting being convened within 28 days.

The graph below shows the looked after population by gender. There continues to be more males looked after than females. This reporting year, statistics show a 1% decrease in the male population and a 2% increase in the female population of children in care in BCP.



The data below details a breakdown of children and young people who are looked after by age. For children under 1, figures remain the same and in line with all comparators. For children aged between 1 to 4 years old, there has been a 2% increase for this age group, which is lower than all comparators.

For children aged between 5 to 9, there has been a 1% increase in this age group becoming looked after, this is in line with comparators. For children within the age group 10 to 15, there has been a 1% decrease which is slightly lower than comparators.

The number of young people in care aged sixteen and over also decreased by 1% this year meaning that a slight decrease has continued from the previous year. In comparison to national, regional, and statistical neighbour data, BCP figures for this age group of children continue to remain higher than comparators.

CIC as at 31st March	23/24	22/23	2023/24		
	BCP	BCP	National	Stat Neighbour	Regional
% Age: Under 1	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
% Age: 1 to 4	11%	9%	13%	11%	11%
% Age: 5 to 9	18%	17%	18%	17%	17%
% Age: 10 to 15	37%	38%	38%	39%	40%
% Age: 16 and over	29%	30%	26%	29%	28%

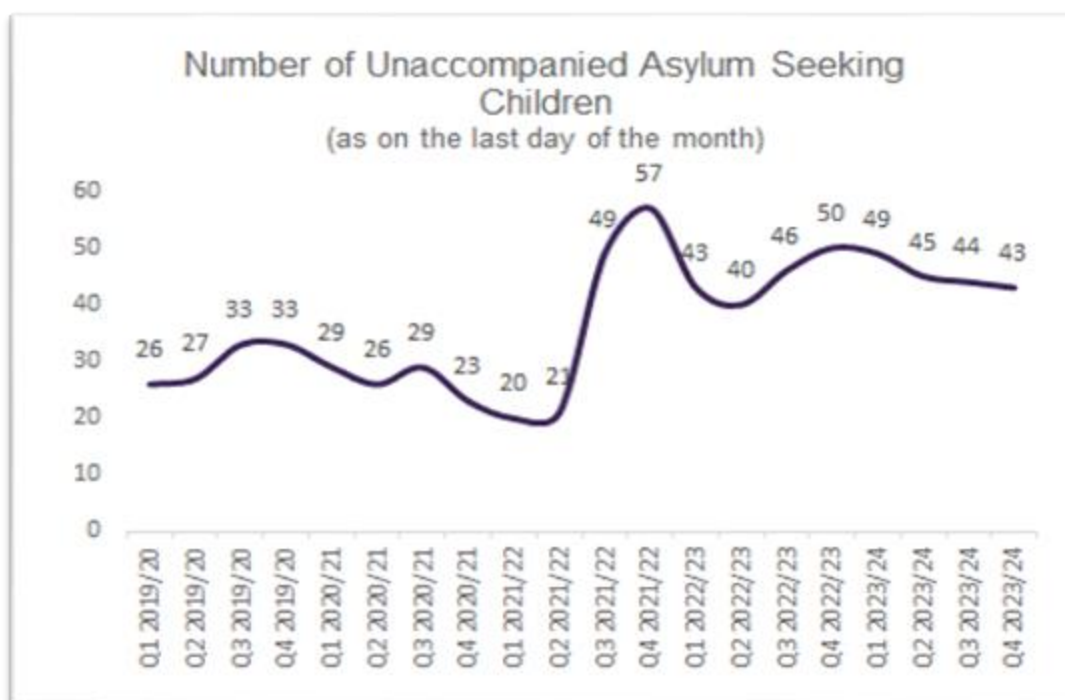
At the end of Quarter 4, 75% of children in care aged under 16 years of age have been in the same placement for at least 2 years. This is a 4% decrease from the previous year but above all comparators.

The number of children who had been in care for over 12 months who have experienced three or more placement moves was 7% at the end of quarter 4. This is a 5% increase from last year but continues to be well below all comparators.

9. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children accommodated in BCP Council decreased throughout this financial year. The number of unaccompanied minors in the care of BCP, 4%, is currently lower than the national average, which is 10%, with statistical neighbours being at 11% and regional at 9%.

At the end of this reporting period, there were 43 unaccompanied minors in the care of BCP. This is a 24% decrease from the same time last year. As part of the National Transfer Scheme, all local authorities are expected to have up to a 0.1% population of asylum seeking children per the overall child population in that area. BCP's quota is 74, therefore BCP are currently under quota. Work is being undertaken via the National Transfer Scheme to increase the number of this cohort of children being accommodated in BCP.



10. Ethnicity and Children with Disability

The ethnic profile of children looked after in BCP, reflects the ethnic profile of the child population within BCP. The table below shows that the majority of children and young people who are looked after, continue to be white/British. Children who are of dual heritage are the next largest group who are looked after. There have been no significant changes to the ethnic profile of our looked after children. The data shows that there are some variabilities between BCP data and comparative data; for example those children who are within the 'other ethnic groups', BCP are significantly higher. For black/Black British children, we are lower than our statistical neighbours and regionally.

The number of children with disabilities looked after at the end of this reporting period was 17. This cohort of children make up 3% of the overall looked after children cohort.

IRO workloads continue to be varied. There are no specialist IROs in the team that solely manage UASC or children with disabilities work. We continue to acknowledge that these groups of children have additional and sometimes complex needs and work on the basis that our aspiration for these groups of children is the same for all other children who we work on behalf of. The variation of workload enables our IROs to develop professionally and gain knowledge and experience across all areas of social work.

CIC as of 31st March	23/24	22/23	2022/23		
	BCP	BCP	National	Stat Neighbour	Regional
% White	76%	76%	71%	77%	80%
% Dual heritage	8%	8%	10%	10%	7%
% Asian or Asian British	3%	3%	5%	4%	2%
% Black or Black British	3%	3%	7%	4%	4%
% Other ethnic groups	9%	9%	5%	7%	6%
% Not known	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%

11. Legal status of looked after children in BCP Council

The below table shows the number of children in care by their legal status. The number of children subject of an interim care order is down 3% from the previous year. The data shows us that we are now more in line with our comparators. The number of children subject of a care order in BCP is 3% higher than the previous year but continues to be lower than comparators. The number of children subject of placement orders in BCP continues to be in line with comparators.

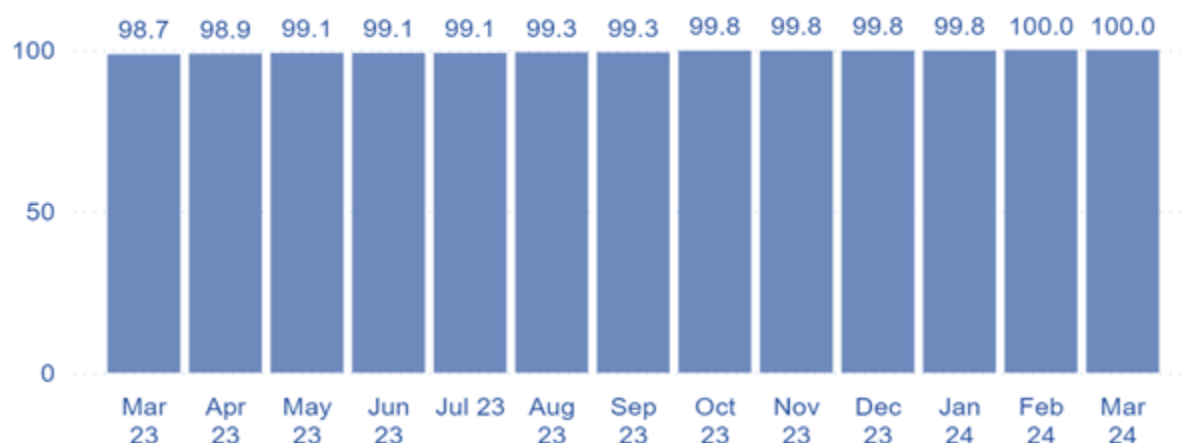
The number of children accommodated under section 20 remains the same as the previous year and remains higher than comparators and this is a continued trend. This is a continued area of focus for the IRO Service.

Children and young people with section 20 status are reviewed within IRO supervision to make sure that their legal status is appropriate and meets their short and long term needs.

CIC as of 31st March	23/24	22/23	22/23		
	BCP	BCP	National	Stat Neighbour	Regional
% Interim care order	19%	22%	19%	18%	18%
% Care order	47%	44%	57%	52%	55%
% Placement order granted	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%
% Accommodated under S20	28%	28%	19%	22%	21%

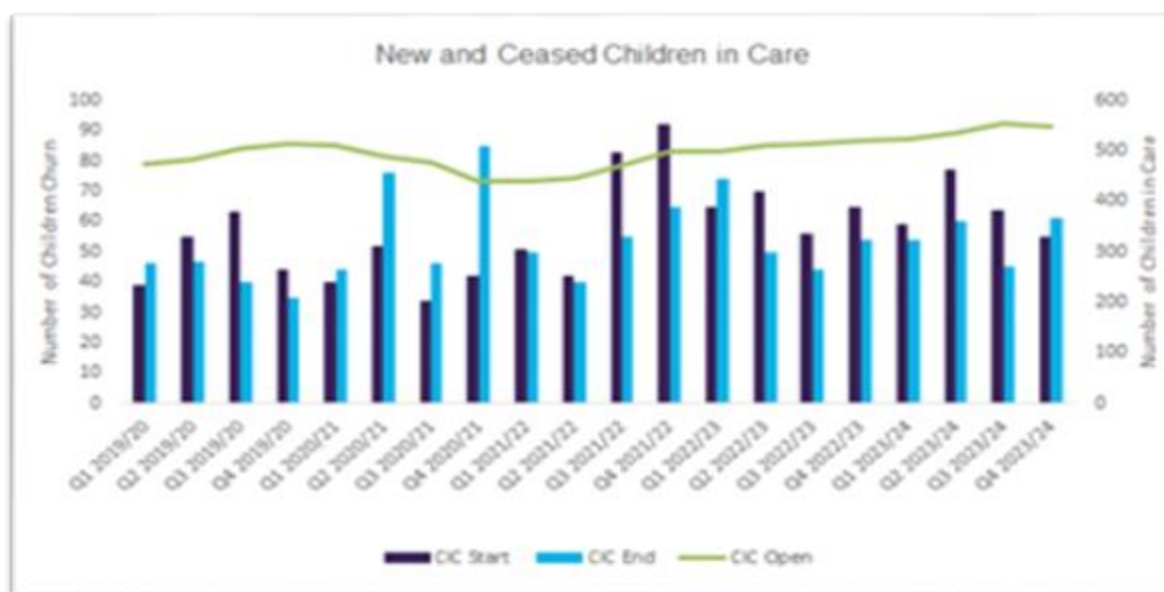
12. Placement type, Permanency and Stability

The IRO service monitors the number of children who have a permanence plan at second review. This is recorded onto the case management system by the IRO via the quality assurance form. There has been a significant improvement in this area compared to last year. Throughout the 2022/23 reporting period, the range in percentage of children who had a permanence plan at second review was between 81% and 86%. In this reporting period, this has increased to between 98 and 100%.



The number of children who had an achieved permanence care plan at the end of this reporting year was low at 43%. This is a continued trend and an area of focus for the IRO service. IRO use of the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) has increased for those children whose permanence plan has not been achieved within nine months of them becoming looked after.

The data below reflects the movement of children in care during the 2023/24 period. In all but quarter 4, there were more children coming into care than being discharged. A Reunification Team has now been established in BCP. The team sits within the Targeted Support Service with the child's allocated social worker having key responsibility for the care plan until reunification has been achieved and the child is no longer looked after or a child in need. BCP's Keeping Families Connected team will also be part of the reunification work.



We know that for some children, their plan of long-term foster care goes unchallenged despite positive changes in a parent's life being made. We need to be more observant of this in the review process and give more consideration to a change of a care plan should it become apparent that a parent or other family member is now able to care for a child or young person who is looked after. The introduction of the Reunification Team will increase the numbers of children returning home where this is appropriate and in line with the child's wishes and feelings.

We have identified that there is still practice in the team that needs to be more robust and challenging of drift and delay. Managers are more aware of this and are taking appropriate steps to address matters on a team and individual basis. A refresher care planning and review training session has been completed with all IROs using case examples.

The use of mid-point reviews is embedded in IRO practice. This assists an IRO to identify drift and delay, or any other issue, part way through the review process and take earlier action. We are starting to see the impact of the midpoint reviews which has led to an increase in the escalation process being used. This is not consistent across the team however and managers are aware of this and addressing as necessary.

Whilst there has been some increased stability in the IRO service and social work teams, this has not been consistent throughout this reporting period, which has impacted upon care planning and achieving permanence. Recruitment across children's services is improving with there now being a 70% permanent to 30% agency staff ratio meaning children and young people experiencing multiple changes in IRO and social worker is less. With stability in the IRO service and social work teams improving, we are confident that, going forward, permanence for our children and young people will be achieved in a timelier manner.

The highest proportion of children in the care of BCP Council are placed with foster families, both in-house and through independent fostering agencies. 65% of children are placed with BCP carers, 30% of children are placed with kinship carers. Due to a system and accuracy of placement codes issue, the data in respect of type of foster placement for 5% of our children is not recorded. 58% of children are long term matched with their carers.

The number of children living with foster families has decreased by 3% in this reporting period. The number of children placed with a relative or a friend has increased by 6%. The pattern that has emerged over the last two years is that more family and friends' placements are being approved which means more children are remaining within their family or with known adults.

The use of secure accommodation and legal orders was used once in this year.

Provision (as at 31 March 2024)	BCP Number	BCP 23/24 %	BCP 22/23 %
Foster placements	404	74%	73%
Placed for adoption	11	2%	2%
Placement with parents	22	4%	3%
Other placement in the community	19	3%	3%
Secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation	45	8%	17%
Other residential settings	42	8%	2%
Residential schools	2	<1%	<1%
Other placement	2	<1%	1%

13. Sufficiency Overview

As is the case nationally, there continues to be ongoing challenges in finding appropriate and local placements for our children and young people. This means that the number of children and young people being placed outside of BCP has increased significantly which has impacted upon workload capacity for some IROs who have a high number of children who live out of county.

In February 2024, a piece of work was undertaken to look at IRO allocations in respect of children and young people placed out of county. Of the 553 children and young people in care at that time, 14% were in placements up to 50 miles out of county; 15% were in placements more than 50 miles out of county. For two IROs, over 50% of the

children and young people they worked with were placed out of county. For the rest of the IRO team, they held workloads of between 33% and 46% of children and young people placed out of county.

Although it is acknowledged that out of county placements fluctuate, the continued trend is that placement sufficiency in house and locally is challenging. Should the numbers increase, it is likely that the IRO establishment will also need to increase to manage this.

Over the latter part of this financial year, work has been focused upon reducing the number of unregulated/unregistered placements. This has reduced such placements from eight to two in a relatively short time. At year end, there were two unregistered placements with active work continuing to reduce this further.

The IRO service continues to monitor such placements as per the IRO Service Practice Standards, working closely with the social worker to monitor and make sure a child or young person's needs are being met.

14. Timeliness of Child in Care Reviews

In this reporting period, 1529 child in care meetings took place. This is a 3% increase from the previous year.

	Number of CIC Reviews 22/23	Number of CIC Reviews 23/24
Q1	356	369
Q2	353	369
Q3	380	413
Q4	384	378
Total	1473	1529

94% of child in care meetings took place within timescale this financial year. This is an increase of 4% from the previous year and a 6% increase from the 2021/22 reporting period. This demonstrates that despite the increased number of reviews taking place, performance in respect of timeliness has continued to improve over the last three years and remains good. We are aware of why meetings have not taken place within timescale which has been down to late notification of first meetings to the IRO service by social work teams and newer IROs miscalculating dates.

The timeliness of letters to children and review minutes being completed by IROs has improved significantly. The majority are completed within 20 days of the child's meeting taking place and sent out within the 5 day timescale by business support.

Weekly reports are sent to the IRO team manager and service manager, which helps to monitor the timeliness of meetings, the write up of minutes and them being sent out.

The standard of practice in relation to IROs written letters to children continues to be good. Feedback from a child via his social worker was that the child puts his letters from his IRO on his bedroom wall so that they are there for him to read. The most common positive feedback received in practice learning reviews is the quality of the IROs written letter to the child or young person.

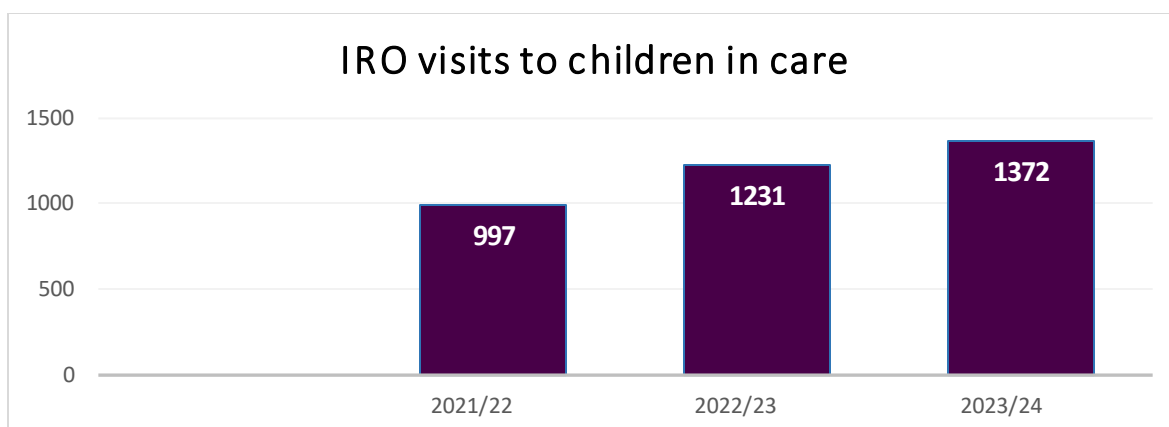
The majority of child in care meetings are undertaken face to face. Out of county child in care meetings also take place face to face.

With the exception of one agency IRO, the rest of the team are permanent and all live either close to, or within the BCP area. We are no longer reliant upon agency members of staff who live out of the BCP and neighbouring areas to chair CIC meetings. Permanent, local members of staff have had a significant and positive impact upon the quality of service delivery and the number of face to face meetings taking place.

It is the exception for meetings now to be held virtually. There are occasions when this does happen, for example if a child or young person requests this. The number of virtual meetings is monitored by the team manager.

15. Participation & Engagement.

The number of visits undertaken in this reporting period was higher than the previous year. 1,372 visits were undertaken as opposed to 1,231 last year. This is an increase of 11%. Recorded visits to children has increased year on year for the past three years. A stand alone IRO visit to children and young people template was added to BCP's case management system in March 2024 (see appendix) which now makes it easier for the frequency and quality of IRO visits to be monitored. Visits to children and young people prior to their meeting is better embedded in IRO practice now resulting in more children and young people attending their meetings and their views being central in the review process.



The below table shows the improvements in child/young person participation and children/young people attending their meetings which has increased over the last three years. Consistency of team manager and IROs has assisted with this. There is still more work and thought needed to help increase the number of children and young people attending their meetings which is underway. We are confident that with continued stability in the team, the number of children and young people attending their meetings will increase further. Our workforce is first and foremost child centred. The comment heard most from our staff is that direct work with children is the best part of their role.

	Participation	Number of children who attended their meeting
2023/24	99%	59%
2022/23	95%	40%
2021/22	92%	43%

There are various ways in which a child or young person can participate in the review process. Some of our young people have felt confident enough to lead their own meetings with the support of their IRO and were able to articulate their own views. For some children and young people, they have preferred to share their views with their IRO, advocate or another significant person prior to the meeting which have then been shared within the meeting by this adult. The increase in IRO visits to children and young people has meant that the voice of children and young people, is more evident in records of the meetings.

We continue to send out consultation forms to children, young people, parents and carers. The return rate is still low and we are looking at ways to address this. Using a QR code and developing an app are options that we are looking into.

Children continue to receive a profile of their IRO when they come into care or if they have a change in IRO. Feedback about the profiles has been positive. An example of

a profile is included at the end of this report. The IRO has had positive feedback from children and young people about her profile which helped to open up conversations with children and young people who were more at ease on meeting their IRO after reading it. The profile includes details for Coram Voice and also has a link to the child's version of the IRO handbook.

16. Advocacy

All looked after children in BCP have access to an advocate or independent visitor. Coram Voice continue to be the advocacy provider for BCP's looked after children and care experienced young people. The IRO Service Manager is the lead officer overseeing the Coram Voice contract along with a BCP Contracts Manager. Coram Voice also provide advocacy to young people aged 16 or 17 who are considered as a child in need and are considered homeless.

Headline data from Coram Voice annual report 2023/24:

Advocacy

- 30% of the overall referrals received were for looked after children
- 12% of referrals received were for care experienced young people
- The majority of referrals received, 58%, were for children subject of a child protection plans
- The majority of referrals were made by social workers
- The referral rate via an IRO was lower than last year
- The majority of children in care with an allocated advocate live in the BCP area.
- The furthest face to face advocacy support offered was to a young person in Cumbria.
- The number of referrals for children and young people who identify as male and female has evened out this year being 97 and 99 respectively. There were 11 referrals where gender was not disclosed.
- 67% of referrals received were for children under 15, with 12 to 15 year old age group being the highest.
- The ethnic profile of children who were referred for advocacy is mainly White/British, with the next group being Black/British/African, then Black/British/Caribbean and then Asian/British Asian. In a small number of referrals, ethnicity was not disclosed.
- 28 referrals were received for children who have a disability

Independent Visitors (IV)

- 12 new IV referrals were received this year
- 18 young people have been supported in total
- At the time of writing the report, Coram Voice were awaiting a match for 4 young people

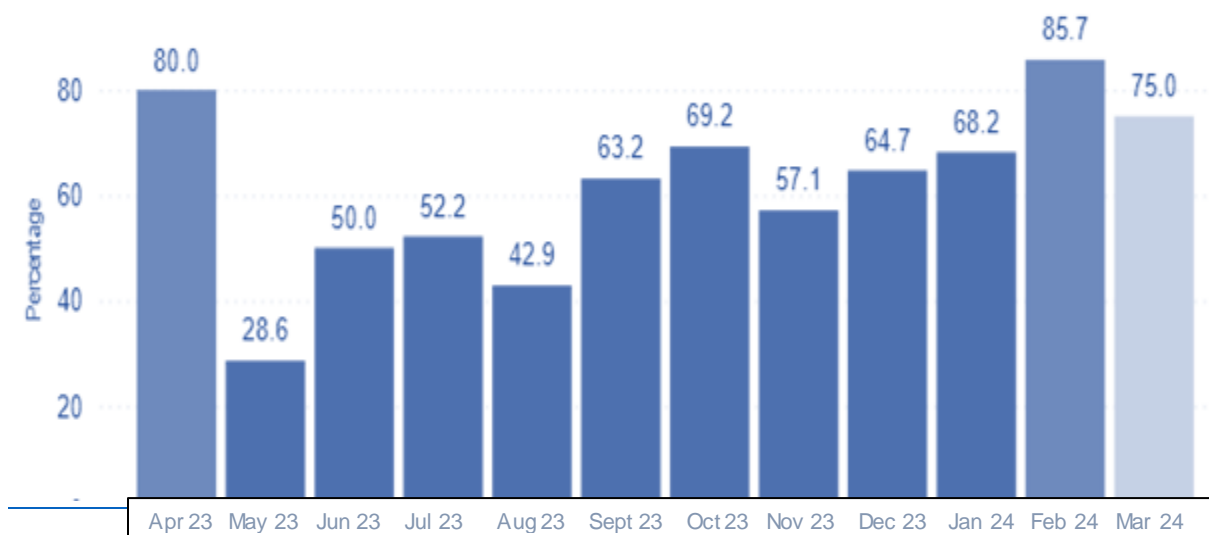
- The majority of referrals received were for young people of White/British/European backgrounds
- Only one referral was received for a young person who is of dual heritage
- 58% of referrals received were for males and 47% for females
- Of the referrals received, 75% recorded the young person as having a disability
- The age group with the highest number of referrals received was 12 to 15 year olds at 50%. 16% for 16-18 years olds and 33% for the under 11 age group.

Meetings are held with Coram Voice once every six weeks to review the advocacy and IV service provided. Work is being undertaken to look at why referral rates for looked after children are lower in comparison to those for children subject of a child protection plan. It is acknowledged that for this group of children, some have access to a Guardian, and all have an IRO as well as other professionals who can advocate on their behalf. This may be one of the reasons for the low referral rate for children in care.

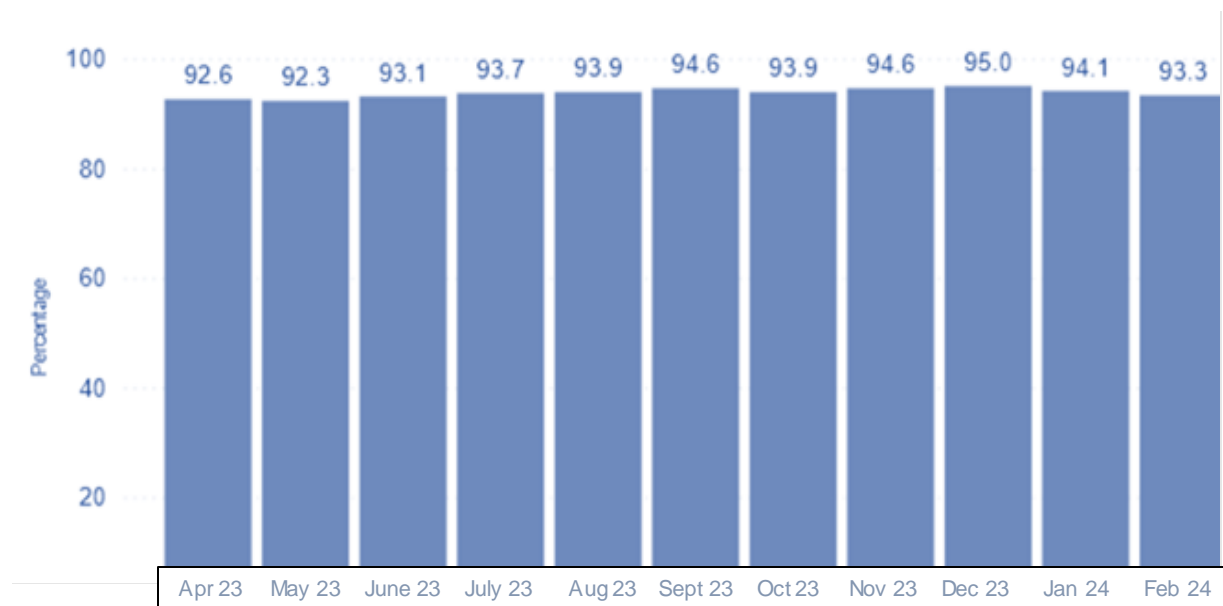
The IRO child visit template on Mosaic has made it mandatory for it to be recorded if a child has an advocate and that advocacy has been discussed with a child or young person.

17. Health

The timeliness of initial health assessments (IHA) continues to be low at 61%. This is a continuing trend from the previous year.



The data below shows the timeliness of review health assessments (RHA). 93% of RHA were undertaken on time in this reporting period. This is above all comparators.



There continues to be a low rate of children who are accessing dental care. At the end of the financial year, only 67% of the looked after population had an up to date dental check. IROs continue to raise with the child in care nurse any issues around dental care for looked after children. Work with health colleagues and social work teams is ongoing to address this issue.

18. Personal Education Plan (PEP) & Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

For children who were not on school role this financial year has fluctuated throughout the year spiking at 84 in July and 86 in August. From September onwards, the number of children not on role decreased and ranged between 22 and 27 ending in 29 at the end of quarter 4. Virtual school have good oversight of these children and work closely with social workers and IROs to address this. At the end of quarter 4, all children and young people had a PEP in place.

PEP and EHCP continue to form an integral part of care planning and it is the IROs responsibility to ensure that these plans have a positive impact on a child and young person's life and help them to achieve in life. An IRO needs to be satisfied that meetings to review these plans are taking place within timescales and that there is an up-to-date PEP/EHCP on the child's/young person's file that meets their needs.

19. Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)

The use of 'cause for concern notices' (informal escalation) has increased throughout the year and is more embedded in practice. There has been some learning for IROs around starting the informal process with a call to the social worker and team manager to attempt to try and resolve issues informally. Our goal is to achieve the required outcome for a child or young person by building relationships with our social work

teams and positively influencing social work practice through good communication, negotiation and healthy challenge.

From the table below, a high number of 'cause for concern' notices have been raised which have either been resolved or progressed to a formal escalation. The number of DRPs raised this reporting period is significantly higher than the previous year as the table below evidences. There are a number of contributing factors; monitoring and recording of DRPs has improved by business support and IROs, the use of DRP is better embedded in IRO practice and most have a better understanding of when to raise a DRP; the DRP spreadsheet is sent on a weekly basis to the relevant service managers who can see how many active DRPs are in their service area and what stage these are at so have oversight of this also.

Cause for concerns raised since April 2023	205
DRPs raised	
April 2022 - March 2023	71
April 2023 - March 2024	222

DRP data continues to be collated manually by business support officers and monitored by the team manager. A request has been made for the escalation process to be updated on Mosaic that will enable IROs to log escalations on Mosaic, and for these to be more easily monitored by social workers, IROs and managers. It is anticipated that Mosaic will be updated in September/October 2024.

The learning from PLRs, dip sampling and the DRP spreadsheet tells us that the escalation process is not used consistently by all of our IROs. The timeliness of the process can also be delayed which means that issues are not resolved in a timely manner.

The recording of the reasons why an escalation has been raised has been difficult to track manually so we do not have an accurate picture of the issues. This is the same for the tracking of the management level that the escalation was resolved at. What we do know is that a high percentage of cause for concern notices are raised when the report and/or care plan for a child's meeting is not available prior to the meeting taking place. A high number of formal escalations relate to drift and delay in care planning.

There have been no formal escalations to CAFCASS within this review period or independent legal advice being sought by a BCP IRO.

20. Quality Assurance

The Quality Assessment Framework is embedded across the services and monitored monthly by senior management at a quality assurance meeting. Focused reviews have

continued throughout this reporting period which have concentrated on neglect, care experienced young people and domestic abuse. The learning from these reviews has been shared with the team and is discussed in management meetings where examples of practice change as a result of the learning are highlighted.

We need to improve the way we enable our children, young people, parents and carers to provide feedback. At the moment feedback is limited to that obtained as part of the practice learning review process which is helpful but does not always focus on the work of the IRO. Feedback from children and their families is low and we are working on ways to increase this, for example, looking at the use of QR codes and apps.

Practice week continues to take place in BCP. In this financial year, MASH, Children and Families First Team, the PLO and Court Team and Care Experienced Young Person's Team were the service areas reviewed. As IRO work straddles most of these services, we were provided with feedback and learning from the practice weeks which was helpful. IROs also form part of the review team for practice weeks which helps with their learning and development.

All managers at every level undertake a monthly collaborative PLR which has provided the IRO Service with valuable feedback and learning on an individual and team level.

Practice Standards for all staff as well as specifically for IROs are in place. This supports practitioners to provide a consistent service that meets good standards of practice.

21. What is working well

- Despite the increase in numbers of children coming into care, the timeliness of meetings has continued to be good. We have continued to allocate an IRO within 24 hours of being notified of a child coming into care.
- IRO visits to children have increased year on year. The number of children and young people seen prior to their meeting has increased leading to more children and young people attending their meetings.
- Mid-point reviews are embedded in practice for most IROs meaning better oversight of care planning and earlier identification of drift and delay or other issues.
- A stable staff and management group has contributed towards there being more practice consistency across the team. The majority of children have had the benefit of a consistent IRO. This has led to better engagement from children in the review process and IROs who know their children, and their care plan well.
- Team culture is positive. We have a committed workforce who are supportive of each other and have shown resilience in more challenging times. There is a high support/high challenge model of management in the service which has developed

a trusting and respectful working environment across the team. The current team manager has been in post for over a year now and this has helped to provide stability to the team. Senior management has been stable for over two years which has resulted in driving forward improvements and achieving good results..

- Five agency members of staff converted to permanent posts within the IRO Service and remain with us.
- Peer supervision continues to take place and is led by either an IRO or Child Protection Chair. This has been beneficial to the newer members of the team who have been able to learn from more experienced IROs in a less formal setting.
- For the majority of the year, workloads have been stable and only for a short period of time did they go beyond the recommended workload in the IRO handbook. This has helped to improve the quality of practice in the team.
- Practice Standards are in place which brings about a more consistent way of working and sets out clear expectations and the required standards of practice for our staff.
- IRO impact is increasing. There is more visible evidence of IROs achieving good outcomes for children.
- The introduction of the IRO section in the practice learning review template helps us to identify areas of development both on an individual and team level.
- We have bespoke PowerBi that gives rich and relevant data for the IRO Service which helps us to manage our work, performance and meet our KPIs.
- The number of complaints received in respect of IROs continues to be low. Whilst this is only one aspect of how we assess our service delivery, it is reassuring that complaints from children, parents, carers and other professionals are at a minimum.
- As a management group, we continue to know our service and staff well, so know our areas of strength and development.

22. Our priorities for 2023/2024

- Continue to increase child attendance at meetings as well as further consider how we can increase children and young people leading their own meetings.
- Ascertain why we have a low number of advocacy referral rate for children in care.
- Increase IRO impact to address drift and delay and increase the number of children with an achieved care plan within 12 months of becoming looked after.

- All IROs to undertake mid-point reviews and for these meetings to evidence impact and follow on action when necessary.
- The development of online feedback survey for children and young people, parents and carers that captures their experiences and feedback on the review process.
- DRP process to be updated on Mosaic so as escalations can be monitored.
- Timeliness of the recording and sending out of child in care records to be maintained.
- Mid-point meetings are taking place now on a regular basis. We need to ensure that these meetings are meaningful and have an impact on the care planning process where there is drift and delay.
- Recruitment and retention of staff and providing a learning plan for 24/25.
- Focus on developing better links with social work teams.

Nicky Campbell –
3rd June 2024

23. APPENDIX

Good practice examples

Michael is 13 years of age. He had not seen his mum since he was a younger child and wanted to make contact with her again. His dad had passed away and he was worried that his mum may pass away and he wanted to get to know her. Michael spoke to his IRO shortly before his child in care meeting and told her this. Michael's IRO made some enquiries, Michael's IRO and Social Worker were able to track down Michael's mum and they started to have indirect contact with each other. Michael's social worker is now in the process of re-assessing Michael's mum in the hope that this could lead to her being reintroduced into Michael's life on a more permanent and substantial basis

Good Practice Story Board - Template



Alice, you, and your brother Jamie became subject to an ICO in Feb 2023 and initially lived with your paternal grandparents, then a foster family, then moved to live with your aunt, who is a connected carer. You both became children in care after your father was arrested and subsequently found guilty of downloading sexual images of children. Prior to becoming a child in care, you were subject to a Child Arrangement Order and lived with your dad following a Finding of Fact hearing where your mum was identified as the perpetrator of physical and emotional harm against you and Matthew. Your plan going forward is long term care with your connected carer.

What outcomes are we improving?

You need to be safe and cared for now and throughout your childhood. Any care plan of permanence for you and Jamie needs to be informed by comprehensive assessments. A Special Guardianship Order assessment was undertaken of your aunt and uncle, the outcome was positive. Due to other information coming to light, your aunt and uncle changed their minds about becoming your special guardians and if this was progressed, your uncle said he would end the marriage. The impact of this separation upon your aunt's emotional wellbeing and financial situation regarding the end of the marriage and your awareness of the different views held by your carers needed to be considered within the assessment. Also, your living arrangements became unusual in that you all moved to live in your father's house, and he had a significant amount of control over the day-to-day arrangements. It became unclear whether your aunt had the reparative parenting skills to keep you safe and meet your needs given your levels of trauma. An addendum SGO assessment was commissioned.

What has been delivered?

Helen has been your IRO since Jan 2023, she has visited you at home prior to your CIC meetings taking place to ensure she had your views. Your CIC meetings have taken place within timescales. The recommendations from these reviews are SMART and meaningful so as to progress your care plan. Helen has undertaken midway reviews between your meetings to drive your plan forward. Helen has raised a cause for concern on 30 May 2023 re the drift and delay in completing the viability assessment of your aunt and the risk assessment of your grandparents, this informal escalation led to the outstanding work being progressed. Helen raised a further DRP highlighting the gaps in the SGO assessment which led to an addendum assessment being commissioned to inform care planning. Helen has given her views in respect of your care plan and also communicated with your Cafcass Guardian. Helen has communicated regularly with the social work team in order to monitor the progression of your care plan.

What is the Evidence?

The use of the escalation process meant that Helen raised her concerns informally to begin with, and then formally so as to address and resolve the drift and delay and gaps in assessment. Mid-point reviews have also helped Helen to have good oversight and monitoring of your care planning whilst her visits to you have enabled her to balance this with your own views

What has been the impact for children, young people, and families?

We hope that you have felt listened to and that your views have influenced your care planning. By using the escalation process, Helen was able to highlight drift and delay and outstanding work which has now been completed in time for the end of the court process.

Team: Independent Review Service – Child in Care

Good Practice Story Board – SD (CP)



Amie became subject of a child protection plan under the category of neglect on the 14 December 2023, along with her older siblings. The concerns related to Amie's mother's substance misuse (cocaine), drug dealers attending the property, and the health and education needs of Amie and her siblings not being met by her mother. Amie and her siblings also witnessed domestic abuse. Due to concerns identified at the ICPC, the Child Protection Chair escalated his worries with the social work team, resulting in Amie and her siblings being discussed at a legal gateway meeting (LGM) held on the 18 December. It was agreed that the local authority would initiate care proceedings which resulted in Interim Care Orders being granted for Amie and her siblings on the 22 December 2023.

What outcomes are we improving?

- Amie and her siblings needed to be safe and feel safe which the child protection chair felt was not the case whilst they were at home with their mum.
- The children needed to be protected from exposure to substance misuse, domestic abuse and their overall needs met.
- The emotional welfare of the children who had experienced trauma
- Mother's lifestyle and the choices that she makes as well as improving her parenting abilities so as the children could return to her care.

What has been delivered?

- CP Chair/IRO chaired conference and Initial CIC Review in timescales. The CP chair became the IRO for continuity.
- CP Chair escalated safeguarding concerns directly after ICPC with the Team Manager and recommended LGM (held 18 December) and raised further worries resulting in care proceedings being issued and ICOs granted 22 December 2023.
- The IRO has visited Amie and her siblings to ascertain their wishes and feelings so as these are central in the care planning process.

What is the Evidence?

- CP Chair/ IRO footprint on the file to show how concerns for the children escalated to team manager directly after conference which led to care proceedings being issued. Robust child protection and CIC planning.
- Case notes from SW team evidencing pace and purpose to work with booking LGM meeting and then decision to issue care proceedings within a few weeks from ICPC held.
- Change of placement to carer when suitability of father's care raised by IRO.
- Minutes of conference and CIC review on file and signed off in timescales.

What has been the impact for children, young people, and families?

- Amie and her siblings are safe in the care of an approved foster carer.
- Amie and her siblings are not exposed to substance misuse, domestic abuse or having their needs unmet by their primary carer.
- Care Proceedings and a Guardian will also track the care planning process to ensure it meets the children's needs and is timely.
- Initial Health Assessment identified the need for a speech and language referral required and a referral is being completed; this will support Amie's voice being clearer and support her learning/development.
- Amie and siblings benefit from regular time with their parents and extended family.

Team: Child Protection Chair

BCP Council Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

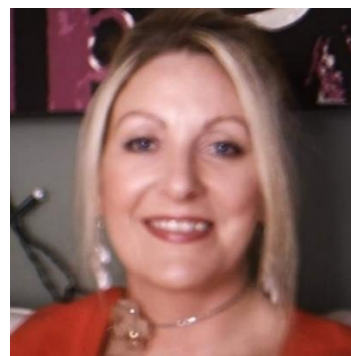


Date: 17/01/2025

Our Ref: NBLO / LH / TD

Hello Josie!

My name is Lorraine



I am an Independent Reviewing Officer who has many years of experience working with children, young people, and their families. I have been allocated as your Reviewing Officer and will be chairing your reviews.

All children and young people who are in care will have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). I make sure you are safe, that all your needs are met with the best plans, and that your voice is heard in all meetings. I don't mind how you do this; you can speak to me, send me a text or email. You can do this anytime, even outside of the meetings if you want to. Of course, you are always welcome to attend your review or part of your review if you would like too as well.

In my role as an IRO, I am an independent voice, I make sure all professionals are doing a good job making sure the plans are meeting all your needs and that you are well cared for and happy whilst you are living away from home.

The meeting is your meeting where we talk about you, and as your Reviewing Officer, it is my job to make sure that your care plan meets your needs, so it is important that you help me to decide who you would like to invite and what you would like to discuss. If you would like to, you can lead some or all the meeting, and I would be happy to help you do this.

If you are too young or feel unable to speak for yourself, your current carer could contact me on your behalf.

Advocacy can be an important way to support you to share your wishes and feelings when you are looked after. For more information you can type in the link below into your web browser to see a video of young people talking about advocacy – what it is and how it helped them.

<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/>

If you want to self-refer then it's best if you contact Coram Voice on 0808 800 5792 and someone will take your details, or you can text 07758 677036 to ask someone to call you back, or their Whatsapp on +44 (0)7758 670369. You can also email them on help@coramvoice.org.uk. Your Social Worker or I as your IRO can also make the referral for you.

I know a lot about you, so here are some facts about me:

I am the 3rd eldest in a family of 7 children. We are all adults now, but I do remember what it felt like to live in a busy household. My brothers and sisters live all over the UK and some live abroad.



My heritage is primarily Irish and Dutch but there is also a mix of Native American. Like lots of people my family heritage has roots from all over the world and my family members are from many different countries.

When I have time to and to relax, I really enjoy cooking and baking cakes. I am not amazing at baking, but I just enjoy baking and using lots of different flavours and colours to make a cake. One of my favourite tv shows is Master Chef and the Great British Bake Off.





I love walking and I like to take my metal detector with me.

I dream of finding long lost treasures and gold!



Finally, I love to go hacking once every few weeks. This means that I go to the stables and go out on a horse for about 30/ 60 minutes One of the stable girls or boys walks beside the horse as I am not ready yet to be let loose on my own. I really enjoy doing this because I find it really makes me focus on the horse, I use called Nina, and it reduces any stress I am feeling, and I get a good view of the countryside from such a height.

I look forward to meeting you and finding out about you and what sort of things you enjoy doing and think about doing in the future.

Until then, you can contact me on the following:

Lorraine.hanley@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

T. 01202 093680

M. 07500607735

You can find out more about what an IRO does by clicking on the link below:

[Young person guide to IRO Handbook](#)

(If you received this letter by post, we would have sent a link to this handbook to your or your current Carer's e-mail address)

Kind Regards,

Lorraine Hanley

Your IRO

IRO and CP Chair Visit Form

Details of visit

Type of Visit?

Child(ren)'s / Young Person(s) details

Your name

Visit details

Date and time of visit?

Virtual visit or Face to face?

Your voice

What you discussed with your IRO/CP Chair

Are you aware of the Coram Voice advocacy service and how to contact them?

Do you have an advocate?

Analysis

IRO/CP Chair analysis of the visit

Are there any actions your IRO/CP Chair needs to complete on your behalf?

Optional - Manager comments

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Work Plan
Meeting date	28 January 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review, update and confirm its Work Plan.</p>
Reason for recommendations	The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda

Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – O&S is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background –

1. All Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) bodies are required by the Constitution to consider work priorities and set these out in a Work Plan. When approved, this should be published with each agenda.
2. It is good practice for the Work Plan to be kept under regular review by the Committee. Between meetings O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs, in consultation with officers, suggest updates to the Work Plan to ensure proposed topics remain timely, fit for purpose and allow sufficient time for report preparation as appropriate. The Committee is now asked to review, update and/ or confirm the latest Work Plan update. See the Work Plan attached at Appendix B to this report.
3. The current Work Plan is due for review. A workshop has been arranged for 10 October, 6-8pm to enable the committee to consider and set its priorities for the year ahead.

Principles of Good Scrutiny

4. The Constitution requires that the Work Plan of O&S committees shall consist of work aligned to the principles of the function. The BCP Council O&S function is based upon six principles:
 - Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend';
 - A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development;
 - Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process;
 - Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence;
 - Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the Council;
 - Agility – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

Process for agreeing Work Plan items

5. An O&S committee may take suggestions from a variety of sources to form its Work Plan. This may include suggestions from members of the public, officers of the Council, Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet and Council, members of the O&S Committee, and other Councillors who are not on the Committee.

6. The Constitution requires that all suggestions for O&S work will be accompanied by detail outlining the background to the issue suggested, the proposed method of undertaking the work and likely timescale associated, and the anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed. No item of work shall join the Work Plan of the O&S Committee without an assessment of this information.
7. Any councillor may request that an item of business be considered by an O&S Committee. Councillors are asked to complete a form outlining the request, which is appended to this report at Appendix C. The same process will apply to requests for scrutiny from members of the public.
8. A copy of the most recent Cabinet Forward Plan will be supplied to O&S Committees at each meeting for reference when determining items of pre-decision scrutiny. The latest version is supplied as Appendix D to this report.

Resources to support O&S work

9. The Constitution requires that the O&S Committees take into account the resources available to support their proposals for O&S work. This includes consideration of councillor availability, officer time and financial resources. Careful and regular assessment of resources will ensure that there is appropriate resource available to support work across the whole O&S function, and that any work established can be carried out in sufficient depth and completed in a timely way to enable effective outcomes.
10. It is good practice for O&S Committees to agree a maximum of two/ three substantive agenda items per meeting. This will provide sufficient time for Committees to take a 'deep dive' approach to scrutiny work, which is likely to provide more valuable outcomes. A large amount of agenda items can lead to a 'light touch' approach to all items of business, and also limit the officer and councillor resource available to plan for effective scrutiny of selected items.
11. O&S Committees are advised to carefully select their working methods to ensure that O&S resource is maximised. A variety of methods are available for O&S Committees to undertake work and are not limited to the receipt of reports at Committee meetings. These may include:
 - Working Groups;
 - Sub-Committees;
 - Tak and finish groups;
 - Inquiry Days;
 - Rapporteurs (scrutiny member champions);
 - Consideration of information outside of meetings – including report circulation/ briefing workshops/ briefing notes.

Further detail on O&S working methods are set out in the Constitution and in Appendix A – Terms of Reference for O&S Committees.

Options Appraisal

12. The O&S Committee is asked to review, update and confirm its Work Plan, taking account of the supporting documents provided and including the determination of any new requests for scrutiny. This will ensure member ownership of the Work Plan and that reports can be prepared in a timely way. Should the Committee not confirm its forthcoming priorities, reports may not be able to be prepared in a timely way and best use of the meeting resource may not be made.

Summary of financial implications

13. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The Committee should note that when establishing a Work Plan, the Constitution requires that account be taken of the resources available to support proposals for O&S work. Advice on maximising the resource available to O&S Committees is set out in paragraphs 9 to 11 above.

Summary of legal implications

14. The Council's Constitution requires that all O&S bodies set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda. The recommendation proposed in this report will fulfil this requirement.

Summary of human resources implications

15. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

16. There are no sustainability resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

17. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

18. There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any councillor and any member of the public may make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Summary of risk assessment

19. There is a risk of challenge to the Council if the Constitutional requirement to establish and publish a Work Plan is not met.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference

Appendix B - Current Children's Services O&S Committee Work Plan

Appendix C – Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny

Appendix D – Current Cabinet Forward Plan

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD / COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a statutory role fulfilled by Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet in an authority operating a Leader and Cabinet model. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of Council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account.

PRINCIPLES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Overview and Scrutiny function is based upon six principles:

1. Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend'.
2. A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development.
3. Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process.
4. Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence.
5. Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the Council.
6. Agile – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

MEETINGS

There are four Overview and Scrutiny bodies at BCP Council:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Each Committee meets 5 times during the municipal year, except for the Overview and Scrutiny Board which meets monthly to enable the Board to make recommendations to Cabinet. The date and time of meetings will be set by full Council and may only be changed by the Chairman of the relevant Committee in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. Members will adhere to the agreed principles of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Where it is not possible to reach consensus, a decision will be reached by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. Where there are equal votes the Chair of the meeting will have the casting vote.

MEMBERSHIP

The Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees are appointed by full Council. Each Committee has 11 members and the Board has 13 members. No member of the Cabinet may be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board, or any group established by them. Lead Members of the Cabinet may not be a member of Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee may not be a member of any Overview and Scrutiny Committees or Board.

The quorum of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Board shall be one third of the total membership (excluding voting and non-voting co-optees).

No member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they been directly involved. If a member is unable to attend a meeting their Group may arrange for a substitute to attend in their place in accordance with the procedures as set out in the Council's Constitution.

Members of the public can be invited to attend and contribute to meetings as required, to provide insight to a matter under discussion. This may include but is not limited to subject experts with relevant specialist knowledge or expertise, representatives of stakeholder groups or service users. Members of the public will not have voting rights.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee - The Committee must statutorily include two church and two parent governor representatives as voting members (on matters related to education) in addition to Councillor members. Parent governor membership shall extend to a maximum period of four years and no less than two years. The Committee may also co-opt one representative from the Academy Trusts within the local authority area, to attend meetings and vote on matters relating to education.

The Committee may also co-opt two representatives of The Youth Parliament and, although they will not be entitled to vote, will ensure that their significant contribution to the work of the Committee is recognised and valued.

Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee - The Committee may co-opt two independent non-voting members. The selection and recruitment process shall be determined by the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

FUNCTIONS OF THE O&S COMMITTEES AND O&S BOARD

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including the Overview and Scrutiny Board) has responsibility for:

- Scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet, offering advice or making recommendations
- Offering any views or advice to the Cabinet or Council in relation to any matter referred to the Committee for consideration
- General policy reviews, and making recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet to assist in the development of future policies and strategies
- Assisting the Council in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- Monitoring the implementation of decisions to examine their effect and outcomes
- Referring to full Council, the Cabinet or appropriate Committee/Sub-Committee any matter which, following scrutiny a Committee determines should be brought to the attention of the Council, Cabinet or other appropriate Committee
- Preparation, review and monitoring of a work programme
- Establishing such commissioned work as appropriate after taking into account the availability of resources, the work programme and the matter under review

In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Board has responsibility for:

- Considering decisions that have been called-in
- Undertaking scrutiny of the Council's budget processes
- Carrying out the Council's scrutiny functions relating to crime and disorder, and discharging any other statutory duty for which the O&S function is responsible, other than those that relate to Flood Risk Management, Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education
- Overseeing the Council's overall O&S function including oversight of the work plans and use of resource across all O&S bodies
- Keeping the O&S function under review, suggesting changes as appropriate to ensure that it remains fit for purpose
- Reporting annually to Full Council on the output of the O&S function
- Maintaining oversight of the training needs of the whole O&S function.

Figure 1 below provides an outline of the responsibilities of each Committee.

The remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is based on the division of Portfolio Holder responsibilities. Portfolio Holders may report to more than one Overview and Scrutiny body.

Portfolio Holder responsibilities are changeable and from time to time it may be necessary to modify the designation of functions across the four Overview and Scrutiny bodies.

Figure One –Overview and Scrutiny Structure



COMMISSIONED WORK

In addition to Committee meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees may commission work to be undertaken as they consider necessary after taking into account the availability of resources, the work programme and the matter under review.

Each O&S body is limited to one commission at a time to ensure availability of resources.

a) **Working Groups** – a small group of Councillors and Officers gathered to consider a specific issue and report back to the full Board/ Committee, or make recommendations to Cabinet or Council within a limited timescale. Working Groups usually meet once or twice, and are often non-public;

b) **Sub-Committees** – a group of Councillors delegated a specific aspect of the main Board/ Committee's work for ongoing, in-depth monitoring. May be time limited or be required as a long-standing Committee. Sub-Committees are often well suited to considering performance-based matters that require scrutiny oversight. Sub-Committees usually meet in public;

c) **Task and finish groups** – a small group of Councillors tasked with investigating a particular issue and making recommendations on this issue, with the aim of influencing wider Council policy. The area of investigation will be carefully scoped and will culminate in a final report, usually with recommendations to Cabinet or Council. Task and finish groups may work over the course of a number of months and take account of a wide variety of evidence, which can be resource intensive. For this reason, the number of these groups must be carefully prioritised by scrutiny members to ensure the work can progress at an appropriate pace for the final outcome to have influence;

d) **Inquiry Days** – with a similar purpose to task and finish groups, inquiry days seek to understand and make recommendations on an issue by talking to a wide range of stakeholders and considering evidence relating to that issue, within one or two days. Inquiry days have similarities to the work of Government Select Committees. Inquiry days are highly resource intensive but can lead to swift, meaningful outcomes and recommendations that can make a difference to Council policy; and

e) **Rapporteurs or scrutiny member champions** - individual Councillors or pairs of Councillors tasked with investigating or maintaining oversight of a particular issue and reporting back to the main Board/ Committee on its findings. A main Committee can use these reports to facilitate its work prioritisation. Rapporteurs will undertake informal work to understand an issue – such as discussions with Officers and Portfolio Holders, research and data analysis. Rapporteur work enables scrutiny members to collectively stay informed of a wide range of Council activity. This approach to the provision of information to scrutiny members also avoids valuable

Committee time being taken up with briefings in favour of more outcome-based scrutiny taking place at Committee.

These terms of reference should be read in conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules outlined in Part 4C of the Council's Constitution.

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BCP Council Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Plan. Updated 17.01.25

Guidance notes:

- 2/3 items per committee meeting is the recommended maximum for effective scrutiny.
- The Children's Services O&S Committee will approach work through a lens of **TBC**
- Items requiring further scoping are identified and should be scoped using the Key Lines of Enquiry tool.

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report Information
Meeting Date: 28 January 2025				
1.	Children's Social Care Improvement Journey Update	Committee Report	Corporate Director for Children's Services Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	Committee to receive an update on Children's Social Care Improvement Journey
2.	Children's Services Capital Strategy 2025/26-2027/28	Committee Report	Schools Capital Programme Manager Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	For this Committee to have sight of the paper due to the value of the proposed spend for review and scrutiny before it goes to Cabinet.
3.	Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Report	Committee Report	TBC	Was the fourth proactive priority chosen by the Committee
	School Admissions Arrangement 26/27 Pre Consultation Report.	Information only	Head of Service, Schools Planning and Admissions	

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

			Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	
	IRO Annual Report	Information only	Service Manager for IRO, Child Protection and LADO Service. Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	
Meeting Date: 11 March 2025				
1.	Children and Young People's Partnership Plan	Committee Report	TBC	Was the fifth proactive priority chosen by the Committee
2.	CAMHS Transformation Update KLOE for CAMHS Transformation Update - CS O&S - 11 March 2025.docx	Committee Report	TBC	Was the second proactive priority chosen by the Committee
3.	Speech and Language Therapy Update KLOE for Speech and Language Therapy Update - CS O&S - 11 March 2025.docx	Committee Report	TBC	Was the third proactive priority chosen by the Committee
4.	Environmental Health Service Powers - To advise the Committee of the extent of environmental health services powers to ensure the remit of housing is of good quality and fit for purpose for care experienced young people.	TBC	Director of Housing and Corporate Director for Children's Services Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	Officer report requested by Committee. Delayed from December meeting due to resources.

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	SEND Improvement Update	Information only	Interim Director of Education Holder for Children and Young People	Possible to make information only due to the large agenda
Meeting Date: 10 June 2025				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
3.	Youth Justice Service Plan 2025/2026	Committee Report	David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service	Information only item as Committee can add no value
Meeting Date: 15 September 2025				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
	Compliments and Complaints Report	Information only		
Meeting Date: 25 November 2025				

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
	Safeguarding Annual Report	Information only		
Items with Dates to be allocated				
	Annual report from Corporate Parenting Board to include information on Children in Care To include details of any protected characteristics detailed within the Equalities Act	Committee Report	TBC	Enable the Committee to maintain oversight of this issue and target scrutiny as required.
	Children's Services Data Toolkit	TBC	TBC	To enable the Committee to have a toolkit to consider data relating to CS
	Strengthening Families, Supporting Communities Update (New Service Delivery Model)	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
	Post 16 Provision	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	CS Budget Updates	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
Working Groups				
	Budget Development 2025/26	2 working group sessions.	Completed in w/c 11/11/24.	Agreed for inclusion of the workplan at the 24th July 24 meeting
	Family Hubs across BCP	Proposed outline of working group included in scrutiny request	TBC	Requires full scoping Appendix E - Request for consideration of an issue by OS Family Hubs - Cllr Brown 003.pdf (bcpcouncil.gov.uk)
	Transition of mental health services from children to adults			CS O&S CAMHS.docx Was chosen by the Committee as their top priority after conclusion of Family Hubs working group
	The increased use of and funding for TAs in schools to support SEND and increase inclusion			Scrutiny request form TAs.docx Was chosen as second priority
	Child Exploitation inc knife crime – To consider and track Cabinet's response to the recommendations and how they could potentially be furthered by the Committee and whether this topic should be revisited by a working group			Discussed at the meeting of 24 July 2024. Was chosen as third priority

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Parent / Carer Forums and wider family engagement channels used by BCP Children's Services and health colleagues			Scrutiny request form Was chosen as fourth priority
	Review of the quality of food served to children at our schools			Scrutiny request form School meals.docx Was chosen as fifth priority
Item Suggestions for Briefing Sessions				
	POTENTIAL BRIEFING SESSIONS	TBC	TBC	TBC
Update Items The following items of information have been requested as updates to the Committee. The Committee may wish to receive these in an alternative to format to Committee updates (e.g. by emailed briefing note outside of the Committee) to reserve capacity in Committee meetings for items of value-added scrutiny.				
	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) To receive KPIs to include updates on CMOEs and NEETs	Committee Report	Head of Performance for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	Consideration being given to include in data tool kit
Annual Report				
•	Virtual School Head Annual Report	Committee Report	Headteacher of Virtual School and College Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People	To be received annually in January as an annual update.

•	School Admissions Arrangements for community and maintained schools	Committee Report	Director of Education	To be received annually in September/November as an annual update.
•	Youth Offending Service Annual Youth Justice Plan	Committee Report	Service Manager, Dorset YJS	To be received annually in June as an annual update.
•	Annual Report from CPB to include info on CIC	Committee Report	TBC	TBC
•	Annual Report – Complaints and Compliments	Committee Report		To note the information only report – in March

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CABINET FORWARD PLAN – 1 FEBRUARY 2025 TO 31 MAY 2025

(PUBLICATION DATE – 7 January 2025)



What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Council Tax Base 2025/26	This report calculates and presents the proposed council tax base for council tax setting purposes in line with current legislation and guidance.	No	Cabinet 15 Jan 2025	All Wards			Matthew Filmer	Open
Quarter 2 - Corporate Performance Report	Second quarterly report with an update on the measures of progress for the Shared Vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.	No	Cabinet 15 Jan 2025	All Wards			Sophie Bradfield, Isla Reynolds	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Integration of Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership functions	To seek approval for the integration of functions from the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership into the Council	No	Cabinet 15 Jan 2025	All Wards			Chris Shephard	Open
Progress Update - ASC Fulfilled Lives Programme	For Cabinet to be sighted on the progress made during the 'design and scope' stage of the Fulfilled Lives programme and awareness of the delivery stage from January 2024.	No	Cabinet 15 Jan 2025	All Wards			Tim Branson, Betty Butlin, Zena Dighton, Jillian Kay	Open
Transformation Programme - Completion Report	To summarise what the programme has achieved, what hasn't been achieved, and proposed next steps To confirm the programme's closure by end March 2025 and the proposed direction of travel	No	Cabinet 15 Jan 2025	All Wards			Jon Burrows	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Plan	To set out for Cabinet's consideration and recommendation to Council the proposed 2025/26 budget and council tax.	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards			Adam Richens	Open
Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 Quarter Three	Budget monitoring	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025 Council 11 Feb 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Adam Richens	Open
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting 2025/26	To set out the proposal for charges to council tenants and leaseholders and expenditure on council homes and services.	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards	Council tenants and leaseholders BCP Homes Advisory Board Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services	Consultation will be through existing meetings with residents and Advisory Board.	Kelly Deane	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Review of the approach to Environmental Crime and Environmental Crime Policy	To consider the review of the approach to Environmental Crime and Environmental Crime Policy	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards			Sophie Sajic	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Corporate Fleet Replacement Programme - Phase 2	The report seeks ongoing endorsement of Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council's Fleet replacement Strategy that will continue to support the council wide Fleet Management De Carbonising and Replacement Programme for the next 3 years, 2025 - 2028 that proposes to continue with the investment in vehicle replacements to ensure a pathway approach that will help to ensure that BCP Council has fit for purpose, safe, reliable, cost effective and carbon reduced vehicles, plant and associated equipment assets, in the right place at the right time and at the right cost to support the strategic, corporate and service objectives of the Council.	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards			Kate Langdown	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
School Admission Arrangements 2026/27	For determination of the arrangements which is an annual requirement of the School Admissions Code.	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 28 Jan 2025 Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards			Sharon Muldoon, Tanya Smith	Open
Mainstream Schools Formula 2025/26	To agree the mainstream schools formula funded by the dedicated schools grant	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025 Council 25 Feb 2025	All Wards	Schools and Schools Forum in January 2025	January 2025	Nicola Webb	Open
Public health update	To provide an update to Cabinet on the disaggregation of the public health shared service and plans to establish an embedded public health function.	No	Cabinet 5 Feb 2025	All Wards			Jillian Kay	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Local Transport Plan Capital Programme 2025/26	Present recommended investment of Department for Transport (DfT) annual Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital grant for transport improvements and maintenance, and to present recommended delegation(s) to facilitate delivery of any approved spend. Intent is to inform recommendation from Cabinet to Council for approval of the recommendations.	Yes	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025	All Wards			Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open
Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	To consider priorities and future spend of CIL.	Yes	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025	All Wards			Steve Dring	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Community Governance Review - Draft Recommendations	To consider the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and to make a recommendation to Council	Yes	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025 Council 25 Mar 2025	All Wards	Key stakeholders include existing parish and town councils, local community and residents' groups, local representatives and any other interested party.	Any interested party is invited to make submissions as part of Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review process. Participants may make submissions online through the Council's have your say portal, or in paper form through forms available at local libraries, hubs or upon request.	Janie Berry, Richard Jones	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Resident Card	To provide options on the delivery of the Resident Card scheme technology and offer and agree a preferred option.	No	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025	All Wards			Ruth Spencer	Open
Templeman Homes England Drawdown	Permission to Drawdown offer of Homes England funding	No	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025 Council 25 Mar 2025				Remi Oshibanjo	Open
Commercial Road	tbc	No	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025 Council 25 Mar 2025				Remi Oshibanjo	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan	To seek approval for the Bournemouth Development Company Business Plan, extend some contractual "Option Execution Dates" in relation to specific sites and provide an update in relation to the independent Local Partnerships Review.	No	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025	Bournemouth Central			Amena Matin	Open
Children's Services Capital Strategy 2025/26-2027/28	To set out the spending priorities for the Children's Services Capital Programme for the next 3 years and seek financial approval for the proposed schemes.	Yes	Cabinet 5 Mar 2025	All Wards			Sharon Muldoon	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations	To consider the proposals of the Task and Finish Group and to recommend to Council the final recommendations for the review of community governance for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Yes	Cabinet 1 Oct 2025 Council 14 Oct 2025	All Wards	Existing parish and town councils, local representatives, local community and residents' groups, residents within the areas proposed for any new local councils	This is defined as stage 3 of the process and will include a 12 week consultation period for any interested party to respond using both online and paper forms.	Janie Berry, Richard Jones	Open
Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	To present outputs from Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) consultation and to present proposed LTP4 Policy Document complete with Implementation Plan for approval/adoption.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 17 Nov 2025 Cabinet 26 Nov 2025 Council 9 Dec 2025	All Wards	Residents (BCP and neighbouring authorities), partners, organisations and businesses that operate/exist in BCP area and are impacted by transport.	Exact dates tbc, but 6 to 8 week public consultation required, note: LTP4 engagement was facilitated in Spring 2024.	Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
DfE SEND review next steps	To consider the DfE review next steps	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed				Rachel Gravett, Shirley McGillick, Sharon Muldoon	Fully exempt
Children's Services Early Help Offer	Summary of findings and recommendations from an ongoing review of our current Early Help services	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards			Zafer Yilkan	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Adult Social Care Business Case	Adult Social Care services locally and nationally have faced significant challenges in recent years, and as a result the Council is holding significant risk in relation to the ability of the Council to deliver its statutory responsibilities to adults that require support within the available budget. The nature of these challenges means that long term, sustainable change is needed to ensure that BCP Council Adult Social Care services (ASCS) are modern, fit for the future and affordable. This business case sets out a proposal for initial investment in Adult Social Care transformation that will lead to improved outcomes for adults that draw on support in BCP and support the Council to deliver this within the available financial envelope.	Yes	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards			Chris McKensie	Open

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