

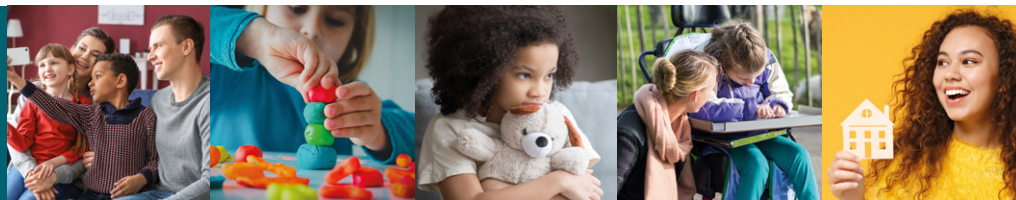
2021-24

Sufficiency strategy for children in care and care experienced young people

Quality and Commissioning



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The Sufficiency Strategy

This document sets out how Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) intends to meet its sufficiency duty as laid out in section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This requires local authorities to take steps that secure, as far as reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local authority area.

The Children Act 2008 further defines sufficiency as “a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do come into care. For children in care, local authorities and their children’s trust partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of children in care and young people within their local area”

In 2010, the Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on all local authorities and children’s trusts to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty. The Children & Social Work Act 2017 extends the duties on all local authorities (including District and Borough Councils) to have regard to a set of corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care experience young people up to the age of 25.

Purpose of the Sufficiency Strategy

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out BCP Council's vision for, and approach to, providing sufficient, safe, secure and appropriate placements for children in care and care experienced young people over the next 3 years.

It supports the delivery of BCP Council's Children in Care Priorities, an important element of planning sufficient accommodation is to take early, preventative action to support children and families so that fewer children come into care.

Executive Summary

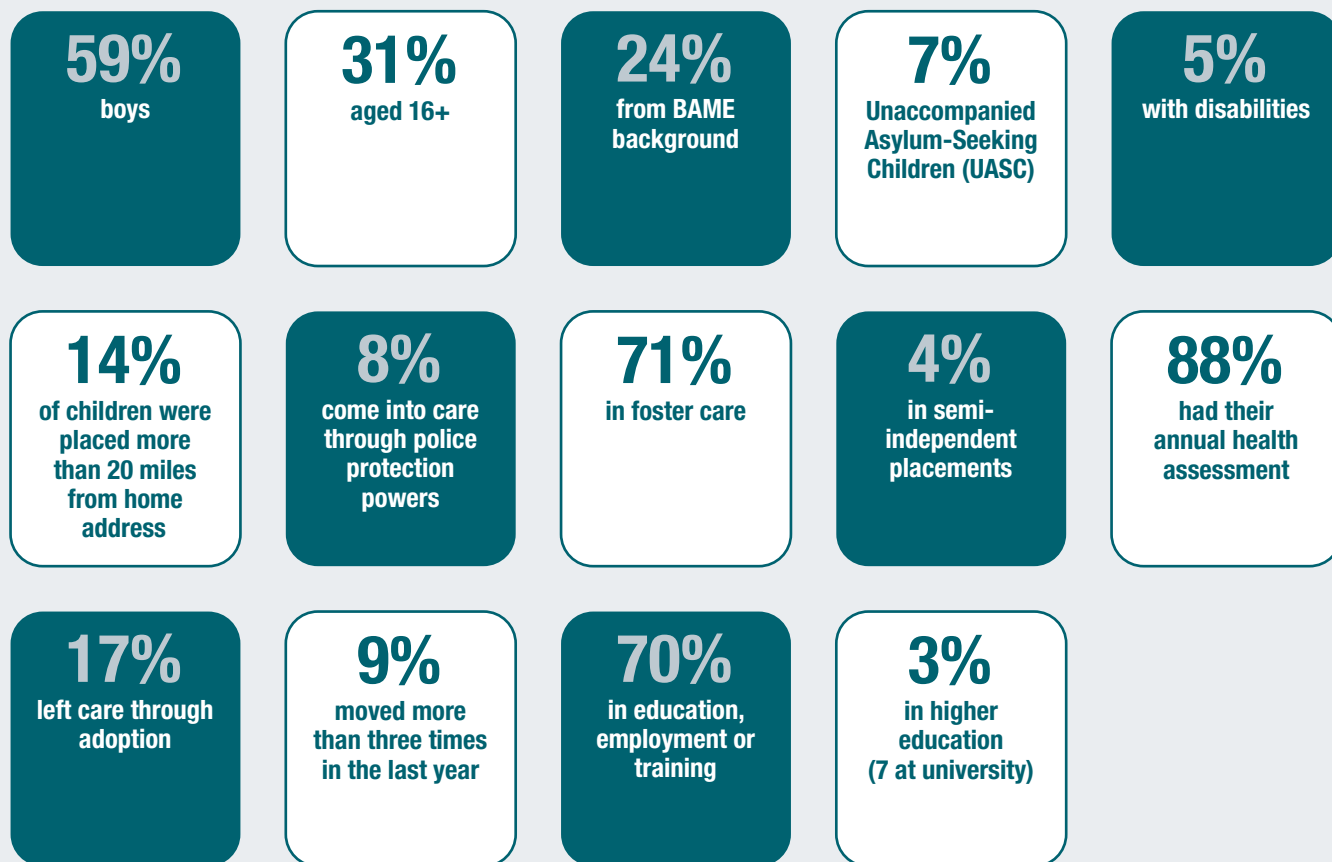
This Sufficiency Strategy sets out how BCP Council will ensure that the right care, accommodation and support services are available for children in care and care experienced young people. Our overall aim is to ensure that we achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people working across the council and with partners.

The national and local drivers underpinning this strategy are:

- The Children Act 1989
- The council's Corporate Strategy which sets out our ambition for children and young people to have brighter futures, providing a nurturing environment, high quality education and great opportunities to grow and flourish
- The council's Corporate Parenting Strategy, which sets out our commitment to being the best corporate parents and grandparents so that our children in care and care experienced young people have bright futures.



On 31 March 2020, there were 526 children in care (CiC) and 252 care experienced young people (CEYP) within the BCP area. The profile of our CiC / CEYP is based on those in care at the end of 2019/20.



Our rate of CiC is higher than the average for local authorities (LAs) with a good/outstanding Ofsted rating and higher than England as a whole (70 per 10,000 population compared to 65 nationally and 63 for good/outstanding LAs). We are offering more support to enable children to remain safely at home or to return home when it is in their best interests. Targeted support through the Edge of Care Team will in future work with children at high risk of exclusion due to exploitation risks. Children from both mixed backgrounds and other ethnic backgrounds are over represented among children in care when compared to their proportions in the under 18-year-old BCP Council population.

The number of CiC placements required over the three years of this strategy will continue to be influenced by national and local drivers. National drivers such as the Staying Put Policy, Southwark and local drivers such as growth in our 11-17 year-old population will put pressure on the demand for placements while initiatives such as our Edge of Care offer and targeted work referred to above will reduce the demand for placements. While we remain ambitious in these and other priorities (identified below) at the very least we expect to reduce children and young people in care placements across the BCP area from its current level of 70 per 10,000 of the population to the national average of 67 per 10,000 which would reduce the number of CiC by approximately 4 percent.

Our priority areas over the next three years include:

Priority 1

- Improve services to support children, prevent children entering care and increase support to families to help children to return to their home through the new edge of care and early help offer

Priority 2

- Embed the Housing Strategy for care experienced young people

Priority 3

- Increase in local fostering placements.
 - a. Increase the in-house fostering cohort, especially for age range 12+ years
 - b. Increase the independent fostering agency availability of placements within a 20 mile radius of BCP Council through partnership working and framework management

Priority 4

- Improve commissioning arrangements for complex joint placements and arrangements that support these for example shared care and short breaks

Priority 5

- Increase the number of providers and improve the quality of residential provision within the BCP area through market shaping and monitoring

Priority 6

- Based on current and emerging needs, take a strategic commissioning approach in developing the market to provide suitable local provision for complex teenagers both on the edge of care and in care who are at high risk of Criminal Exploitation

Priority 7

- Improve the monitoring of placements and the connectivity between commissioning, the provider and social worker to ensure outcomes are appropriate and met.

We have established a Sufficiency Working Group which is chaired by the Children's Strategic Commissioner. This group will monitor and track the progress of this strategy.

General introduction

This strategy sets out how BCP Council will provide and commission the right care and support for children in care (CiC) and care experienced young people (CEYP) that best meets their needs.

It covers the period January 2021 – January 2024 and complements the new offer for Edge of Care and the pledges for children in care and care experienced young people. In turn these feed into and inform the overarching Corporate Parenting Strategy for children in care and care experienced young people. The strategy is informed by the findings and analysis of need and by what our children in care and care experienced young people have told us.

A child is legally defined as ‘looked after’ by a local authority if he or she:

- is provided with accommodation under section 20 Children Act 1989 from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order (places the child into the care of the local authority)
- is subject to a placement order (to place the child with adopters).

Young people can also be provided with accommodation under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 in some rare cases of 16 and 17-year olds who need accommodation but do not want to be in care.

Performance data is based on the annual 31 March snapshot data and the 2019/20 statutory return about young people and their placements.





2. National drivers



Section 22G of The Children Act 1989 requires councils to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, accommodation for children in care in their local area which meets the needs of those children. Councils need to consider their strategy for securing the range of accommodation capable of meeting different needs.

This requirement is informed by research which has identified that local placements generally produce better outcomes for children in care, whether provided by the local authority or the voluntary or private sector. Although the duty is focused on improving outcomes and providing accommodation to meet the needs of children in care, the guidance is clear that a key part of this is taking earlier preventative action so that fewer children enter care. As such the scope of this strategy includes children on the edge of care.

A number of national developments shape our delivery of services:

- **Staying Put Policy** – this policy enables children in care to remain with their foster carers from the age of 18 until 21 (or 25 for young people with disabilities).
- **Southwark Judgement**. This duty obliges children's services to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17-year-olds under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 with some potential exceptions where section 17 may be used

- Social Work and Children Act 2017. This act introduces the seven principles of corporate parenting. The act also extends the personal advisor role to care experienced young people until they are 25 years of age if this is requested by the young person. The personal advisor role is no longer dependent on the care leaver being in education or training
- Remand Process. Children aged 10-17 years of age who are refused bail and remanded in local authority care or youth detention accommodation have the status of children in care
- Special guardianship orders (SGO). This is a part law order made under the children's action 1989. This is a legal order where the court appoint a guardian for a child, the special guardian then shares legal responsibility for the child
- Contextual safeguarding. This is an approach to understanding young people's experience of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises the different relationships that young people form in their schools and online which can feature violence and abuse.

Unite (the forum for children in care) and Insight (the forum for care experienced young people) have each developed a set of pledges, the following of which are to be implemented through commissioning:

- **Pledge 2** – children in care will receive information about their placement before they move there (Unite)
- **Pledge 7** – every child in care will feel listened to and involved in making plans about their own life (Unite).





3. Vision and principles



The council's Corporate Strategy sets out our ambition for children and young people to have brighter futures, providing a nurturing environment, high quality education and great opportunities to grow and flourish. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out our commitment to being the best corporate parents and grandparents.

The vision of this Sufficiency Strategy is to ensure that we:

- achieve the outcomes our children and young people need
- with the best placement
- in the right location at the right time
- for the most competitive price.

Our aim is for our services and performance to be in line with the good or outstanding local authorities by 2022:

The key principles and drivers for our Sufficiency Strategy are that we:

- listen to children and young people and maximise opportunities for co-production to inform and influence service delivery
- secure the best possible placement for every child and young person, with consistent application of processes and standards across internal and external provision
- are clear (to providers) what excellent outcomes look like for each child and young person and explore incentives for achieving these
- young people are provided with choice (where possible) about where they live
- placements are based on best value and evidence of outcomes being delivered
- implement robust commissioning, contract and quality assurance processes and ensure that the same levels of monitoring and quality standards are applied regardless of the geographical distance from the BCP Council area
- working in partnership with other authorities and the market to maximise shared resources and economies of scale
- commissioning priorities are based on the analysis of needs of children in care and care experienced young people.





4. Achievements since the last Sufficiency Strategy



As a result of the information, knowledge, views and data collected in 2018/19 the following were the key headline commissioning intentions for 2019/20.

1. Fostering placements
2. Residential placements
3. Post 16 semi-independent placements
4. Care experienced young people leaving care

The following impact measures were used to assess the success of the outcomes:

- reduce the number of children and young people placed in residential care
- increase percentage of children placed within 20-mile radius of their home address
- increase in the number of in-house resilient foster carers for children range 12+ years
- increase local fostering provision to meet the complex health and disability needs of young people aged 10-15 years old
- increase the numbers of suitable high-quality 18+ accommodation options to young people leaving care
- increase availability of supported accommodation for those young people who do not meet adult learning disability thresholds.

1. Fostering placements

- we have seen a 6 percent increase overall, recruitment campaigns continue
- there has been a small increase in the number of carers and fostering ability to place young people stepping down from IFA bespoke programmes or residential. Work continues in this area
- it has been decided that block booking of IFA beds is not the way forward for the council following research into the Surrey, Oxfordshire, and Dorset approach. The reasons which led to this decision are around the ability to match and having a child centred approach to placements
- further consideration was given to block booking an emergency bed within the BCP area should a placement be required at short notice. Matching again was an inhibitor to this approach and will not be taken forward at this time.

2. Residential placements

- consideration given to block booking with the established local provider within the BCP area. However, concerns regarding the ability of provider to meet the complex needs of our young people was raised. Block booking this provision was deemed not suitable. Monthly meetings are in place to work with the provider to improve their quality of practice
- consultation with smaller providers continues with a view of potentially block booking provision when current beds become available. Also, discussions in terms of expanding established services across the BCP area
- consultation completed on potential block booking of residential provision in partnership with consortia members, aim was to access accommodation when required and share void costs. Review of provision available and costs resulted in the proposal not being financially viable or suitable for local authority partners
- the council has seen a reduction in its use of crisis intervention residential placements for new children into care. The need now tends to be for young people already in our care where placements are at risk of breakdown. As a result, the council is working with providers earlier to prevent breakdowns. The terms of reference for the weekly Permanence Planning and Tracking Panel have been revised with a focus on six key cohorts and the planning of care and placement stability
- targeted work to establish relationships with larger residential providers out of the area has resulted in our need being met when required.

3. Post 16 semi-independent placements

- robust monitoring forms have been designed and signed off by all framework partners. Established monitored procedures and timescales are now in place with the ability to feedback at regional quarterly meetings or alert if concerns are raised
- unregulated guidance, procedures, and flowcharts for monitoring of provision have been shared with all framework partners to ensure a consistent approach
- all of the above is now implemented and embedded within the council's practice.

4. Care experienced young people leaving care

- there has been the development of six studio flats within the BCP area specifically for CEYP at 18 years
- partnership working with external landlords has seen the development of private rental opportunities specifically for UASC cohort
- commissioning is aware of the need to spread provision across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to avoid having homes located in central areas which already have registered children's homes or Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) located within them.

At the next annual update we will report on progress against the pledges for children in care and care experienced young people that are about sufficiency and this will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Board, which Unite and Insight are part of.





5. Profile of our children in care and care experienced young people



Overview of BCP Council

BCP Council is ranked the 160th most deprived local authority of 317 in England. While the BCP area is sometimes seen as a relatively prosperous, wealth is not evenly spread, and significant inequalities and pockets of deprivation exist.

Approximately 9,400 children (under 16) and 10,800 dependants under the age of 20 live in families with a low income (reported income is less than 60 percent of the national median average). As well as this, using the English Indices of Deprivation indicator for Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), BCP Council has 8,900 children aged 0-15 living in Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs – small statistical areas) that fall into the 20 percent most deprived in the country.⁵

The BCP area has a smaller proportion of the population under the age of 16 when compared to England and Wales. There are 67,800 young people aged 0-15 living locally (17 percent of the local population compared to a national figure of 19 percent). The number of under 16s is set to increase by less than one percent between 2018 and 2028. While the population increase in under 16s isn't significant, looking more closely at the growth in the population under the age of 18 reveals a more significant growth in the population between the ages of 11 and 18. The number of people in this age group is set to increase by 21 percent while the number of children aged 0-5 and 6-10 is set to decrease between 2018 and 2028.⁶

⁵ Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019

⁶ www.bpcouncil.gov.uk/Council-and-Democratic/Consultation-And-Research/Research-report-docs/state-of-bcp-report-november-2019.pdf

According to the School Census conducted in January 2019, 78 percent of pupils attending school in the BCP area identify as 'white British', 20 percent identify as 'non-white British' (two percent non-disclosed)⁷

The rate of referrals for BCP Council in 2019/2020 was 453.7 which was lower than the national average of 535 and higher than the south west average of 434.

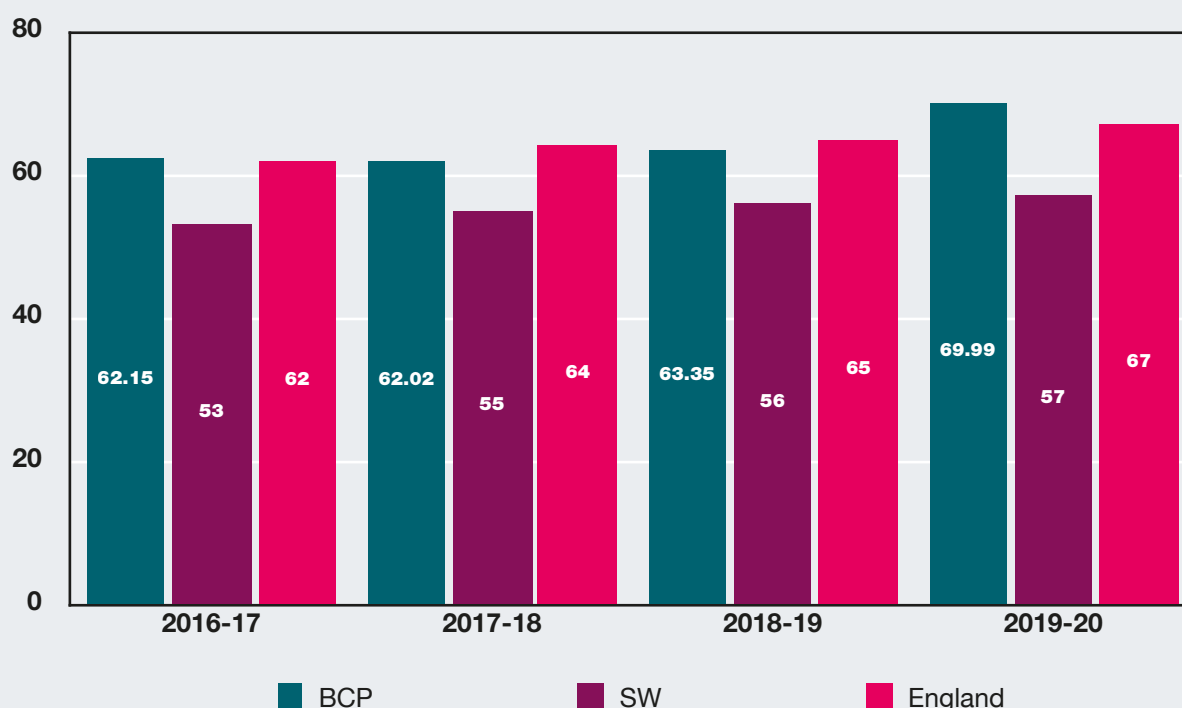
Number of children in care needing homes

As of 31 March 2020, there were 526 children in care in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole:

- **42%** of these children are in care as a result of abuse or neglect
- **31%** entered care due to family dysfunction
- **27%** entered care due to factors including absent parenting, the family being in acute stress, parental disability or illness, socially unacceptable behaviour or the child's disability or illness

The rate of children in care has increased from 62 to 70 per 10,000 (children aged under 18 years) between 2016 and 2020. This is higher than the national trend and the rate of children in care in the south west overall.

TABLE 1: Rate of Children in Care – 2016-2020



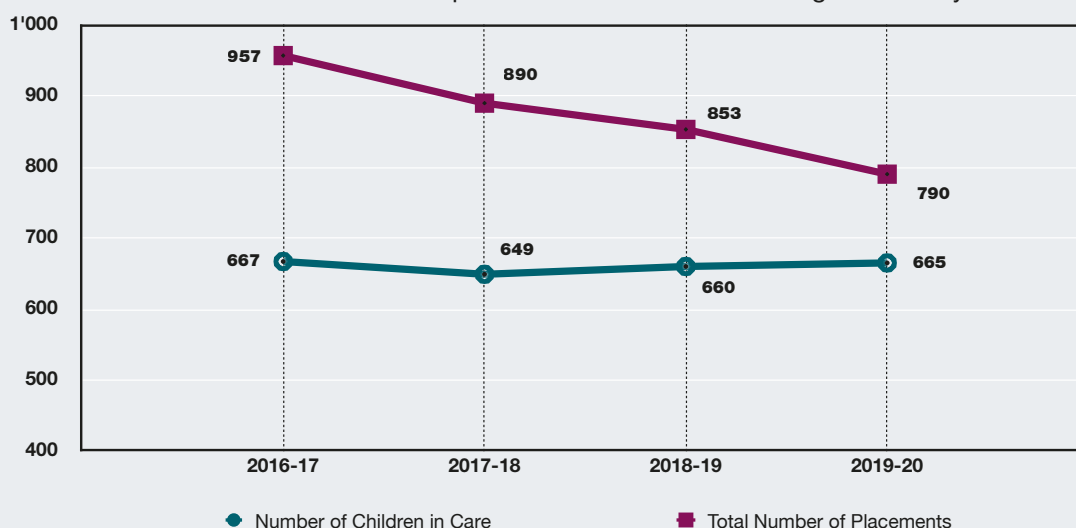
Source: DFE Snapshot data on 31 March each year from 903 Return

⁷ www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Council-and-Democratic/Consultation-And-Research/Research-report-docs/state-of-bcp-report-november-2019.pdf

Volume of placements throughout the year

The trend in the last four years has been a decline in the overall number of placements during each financial year. This is despite the overall number of children in care remaining the same indicating that the stability of placements is improving.

Table 2: Total number of placements and children throughout each year



Age profile

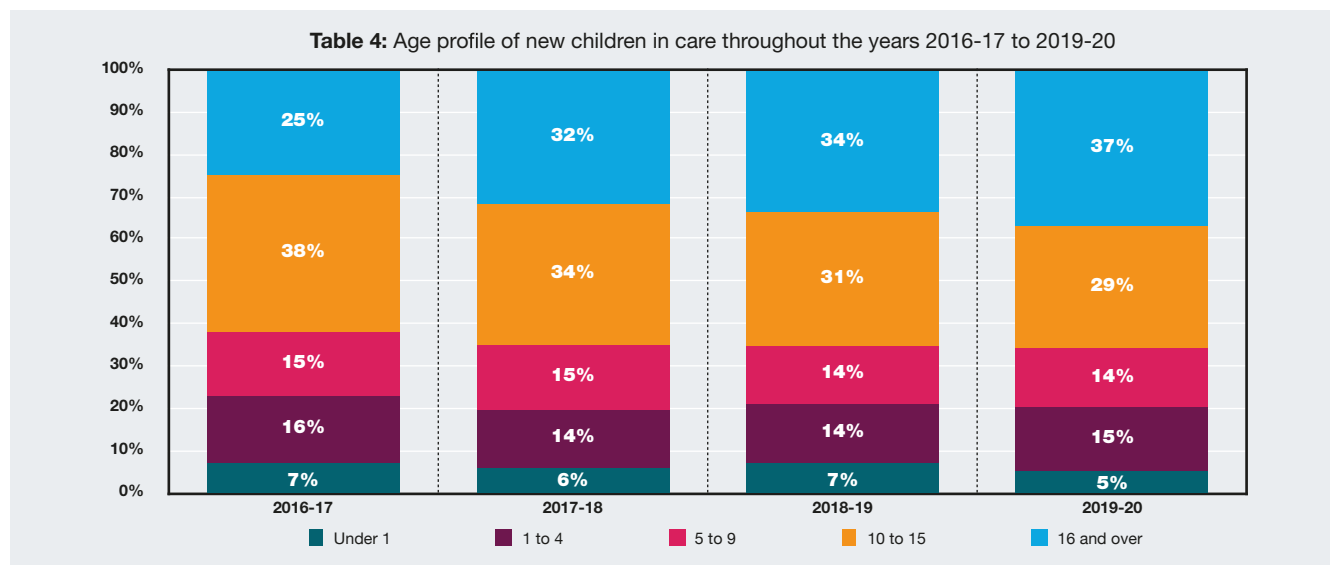
The largest groups of children in care are aged 10-15 years represent 35 percent and 16+ years at 31 percent, which makes up 66 percent of the children in care population.

Table 3: Age profile of children in care at 31 March 2020.

Age group	Number of children in care	% Children in care population	BCP population 19 and under	% BCP population 19 and under
Under 1	29	6%	3868	5%
1-4 years	72	14%	16995	21%
5-9 years	80	15%	22544	28%
10-15 years	184	35%	24346	31%
16 and over	161	31%	11763	15%

Source: CLA 903 data, Mid-Year Estimates 2018 – Data Insight team

Table 4: shows that over the last four years, there has been an increase in placements required for children aged 16 and over. The placements required for 10-15 year-olds has decreased over the same period and currently stands at 31 percent of placements.

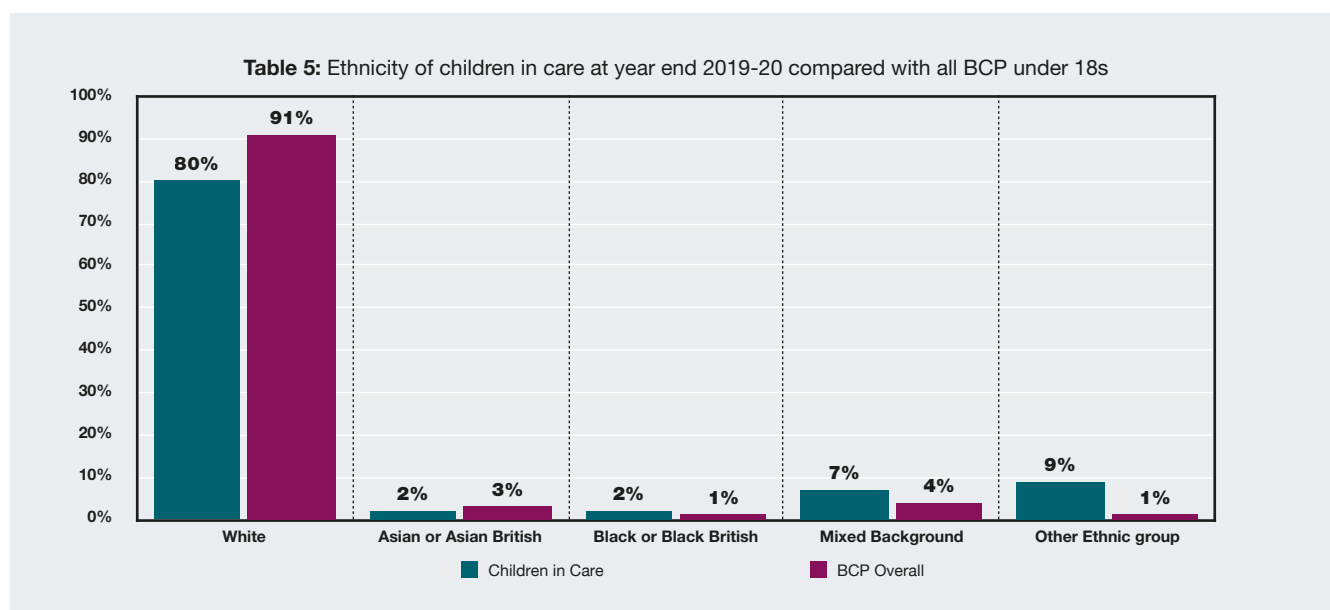


Source: CLA 903 data

Ethnicity

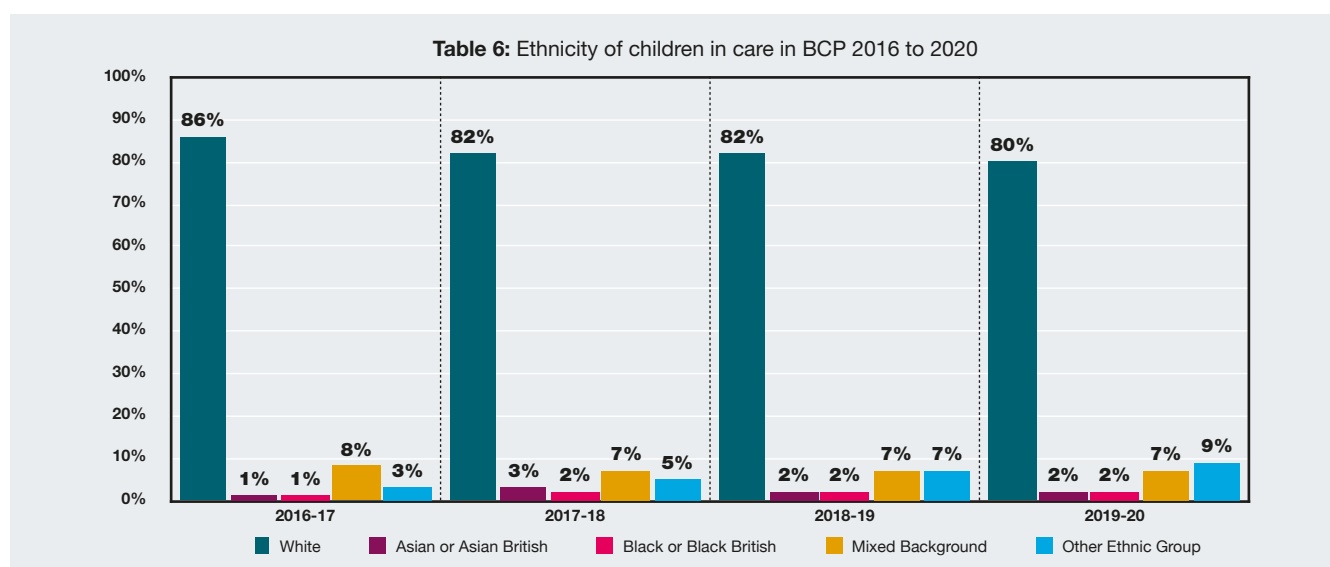
The majority of children in care are from white backgrounds (81 percent) followed by children from mixed and other backgrounds (7 percent each). Children from both mixed backgrounds and other ethnic backgrounds are over-represented among children in care when compared to their proportions in the BCP under 18s population.

Table 5: Ethnicity of children in care at year end 2019-20 compared with all BCP under 18s.



Source: CLA 903 Data, 2011 Census – Data Insight team

Table 6: Ethnicity of children in care in BCP 2016 to 2020.



Source: CLA 903 data

Gender

There have consistently been more boys than girls for whom placements are made. In 2019/2020, boys made up 59 percent of children in care during the year compared to 41 percent for girls, which is higher than the national figure of 56 percent for boys and 44 for girls.

For new entrants into care during 2019/2020, there was a 59:41 split between boys and girls in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Care experienced young people

As of 31 March 2020, there were 252 care experienced young people with cases open to the service.

Table 7: shows that there is an even spread of ages for care experienced young people. 24 percent of care experienced young people aged 18 and over are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and 16 percent have a disability.

Age band	Number of young people	% of young people
18-19	150	60%
20-21	102	40%
Total	252	100%

Source: 903 data, 2019-20

The majority of care experienced young people are provided with suitable accommodation with 92 percent of 17-18 year-olds and 86 percent of 19+ living in suitable accommodation in 2019-2020. This is slightly higher than the national figure for 17-18 year-olds (90 percent) and slightly lower for 19+ at (85 percent).

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At 31 March 2020, there were 23 children in care identified as having a disability. 13 children met the threshold for children with complex needs and were allocated a social worker with the Child Health and Disability Team. Demand is rising for those children with more complex needs. Three-quarters of EHCPs are for males, with the most frequent needs of autistic spectrum disorder, social, emotional and mental health, moderate learning difficulty and speech, language and communication difficulty.

48 percent of the children in care with disabilities (11 out of 23) live with foster carers (at 31 March 2020). Of the 11 children, two are living with IFA foster carers and nine with foster carers. We need to increase the skills and capacity of our foster carers to enable them to care for more of our children with disabilities and to reduce the number who may be placed in children's homes because there are no suitable foster carers available. Children placed with local families benefit from going to local schools.

BCP Council needs specialist foster carers to provide homes for young people with complex health needs (physical health). We have insufficient foster carers to meet the short breaks offer for children and young people but there are few in house foster carers able to deliver short breaks.⁸

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Table 8 shows that the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) has doubled in the last four years. The gender breakdown of the UASC population shows that 97 percent are male with only two female UASC in 2019/2020.

Table 8: Total number of UASC in BCP 2016-2020 (at 31 March each year).

Year	Number of UASC under 18 years of age	Number of UASC aged 18 and over	Total number of UASC
2016-2017	29	1	30
2017-2018	42	21	63
2018-2019	33	23	56
2019-2020	39	22	61

Source: CLA 903 return

⁸ Short breaks are activities for disabled children and young people to give them opportunities to have fun, spend time away from home with their friends and develop skills and independence.pdf

Complex needs of our children in care

The issues as of September 2020 for the council's newly formed Complex Safeguarding Service cohort (55 young people) were:

- **90%** use cannabis very regularly
- **20%** regular missing episodes feature in young people's risk profile
- **95%** have experienced childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences
- **90%** being coerced into organised supply of drugs
- **10%** being coerced into sexual exploitation
- **95%** have a very limited education offer
- over representation of dual heritage males living with single mum within the cohort
- alternative custody placements required to offer a bail alternative to police custody
- accommodation options for families to create safety (in situations where it is unsafe for the families to remain in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole).

It is acknowledged that an increase in family-based placement sufficiency for children aged 14 years plus who have suffered significant trauma is required both longer term and respite provision. Placements are often required in an unplanned way which limits the ability to source a placement which will meet all the identified needs of the child. The education offer is limited for high need, high risk young people and this impacts on placement stability.





6. Review of current provision and market analysis



BCP Council operates within a mixed economy of internal and external provision. Placements are commissioned through framework and spot purchasing arrangements, some of which are regional. In recent years, we have seen a decline in IFA placements compared with in house fostering placements. In-house placements now make up most foster care placements.

BCP Council works directly with external providers alongside regional LA partners to expand what provision is available to meet the needs of our children.

We have an increasing proportion of children in foster care. Table 6 shows that at 31 March 2019, 71 percent of all Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole children in care were in foster care. The national average is 72 percent.



Table 9: Use of placements in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (at 31 March 2018 and 2019).

Placement type	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Foster carers	297	64.29%	338	70.71%	383	72.81%
Semi independent	34	5.37%	36	5.83%	38	5.67%
Children's homes and hostels	33	5.51%	29	4.98%	23	3.64%
Placed for adoption	32	5.65%	10	1.81%	7	1.15%
Youth offender institution or prison	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.17%
Secure unit	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	—	0.00%
NHS/health trust/medical or nursing care establishment	2	0.38%	3	0.55%	6	1.00%
Residential accommodation	39	7.34%	31	5.74%	31	5.21%
Placed with parents	24	4.88%	30	5.89%	29	5.14%
Family centre/mother and baby unit	0	0.00%	1	0.21%	5	0.93%
Other placements	3	0.64%	0	—	3	0.57%
Total	465	94.25%	478	95.72%	527	96.29%

Placements with in-house fostering team

The council's fostering service has the following category of placements for our children and young people.

Table 10: Children in care placements in foster care provision by type of foster carer placement as of September 2020.

	Number of households	Number of placements available	Actual take up	Placements not available	Vacancies
Mainstream	137	205	165	31	12
Friends and family	59	N/A	77	N/A	N/A
Shared carers	9		12		
Supported lodgings	52	74	52	13	8
Emergency carers	4	3	1	0	3
Staying put	15	19	19	0	0
Parent and child carers	2	2	0	1	0
TOTAL	278	303	326	45	23

Mainstream carers

The council's fostering service recognises that children and young people in care should be provided with the very best of care, nurture, support, and opportunities to meet their full potential. We aim to recruit and develop the skill base of our carers locally to provide the least disruption for our children and young people.

We are committed to matching children to carers who meet individual needs, including those relating to sibling groups, disabilities, complex emotional and behavioural needs and cultural or religious origins. Our fostering placements aim to be healing environments for children with an emphasis on therapeutic care in which skilled carers can use techniques from PACE, Theraplay and NVR and Life Story Work.

Foster carers training programme

We are very proud of our comprehensive post approval foster carer training programme. We believe that our foster carers need the opportunity to reflect on practice and develop their knowledge and skill base. The key aim is to ensure that the training being offered is transforming practice and making a difference in the lives of the children and young people placed.

Training opportunities have been developed to ensure that all foster carers, regardless of ability or skill level can have the opportunities to fully participate in developing their skills and knowledge base. We take a person-centred approach to all training plans and are mindful in respects to individual needs, such as dyslexia or when English is not the first language.

Training opportunities include:

- dedicated training and development officer
- personalised training portfolio for each foster carer
- broad and extensive range of training opportunities including face-to-face and online
- opportunities for extended training events
- transitions support group facilitated by a clinical psychologist
- opportunities for foster carers to become champions and coaches
- day / evening monthly Foster Care Forum
- bespoke training package for newly approved foster carers
- PACE support group facilitated by a clinical psychologist
- monthly Training Standards Development Workshop
- Parent and Child Reflection Group
- dedicated monthly clinical support with a clinical psychologist for friends and family carers
- 1:1 to support available for foster carers to complete training, support, and development workbooks

- virtual support group for foster carers who are supporting young people with substance misuse issues
- virtual support group supporting foster carers where young people have self-harming behaviours
- virtual support group for our enhanced and resilience foster carers.

Parent and child carers

There are currently only two parent and child foster carers within the in-house fostering team. A recruitment campaign needs to be initiated to increase this number of parent and child carers by three and supported lodgings carers by one carer in order to meet demand.

There are currently two in-house supported lodgings carers within the in-house fostering team. There is a need to increase capacity within the supported lodgings service to include placement offers for young parents with children. The aim is to increase this number to three by April 2021.

Increasing the number of carers will mean we are able to offer local placements close to their support networks and will positive rehabilitation back into the community.

Shared carers

There is a shortage of in-house shared care foster carers for children and young people with a range of complex needs, which may include but not be limited to autism spectrum disorder and learning disabilities. The recent transfer of this service to our in-house fostering service will see a targeted recruitment for shared carers who will be registered as foster carers. The focus of the recruitment will be building on families and professionals who have a connection to disability as this is often a common theme of specialist carers. This will include staff at special schools, (community) nurses, social workers, and teaching assistants. Collaboration between the 0-25 SEND service and the fostering service will identify potential shared care foster carers. We currently have seven shared carers across the BCP area, and the aim is to increase this to 17 by April 2022.

The council is committed to supporting foster carers who may require adaptations to their family homes in order to allow them to provide shared / foster care to young people with more complex needs. This will be assessed on an individual basis.



Remand Foster Care Beds

The Remand Foster Care Bed Scheme was designed for children in police custody who are required to attend court the following day (or so). Custody officers have a duty of care under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) to secure the transfer of the arrested child to local authority accommodation. Local authorities then have a duty to ensure the child is kept safe, protected and 'accommodated'.

In partnership with Dorset Council, we have three carers who are on a rota to offer a remand bed should it be required. Demand for this service is low across the BCP area with the service used for only four nights since 2018. A review of the Remand Fostering Bed Scheme is being carried out in 2020/2021.

Sibling groups

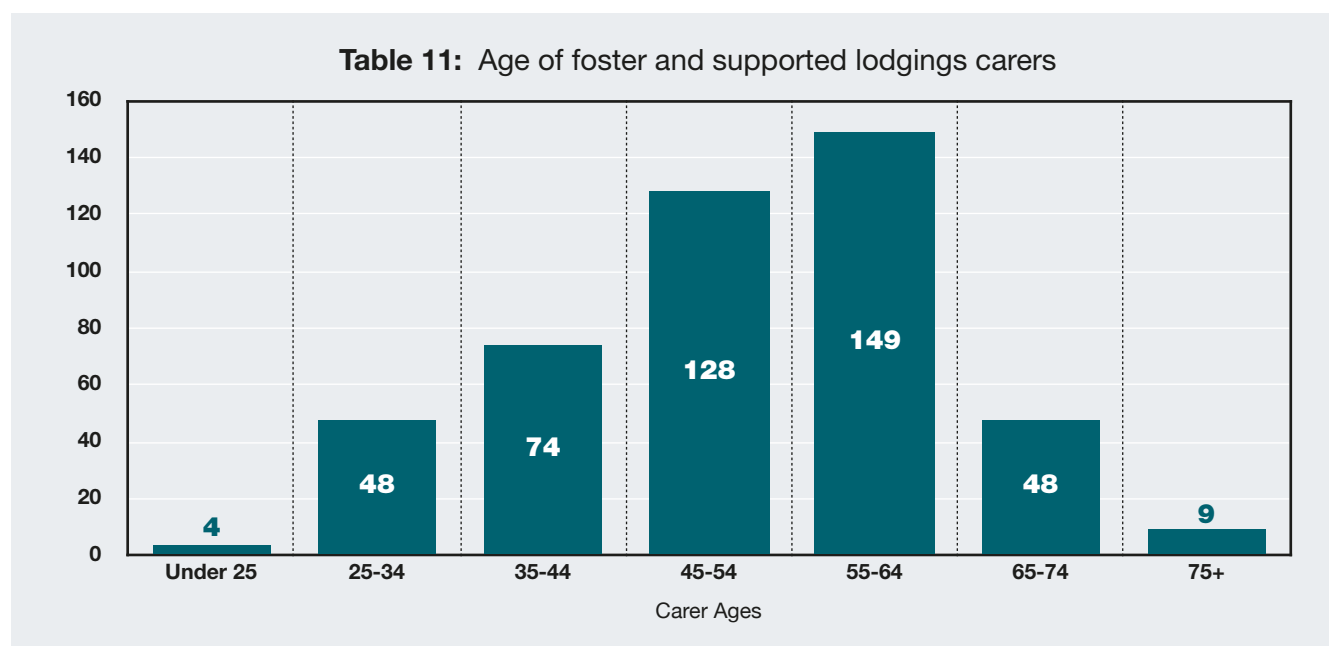
BCP Council currently has 48 foster carers who can have more than two children placed in order to accommodate sibling placements. We currently have 38 sibling groups placed, excluding those in friends and family placements.

The challenge is the changing demographic of carers and the challenge of recruiting carers who have properties large enough to accommodate large sibling groups.



Age profile of foster and supported lodgings carers

Table 11: Age of foster and supported lodgings carers⁹



BCP Council has 278 fostering households with a total of 461 carers both primary and secondary carers are included within the age profiles above. 12 percent of carers are aged over 65 years with 44 percent aged over 55 years.

99.9 percent of our foster care households are located within BCP with only 0.1 percent in a neighbouring authority. Whilst it is recognised that some children and young people would benefit from a family-based placement outside of the BCP area due to their own individual situation, recruitment within the area and the ability to support carers robustly remains a challenge.

BCP Council has foster carers who are approved and registered to take a range of children from single to multiple sibling placements.

Placements with connected carers

BCP Council is committed to family-based placements and recognise that children and young people achieve better outcomes when placed within a family setting. Social workers are required to investigate placements with connected persons before a referral into the Access to Resources Team can be made for an internal or external provision of care.

BCP Council has an effective assessment process in place for family members who are identified as potential connected carers, all assessments are completed within statutory timescales.

⁹ Where there are two adults registered in the household, the age of the primary foster carer has been used.

We have seen an artificial increase in the number of connected carers, this is due to current expectations from the courts that a child should live with the carer for a minimum of three months before a special guardianship order SGO can be granted.

Fostering Service Development Programme

Developing spaces for young people who struggle to live in a family home. Looking to develop garages or annexes within the family home. A business plan is in development and carers have expressed an interest in this programme.

Stand By Me. Developing a scheme where young people living in semi-independent provision however would benefit from a link with a family. The 'stand by me' programme will look at offering support such as a family meal, washing and general parental support when required.

The shared care arrangement for some of our more complex young people is being trialled at the moment where there are a set of two sets of foster carers allocated to one young person with their own room, within each family home and a regular pattern of respite.

Adoptions

Legal permanency which includes adoption, special guardianship orders (SGOs) and long-term fostering provide the best outcomes for children and young people.

BCP Council, along with Dorset Council, has a service level agreement for Aspire to provide adoption and special guardianship services including adoption assessments, special guardianship assessments, family finding, and post order support. Aspire has case responsibility for most children who are subjects of Placement Orders.

In 2019-20, 42 children in the BCP area were made subjects of 'Should Be Placed for Adoption' (SBPA) decisions. There is no clear pattern which can be identified within or across the local authorities in relation to numbers of SBPA decisions each quarter to manage workloads for staff in Aspire, or to manage the workload of the agency decision makers in each local authority.



Twenty-seven Placement Orders were made by the courts from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Following on from the local authority decision that a child should be placed for adoption, Placement Orders give social workers legal authority to place a child for adoption. There continues to be a significant discrepancy between the number of local authority decisions that a child should be adopted and the courts making a Placement Order. It partly reflects the time lag between a SBPA decision and the final court hearing date, a local authority change of plan before the final court hearing or the court making an alternative permanence plan for the child.

Thirty-three children in the care of the local authorities of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole were placed with adoptive families in 2019/20.

The most effective and competent way to place these children is for Aspire to recruit and assess their own families to take children with more complex needs. Recruitment activity has been the priority in the coming year and was stepped up to increase the overall number of adopters and targeted to recruit families who will consider the children currently waiting. Aspire aims to recruit 60 adopters per year to meet the demand for placements across the BCP and Dorset Council areas.

A total of 24 children were adopted in 2019/20, lower than the previous year. The slow down in Adoption Orders is likely to continue for some time as the courts are having to prioritise their work to focus on children at risk and stopped accepting adoption applications in mid-March 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis.

17 percent of the children who ceased to be in care in 2019/20 were adopted, this is better than the 2019/20 national average of 12 percent but is significantly lower than the preceding two years which was 21 percent in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

National adoption scorecards measure timeliness in adoption activity on a three-year rolling average. They are published by the Department for Education a year later than the activity they are reporting on. The available published data is for the three-year period 2016-2019 and reflects the legacy local authorities of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset County. Care must be taken as small numbers can result in significant swings in averages if just a few children take longer to place for adoption. The outcome for the child is a positive one but can reflect negatively on the data.

Aspire data for 2019-20 would suggest that for the Aspire local authorities, it took an average of 160 days between the local authority receiving court authority to place the child and the agency decision maker (ADM) deciding on a match to an adoptive family. The England average from the 2016-19 adoption scorecard is 170 days. It took an average of 356 days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. The England average from the 2016-19 scorecard is 363 days.

The Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team includes social workers, family support practitioners and child psychologists.

Placements with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

BCP Council forms part of the South-Central Consortia which is a collaboration of 14 local authorities who commission IFA placements via a contractual framework. The framework has been in existence since 2017 and was due to expire in March 2021. The re-tendering process had started; however, the impact of COVID-19 has resulted in a 12-month extension with a proposed tender for a further five years planned from March 2022. The rates paid to the 25 providers are set for the framework period with providers being able to request an annual uplift which requires board approval. BCP Council manages the contract management function of the framework for the consortia and has been recognised by the National Association of Foster Parents (NAFP) as a consortium of good practice. Spot purchase placements are in the minority and tend to be providers bespoke programmes, these are commissioned via the national contract with the added benefit of being monitored through the consortia contract management function which provides added scrutiny of placement standards.

BCP Council has seen an overall increase in IFA fostering households of 29 percent, however this is not reflected in the number of placements available. There has been an overall decrease in the last two years of 18 placement (8.4 percent) and the vacancy rate has decreased by 43 percent.

Between BCP Council and IFA providers, engagement and relationship management continue to be positive. However, the stabilisation of IFA foster care provision within the BCP area may be a direct result of an increase in the use of in-house foster care provision. South Central sufficiency data reports that providers have developed their market within other geographical areas, this is mainly due to a lack of affordable larger housing due to the BCP area being a university town and high demand for large rental properties.

Table 12: Overall BCP IFA Provider Sufficiency Data¹⁰

Year	Households	Maximum placements	Vacancies
2019	68	213	41
2020	88	195	23
Difference	20	-18	-18

¹⁰Short breaks are activities for disabled children and young people to give them opportunities to have fun, spend time away from home with their friends and develop skills and independence.pdf

Comparing data between 2017 and 2020, we have seen a 22 percent increase in placements available, however overall use of IFA placements has reduced by 20 percent. It is important to note that whilst BCP Council has seen a reduction in the use of local IFA provision there is still 1.5 percent of our overall CiC population (eight children) being placed outside of the BCP area which needs to be addressed.

Table 13: Overall BCP IFA regional and local usage data¹¹

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Maximum placements in region [provider data]	159	169	193	195
Live placements [LA data Bournemouth and Poole councils / BCP Council]	105	75	60	84

Residential children's home provision

At any given time, there are approximately 13 children in care placed in residential homes (excluding the children with a disability cohort). Some young people need the care and attention that only a residential children's home placement can provide. These children may have experienced multiple placement breakdowns in foster care; others may not want a substitute family and for them a residential placement is a positive choice.

BCP Council forms part of the South-Central Consortia which is a collaboration of 17 local authorities who commission residential care provision via a contractual framework. The framework has been in existence since October 2019 and is due to expire in March 2025. The rates paid to the 75 providers are set for the framework period with providers being able to request an annual uplift which requires board approval. The Framework providers offer access to 408 homes with 1,710 beds available nationally.

Table 14: Overall BCP IFA regional and local usage data¹²

Homes and beds available			
Year	Homes	Beds	Vacancies
2019	5	30	0
2020	3	10	2

BCP Council has an established residential care provider who due to restructuring has reduced the number of beds it now offers, this alongside the closure of a specialist residential provision has seen a reduction of 20 beds overall within the BCP area.

¹¹Where there are two adults registered in the household, the age of the primary foster carer has been used.

Commissioners have engaged a range of providers with a view to them establishing themselves within the BCP area and increasing the range of residential provision. Partnership work with the existing provider continues to drive up standards of care to cater for our most complex young person.

Overall BCP Council has 6 percent of its CiC population in residential provision, this includes children who reside in specialist educational provision with complex needs.

Short breaks

BCP Council is currently undertaking a short breaks review and we have completed a mapping exercise of existing provision. A revised short breaks statement has been published and the review team are working to align a short break offer across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole by April 2021. There is a short break action plan in place to support the re-commissioning of this service.

Direct payments and personal budgets

Direct payments are monetary payments made by BCP Council to individuals who have been assessed as being eligible to receive care services. Instead of the local authority arranging services to meet their care needs, a direct payment enables the individual to purchase and manage their own services.

BCP Council currently operates two in-house direct payment services with three different rates across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and no single Direct Payment Policy. There are currently 100 packages of direct payments and an additional 12 direct payment rates specifically for overnight respite.

Joint commissioning arrangements

Joint commissioning is a strategic approach to planning and delivering services in a holistic, joined-up way. It is a means for the different partners commissioning education, health and social care provision, to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people.

The development of a Multi-Agency Resource Panel (MARP) has been implemented within the BCP area. This process considers in partnership with all professional agencies, the needs of children and young people who require a high cost multi-agency placement. It ensures that all agencies' approved resources are supporting children and young people appropriately and that the service delivery is focused on outcomes for the children and young people.

Funding arrangements are agreed and packages of social care, education and/or health provision commissioned with clearly defined timeframes, quality requirements and outcomes.

Secure children's homes

There are 15 individually managed secure children's homes throughout England and Wales encompassing a range of services within a secure environment that support the individual needs of children in its care. They provide placements for boys and girls aged between 10 and 17 years and include full residential care, educational facilities, and healthcare provision.

The number of placements made by the council in secure children's homes is low at one or two a year. These placements are used as a last resort where young people have a high risk of repeat absconding, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or are a danger to themselves or others. Young people who are at risk of CSE and with challenging behaviour feature regularly among those being placed in secure units.

There are 15 individually managed welfare secure homes in England and Wales. There are currently no secure homes in the BCP area with the nearest in Southampton, Hampshire. There are 248 Youth Justice Board and welfare beds combined. There are four secure homes in Scotland described as independent and one described as local authority.

Emergency accommodation

Where accommodation is required in an emergency, it is a challenge as there may be limited information available about the young person. The council's in-house fostering service has an established retained foster carer scheme. This service is available to the out of hours (OOHs) team to access should a child / young person need to be placed in an emergency.

Access to local regulated children's home provision in an emergency remains a challenge, BCP Council has worked with a local provider who has now opened a 90-day registered provision which will accept emergency referrals. This enables us to keep the young person local whilst assessing their need in a more planned way. We continue to access emergency residential care which is at a distance and this is normally when a young person needs to be placed out of the area.

The development of our in-house fostering resilience scheme has seen a number of our young people successfully placed in an emergency and these placements maintained as the carers have access to a robust training programme and support package.

Semi-independent provision for young people aged over 16 years

Semi-independent accommodation provides young people aged 16-18 with support staff based on-site. This type of provision is not regulated by Ofsted. BCP Council forms part of a consortia which is a collaboration of eight local authorities who commission semi-independent supported living placements for young people under the age of 18 years via a contractual framework. The framework has been in existence since October 2019 and is due to expire in March 2025.

The rates paid to the providers are set for the framework period with providers being able to request an annual uplift which requires consortia approval. The consortia has developed robust contract monitoring procedures which check the performance and outcomes achieved by the providers. BCP Council has a range of accommodation available both in and out of the area.

BCP Council continues to develop the Supported Lodgings Scheme for young people aged 16+ years. There has been a steady increase in the number of carers available within this scheme with active recruitment ongoing. There is currently in the region of 60 young people aged 16+ years accessing family-based care via the Supported Lodgings Scheme. The development of the scheme will see more experienced resilient carers recruited with an aim to provide step down from residential or semi-independent accommodation.

Independent accommodation available for care experienced young people includes shared houses, studio flats and bedsits with or without a package of floating support depending on need. BCP Council has two external providers who have been commissioned to provide accommodation and housing related support over five sites. The support varies between high, medium, and low depending on the assessed needs of the young person. The accommodation ranges from self-contained flats within a block to hostel / group living provision with shared facilities. There are 109 beds in total.

Table 15: 16+ accommodation available within the BCP area.

Placement type	Description	Capacity within BCP Council
Housing related supported accommodation	block of self-contained flats with 24hr high or medium level support	18 14 x high support 4 x medium support
Housing related supported accommodation	rooms within a house with shared facilities and high, medium or low-level support	96 44 x high support, 4 x medium support 48 x low support
Housing related supported accommodation – crash pad	a room within a house with shared facilities and high support (emergency accommodation)	1 1 x high support
Residential semi-independent accommodation	rooms within a house with shared facilities and high-level support	11
In-house supported lodgings	room within a family home with approved supported lodgings carers	96

Accommodation and support for care experienced young people aged 18 and over

A number of young people remain in their foster placements following their 18th birthday as part of the Staying Put arrangements. It is expected that the capacity of in-house foster carers may decline in the future as more post-18 young people remain in their foster care placement. BCP Council has three training flats available. These are designed to offer a period of independence and learning to CiC or CEYP who are transitioning from foster or supported lodgings carers. The furnished accommodation is offered for a period of between six to 12 weeks.

Alongside this we also have six studio flats which are available to CEYP. These properties offer a period of stability with no definitive move on timescales. BCP Council as corporate parents recognises the individual needs of each young person.

All care experienced young people are considered for 'gold band' housing allocation. If the criteria are met, then access to housing stock can be bid for and successfully achieved. However, due to shortages in local social housing, there are delays in young people receiving their own council tenancies which has increased the number of 18-21 year-olds in semi and independent accommodation.

Table 16: 18+ accommodation available within the BCP area.

Placement type	Description	Capacity within BCP Council
16+ Transition Service	specialist residential transition service registered with CQC for 'care experienced young people with a disability	3
Training flats	local authority CSC rented flats used by 17+ CiC/care experienced young people preparing for Independence	3



Table 17 shows that 68 care experienced young people (31 percent) live in independent living accommodation and 21 (9 percent) with former foster carers and 46 (21 percent) in supported lodgings (including foyers).

Table 17: Care experienced young people accommodation type as (at 31 March 2020 year).

Accommodation	Number of care experienced young people	% of care experienced young people
Independent living	68	31%
Supported lodgings (including foyers)	46	21%
Semi-independent	30	13%
Parents/relatives	25	12%
With former foster carers	21	9%
Community home / residential care	10	4%
Other	23	10%
TOTAL	223	100%

Placement costs

Over the last three years, expenditure on care / accommodation and support for children in care has exceeded budget for both the preceding individual local authorities responsible for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and BCP Council. The largest proportion of the overspend is from children's homes and semi-independent costs. This position is reflective of both an increase in numbers and the increase in complexities of cases leading to higher costs.

Demand influencers

The number of CiC placements required will be influenced by national drivers including the Staying Put Policy, Southwark and local drivers such as growth in our 11-17 year-old population which will put pressure on the demand for placements while initiatives such as our Edge of Care offer and targeted work referred to above will reduce the demand for placements.

The full needs assessment will identify the impact of these influencers. However we expect our Edge of Care offer, and Reunification & SGO, initiatives to reduce CiC numbers by 50 in 2021/22. This reduction will be partially offset by pressures in areas identified above but in total we expect the number of CiC to reduce from its current level of 70 per 10,000 of population to the national average of 65 per 10,000 which equates to a 4 percent reduction.

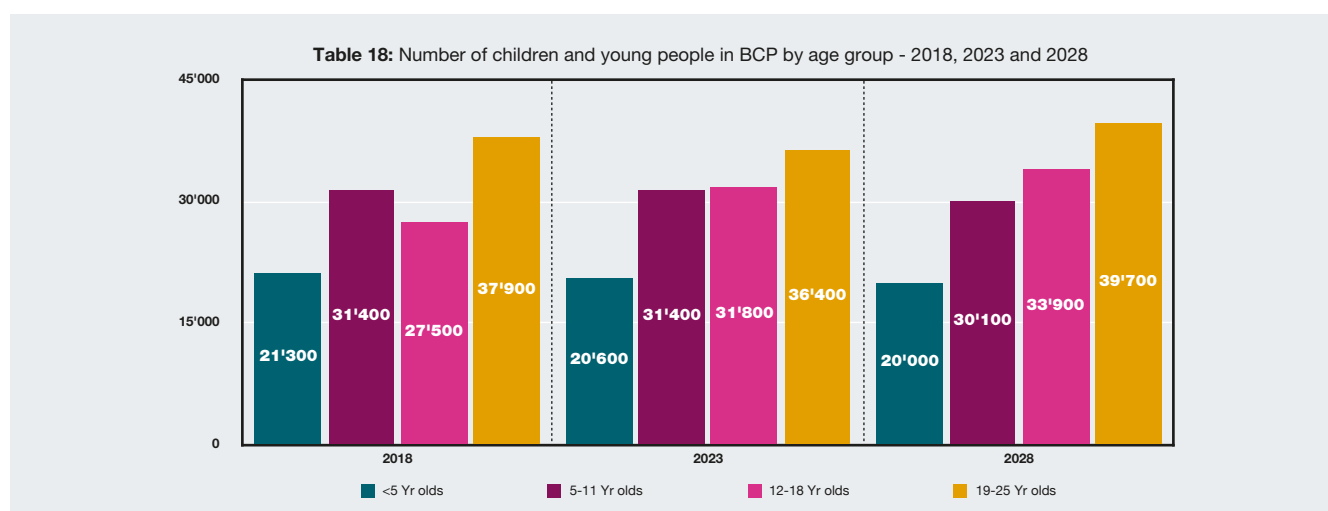
Based on mid-2018 population estimates, it is important to note that the projected growth of age groups still stands:

→ **Current population aged 0-25**

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) has 395,800 residents, of which almost 30 percent – 117,000 are aged 0-25^[1]. Over the next decade, forecasts^[2] suggest there will be a significant shift in the number and age distribution of children and young people.

→ **Future trends to 2028**

The overall number aged 0-25 is forecast to increase by around 5,500. However, this increase is not evenly distributed across age groups. The number of secondary age children will increase by almost a quarter by 6,400; and the number aged 19-25 will increase by around 1,800 (+5 percent) by 2028. However, pre-school and primary age children are likely to decrease as a direct result of a fall in the number of births since 2013.



The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic should be considered. BCP Council's child protection numbers have been increasing since March 2020 and in part this has been attributed to the pandemic, but it does also represent better identification of and response to risk.

CIN (Children in Need) numbers have been directly impacted by the pandemic. Referral numbers reduced during the first lockdown (March to June 2020) when schools were partially closed, and then rose significantly in the autumn term (September to December 2020). It is predicted that a similar spike in CIN numbers may occur when schools reopen fully in 2021, which is expected to further increase our CIN population.

It is acknowledged that BCP Council's CIN numbers should be more in line with our statistical neighbour average which is 315.2 per 10,000 population 0-17s. At the end of December 2021, we were 363.4, which is due to the high number of referrals in autumn term. CP numbers are in line with statistical neighbours – a rate of 43.5 in BCP in December was exactly in line with statistical neighbours.

^[1] ONS 2018 Mid-year estimates

^[2] ONS 2016 based sub-national population projections



7 Priorities for January 2021 – January 2024



Based on the analysis of local need; we have identified the following priorities for the period of strategy. A priority action plan will be developed with key milestones and outcomes documented. Priorities will be reviewed annually based on updated annual sufficiency data and local / national drivers.

Our priority areas over the next three years are to:

- improve services to support children, prevent children entering care and increase support to families to help children to return to their home through the new edge of care and early help offer
- embed the Housing Sufficiency for care experienced young people
- increase in local fostering placements:
 - a. increase the in-house fostering cohort, especially for age range 12+yrs
 - b. increase the Independent Fostering Agency availability of placements within a 20-mile radius of BCP Council through partnership working and framework management
- improve commissioning arrangements for complex joint placements and arrangements that support these for example shared care and short breaks
- increase the number of providers and improve the quality of residential provision within BCP through market shaping and monitoring

- through a need's analysis develop the market to provide suitable local provision for complex teenagers both on the edge of care and in care who are at high risk of CE
- improve the monitoring of placements and the connectivity between commissioning, the provider and social worker to ensure outcomes are appropriate and met.

The subsequent sections will outline the priorities and commissioning intentions to meet each priority.

Priority 1:

Improve services to support children, prevent children entering care and increase support to families to help children to return to their home through the new edge of care and early help offer.

We will continue to offer more support to enable children to remain safely at home or to return home when it is their best interests. Our aim is to improve edge of care services through closer working with Early Help and Children and Family First Teams.

The council's Early Help offer:

- the multi-agency team around the school, work together to identify any early concerns as they emerge, and provide the opportunity for information, advice, guidance and signposting to reduce escalation of need and increasing stability
- the Early Help Programmes Teams and Early Help Support Teams, based in and around the newly developed Early Help Family Hubs, will assess and create the plans needed to address identified, critical family worries and needs and deliver services to meet need. Where appropriate, Early Help family support workers will act as the lead professional, working alongside the family to build resilience and improve outcomes for children. Early Help family support workers will work together with programme officers other professionals and organisations within the localities bringing together as a collective, the strengths of multiagency approach to support children and young people to achieve better outcomes
- the Edge of Care Team will focus on improving outcomes for children and young people who experience harm from exploitation and instability in their family setting and education. The Hub is a responsive, individualised service providing intensive support packages to parents/carers, children and young people to reduce harm from exploitation and to support stability of care, home, health, education and relationships and the Hub is central to the BCP Council Edge of Care approach. The Hub focuses on increasing carers' and parents' support, building resilience creating the space and conditions to repair relationships and being part of a network for their young person and in managing the anxieties this often brings.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- continued development and review of the new Early Help offer across Inclusion and Families Services to monitor activity, throughput, and impact
- development and mobilisation of the Edge of Care approach coordinated through the Edge of Care Team and working together across Children's Services and with partners to increase stability for young people on the 'Edge of Care'
- implementing the support offer within the Edge of Care approach will work towards the engagement of young people in meaningful education, training or employment with a strong focus on getting young people ready to re-engage with opportunities
- develop the support offer to parent/carers to increase support and stability to children and young people on the Edge of Care.

Priority 2:

Embed the Housing Strategy for care experienced young people.

Over the period of this strategy, our aim is to increase the number and range of accommodation and support options available to our care experienced young people.

There is a shortage of standalone and shared accommodation for care experienced young people and an oversupply of staffed units often with support that is not always required. Our intention is to work with the external market via the South-Central Semi-Independent Framework, housing and private landlords to ensure there is choice within the BCP area and accommodation to meet all identified needs.

Partnership working with colleagues in planning services is underway so both parties have a shared understanding of each other's demands and can develop a mutually supportive way forward to provide shared accommodation across the BCP area for our care experienced young people. The aim is for accommodation to be available across the BCP area rather than in centralised areas.

There is an established multi agency Housing Resource Panel which considers the housing needs of all care experienced young people, this provides a consistent approach to considering the housing options and ensures that due housing processes / duty have been followed. A task and finish group has been formed to review the process and legalisation in terms of claiming housing benefit/ universal credit which we can then be allocated to additional accommodation and support services for our care experienced young people and children in care.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- continue to develop and increase the supported lodgings scheme for care experienced young people

- improve the social housing offer for care experienced young people and support care experienced young people to move to their accommodation of choice
- engage with the semi-independent provider market to maintain and improve standards, working proactively with providers to register provision with Ofsted where appropriate
- positively reviewing the care plans for young people in a timely manner and linking with providers to ensure there is access to services and support which can prepare them for independence
- consider the implementation of a floating support worker for young people who are living independently
- improve the uptake and collection of housing benefit / universal credit to maximise the available resources available for supporting care experienced young people
- work with the external semi-independent market to develop smaller homes modelled on family-based care for children in care (under 18s).

Priority 3:

Increase in local fostering placements.

- increase the in-house fostering cohort, especially for age range 12+ years
- increase the independent fostering agency availability of placements within a 20-mile radius of BCP Council through partnership working and framework management.

BCP Council has an established strategy to recruit and train carers to the 'resilience' standard, the commissioning vision is that these carers will be robust to deal with older children who have complex behavioural needs and offer family based placements as a step down from residential care.

The in-house supported lodgings scheme continues to grow with carers offering family-based placements to the council's 16+ cohort.

An established 'retained' foster care scheme ensures that carers are available should a placement be required by out of hours.

Whilst the majority of foster carers own their own property, the Access To Resources Team works proactively with the housing service to secure 'gold band' allocations for care experienced young people and where reunification of children to family members is an option.

During the next 12 months BCP Council will develop the 'Shared Care Scheme', where foster carers offer care within their homes to children with complex needs who are allocated to the Children with a Disability Team. Growth in this scheme has not been seen in recent years and has now transferred the in-house fostering team.

We want to build on the support services available to foster carers to retain and develop them to support the 'our reliance fostering scheme'.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- embed the fostering strategy to increase the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers for sibling groups, respite and reliance carers able to care for teenagers with complex needs
- develop supported lodgings options for care experienced young people
- develop a 'Time Out Foster Carer' scheme which shall provide an opportunity for young people to receive respite care for up to 14 days whilst support is provided to the young person and their family
- achieve a 90 percent occupancy rate for in-house fostering
- embed approaches that maximise the opportunities for permanence as soon as possible including child arrangement, special guardianship, and adoption including improving the quality of assessments for special guardians, foster carers and adopters.

Priority 4:

Improve commissioning arrangements for complex joint placements and arrangements that support these for example shared care and short breaks.

Joint Commissioning is a strategic approach to planning and delivering services in a holistic, joined-up way. It is a means for the different partners commissioning education, health, and care provision, to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people with complex social care or SEND need.

The Multi-Agency Resource Panel (MARP) aim is to ensure that all agencies' approved resources are supporting children and young people appropriately and jointly commissioning services or placements which meet their identified needs.

BCP Council has an obligation to provide short break services, to inform families of what services are available, including an obligation to summarise these services through the Short Breaks statement, and to consult with parents and work in partnership with other institutions, such as health, to offer a joined-up service.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- continue to develop the MARP process with embedded practice across all partners
- develop a clear pathways and process for accessing S117 funding where appropriate
- work with partners in Dorset CCG and Dorset Council to implement a joint integrated funding policy for children and young people
- formal sign off of the council's Short Breaks Statement which will detail the current range of short break services, eligibility criteria and how to access them
- revise the short break offer to have a single offer across BCP Council and to better meet the needs of families

- implement one BCP Council Direct Payments Policy and eligibility criteria across the area
- increase the number of externally commissioned services in order to give families the choice and flexibility they desire whilst giving service providers sufficient certainty of income to plan and remain confident of viability
- families will continue to be involved in the commissioning process including reviewing service specifications, supporting evaluations and contributing to provider monitoring.

Priority 5:

Increase the number of providers and improve the quality of residential provision within the BCP area through market shaping and monitoring.

Currently within the BCP area eight of the 10 residential beds are provided by one provider. We need to improve the standard of care delivered by this provider and work with them to ensure their provisions are designed to meet the needs of the residential cohort.

We need to strengthen the number of residential care providers within BCP to support some of our most complex teenagers. These young people are at risk of child exploitation (CE), self-harming behaviour and exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour and regularly go missing.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- work with known residential providers with a proven track record of delivering outcomes to open residential children's homes within the BCP area
- improve contract and monitoring arrangements with local providers to improve standards
- increase the range of specialist complex residential provision to ensure children can remain within the BCP area whilst accessing specialist educational provision and remain to live near family members.



Priority 6:

Based on current and emerging needs, take a strategic commissioning approach in developing the market to provide suitable local provision for complex teenagers both on the edge of care and in care who are at high risk of CE.

CiC and CEYP are between four and five times more likely to self-harm in adulthood. They are also at a fivefold increased risk of childhood mental, emotional and behavioural problems, and six to seven times more likely to have conduct disorders. Teenage girls who are in care are two and a half times more likely to become pregnant than other teenagers.

It is recognised that all children in care have experienced trauma in some way. They are more likely to have been exposed to deprivation, family breakdown, family mental illness and substance abuse by care givers. The impact of these adverse childhood experiences (ACE) directly affect the young person and impacts their development, relationships and increases their risk of engaging in health-harming behaviours and experiences.

The ambition to create a multidisciplinary Edge of Care Offer (Autumn 2020) with strong partnership arrangements and a shared vision to deliver creative responses.

Understanding childhood adversity and trauma, intervening early and adopting a strengths based approach is the way BCP Council is supporting our children and young people. Ensuring that they can regulate emotions and manage emotional stress as well as acquiring practical problem-solving skills is key.

To ensure effective support for adolescents at risk of experiencing harm through exploitation and supporting and increasing stability in their family setting and in education as protective measures.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- placements are local (where appropriate) and family based depending on the needs of the young person, the overall aim is to increase the proportion of placements in the BCP area and within 20 miles
- review the suitability of semi-independent provision in terms of:
 - a. group living arrangements for young people at risk of CE
 - b. the cohorts which shall include young people placed by other local authorities
 - c. the impact and risks for young people
- a multi-agency task and finish group has been established
- based on the aims and outcomes documented for the Edge of Care Offer ensure suitable services are available to support lead professionals in order to achieve the desired outcomes for young people and their families
- increase the supported lodgings family-based care options for complex teenagers with resilience carers
- develop a multi-agency task and finish group with partners to continually review the needs of complex young people who are at risk of CE.

Priority 7:

Improve the monitoring of placements and the connectivity between commissioning, the provider and social worker to ensure outcomes are appropriate and met.

BCP Council intends to evidence the outcomes being achieved by young people and the cost effectiveness of the externally commissioned placement provisions. The aim is to measure children and young people's outcomes using a standardised approach across all placements ensuring an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.

BCP Council has a central Access to Resources Team which deals with all placement referrals, there is a system in place where social workers complete a placement referral, risk assessment and child profile to support the placement officers in sourcing a suitable placement.

Building on this central strength will ensure there is a collective approach and sharing of information / outcomes between all parties.

Commissioning intentions to achieve this priority:

- improve the long-term stability of placements
- children in care are healthy and emotionally resilient
- improve the quality of referrals so they are strength-based with clearly defined outcomes in order to deliver effective packages of care without always incurring unnecessary additional costs for extras
- develop and implement Young Commissioners programme to work with commissioners of accommodation, care and support for young people
- develop an outcomes-based quality assurance framework to monitor quality and establish what 'good' looks like in fostering, residential and supported accommodation services.

This information is issued by BCP Council

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