

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.

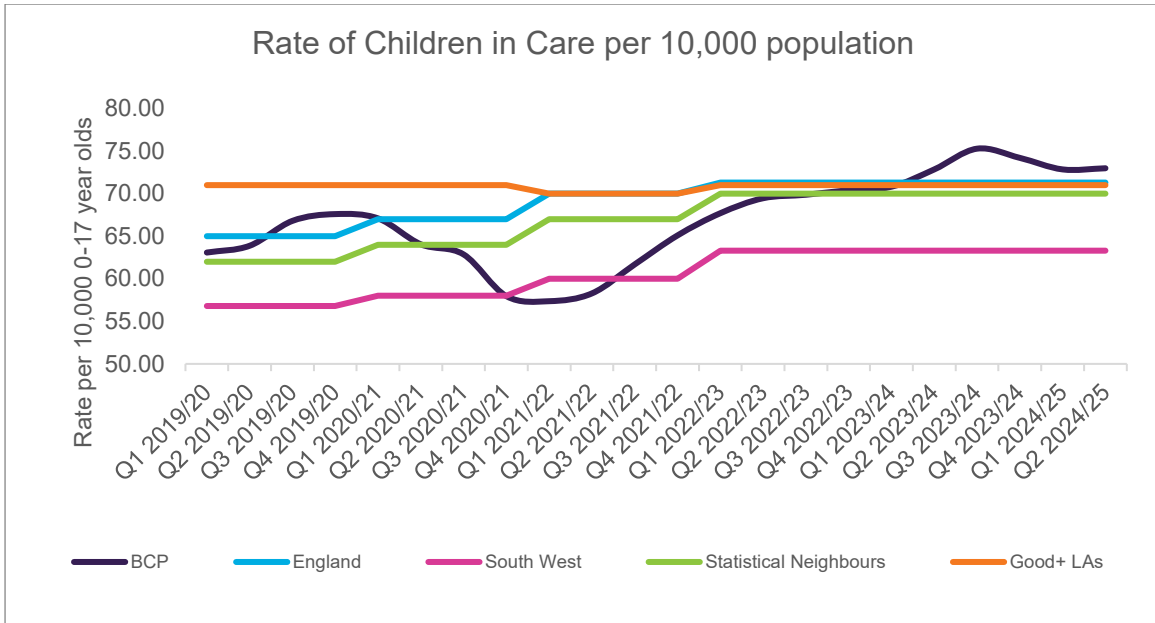
7.3 Placement Information

- 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

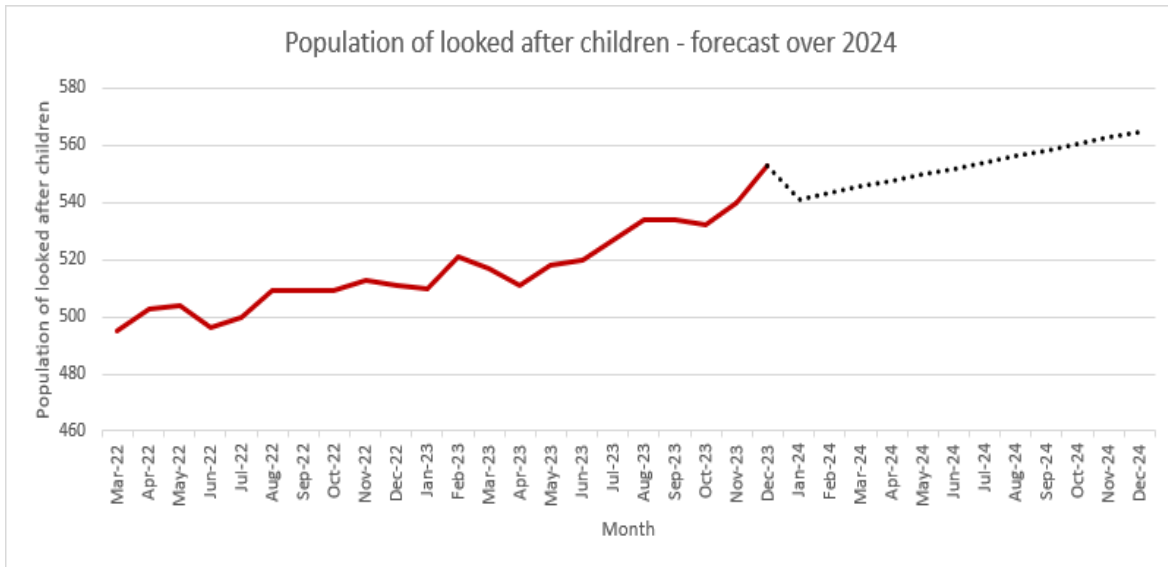
8.1 Children In Care – Population

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.



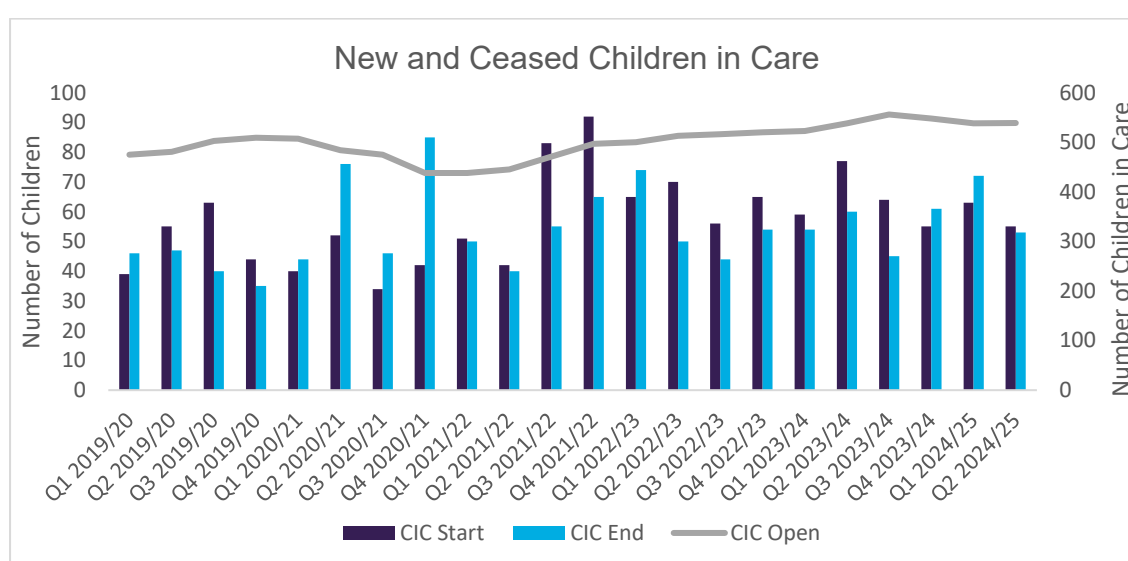
8.3 2019/2020 to 2022/2023 new and ceased Children in Care data

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

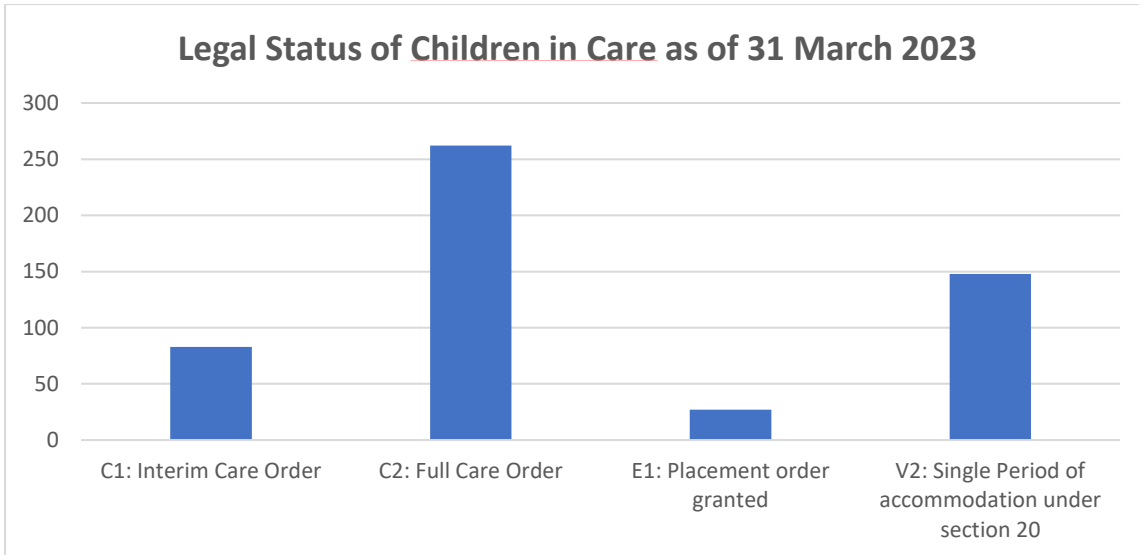


8.4 Legal Status of Children in Care

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.

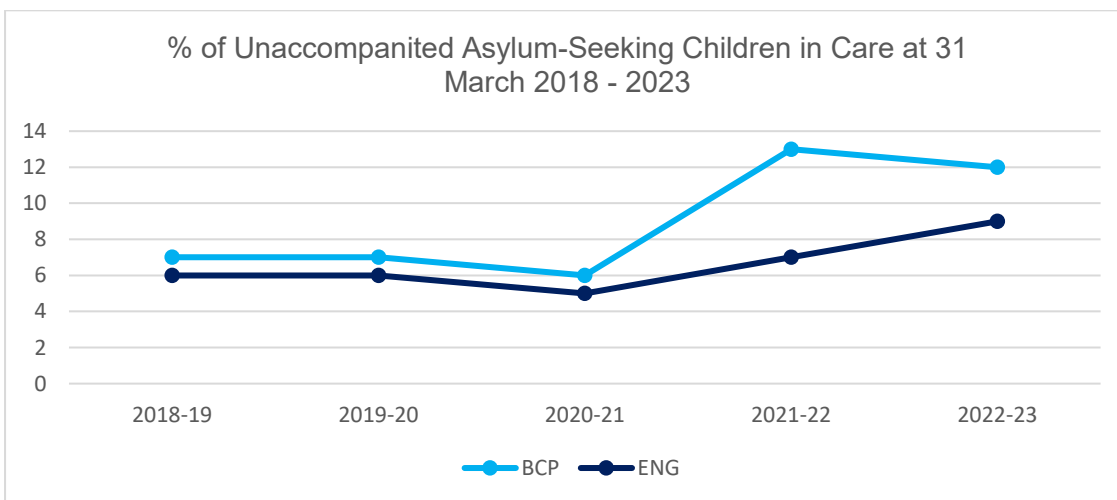
262 (50.4%) of all children in Care as of 31 March 2023 were subject of a Care Order, which is below all the comparator figures of England 58.0%, statistical neighbours 53.4%, Southwest 55.0% and Good+ local authorities 54.0%. There are currently 27 children in Care with a Placement Order, of which 9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

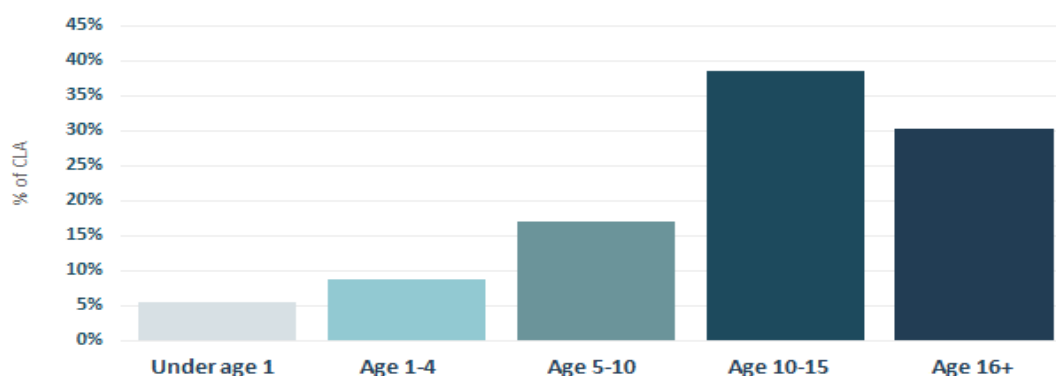


Numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care between 2019/2020 – 2022/23				
Financial Year	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care	32	23	57	49
Percentage of Children in Care Population	6.29%	5.25%	11.47%	9.42%
South West	4%	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.

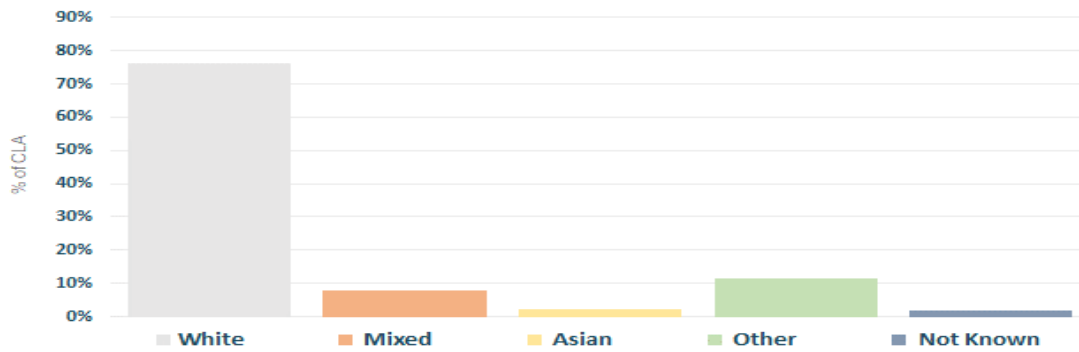
There are slight variations in each of the age brackets compared to 2020 (a slight decrease in the 0-5 (previously 35%), and an increase in the 10-15 (previously 35%).



8.7 Children in Care by Ethnicity

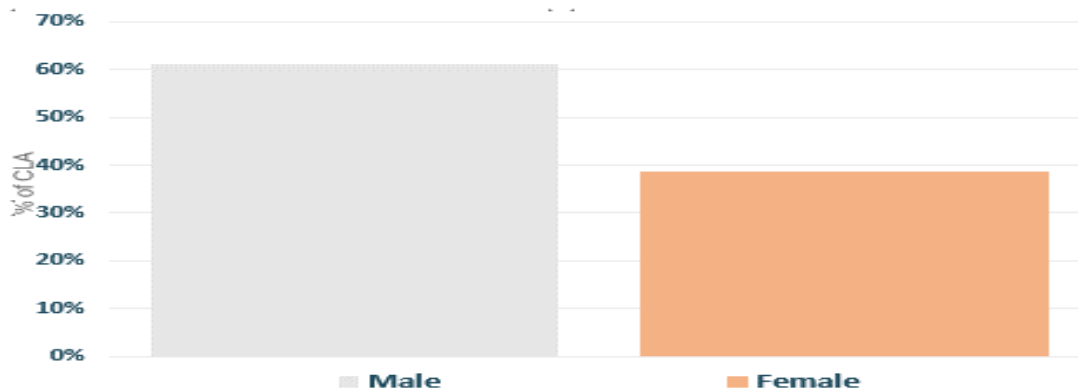
The majority of BCP Council's children in Care population are from white backgrounds (395/ 76%) followed by children from mixed heritage (47/ 9%) and other backgrounds (78/ 15%).

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.

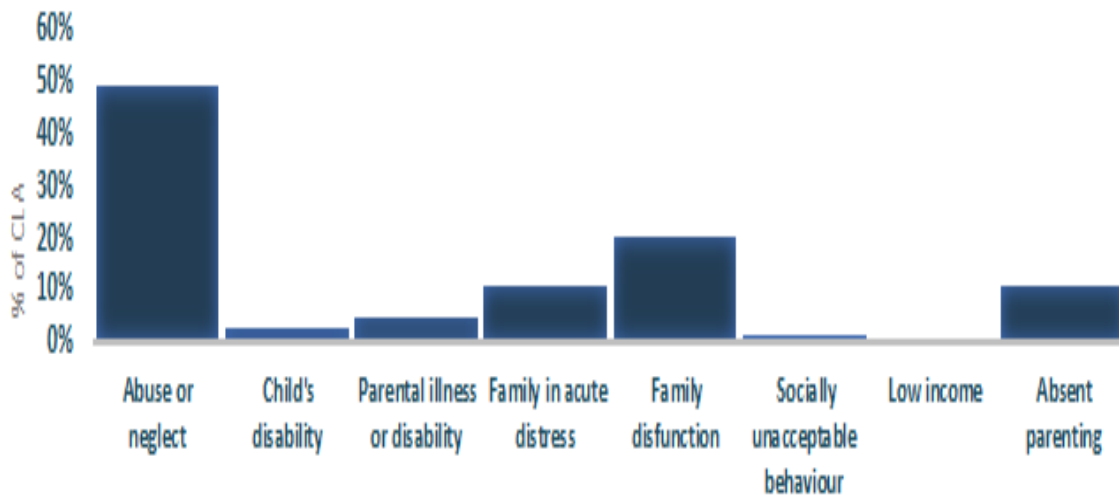


8.8 Children in Children by Gender

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



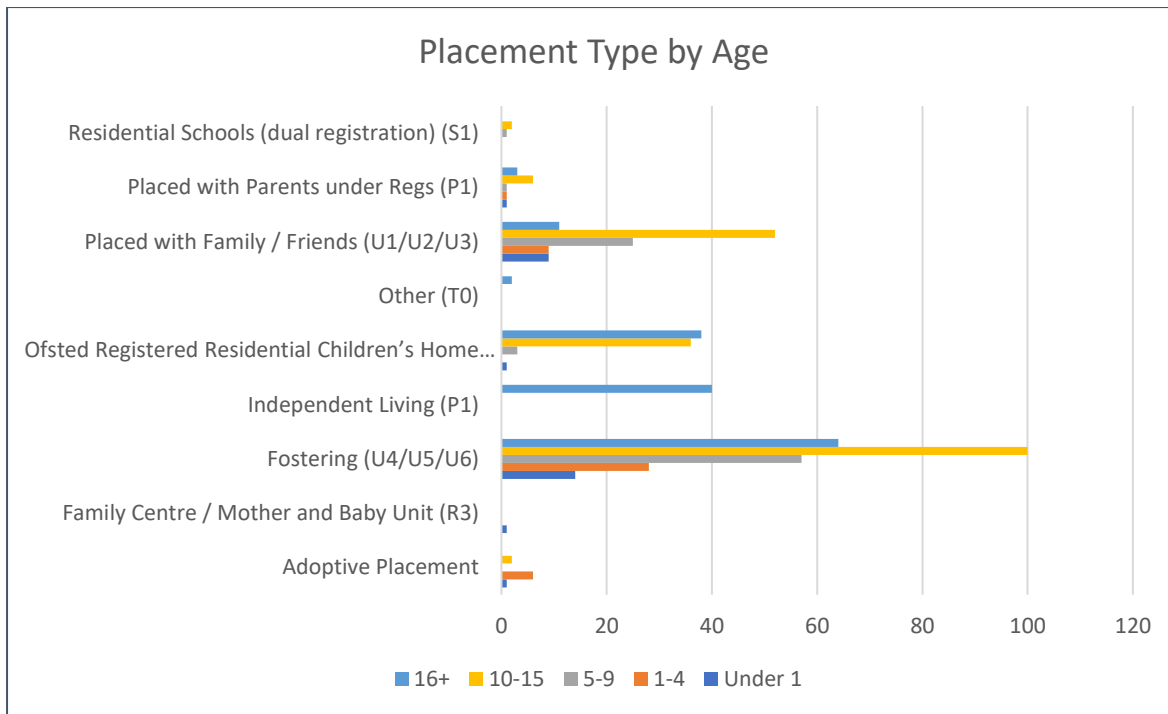
50% of children entering BCP Council's Care have experienced abuse or neglect, with family dysfunction being the second primary need. BCP council data mirrors the findings of the National Census of 2021 which reported the most common reasons (known as category of need) for children coming into Care as 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.



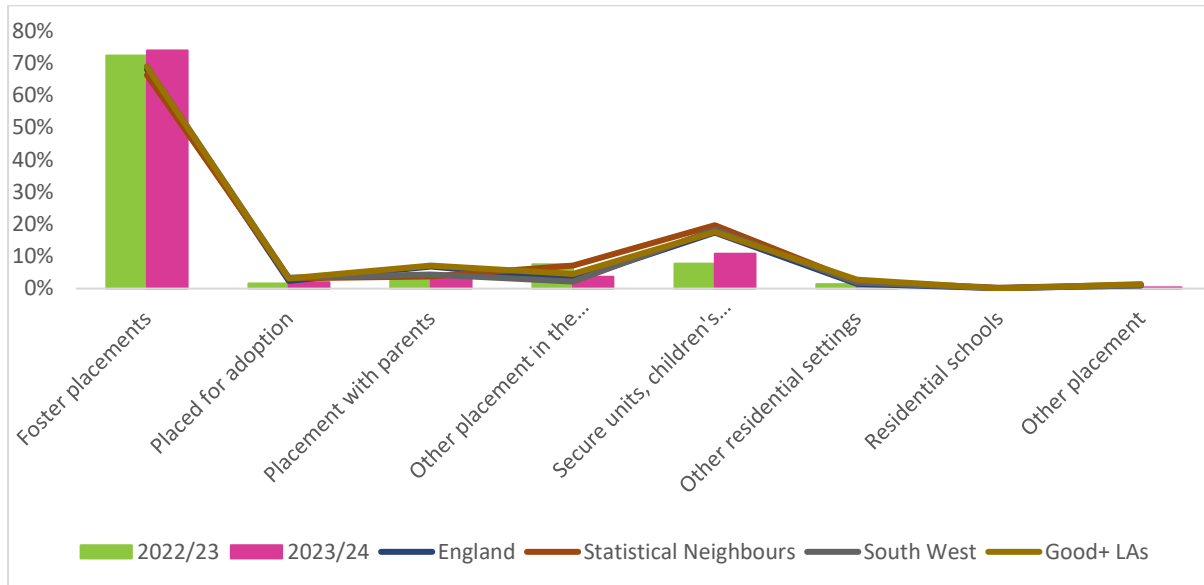
The table below shows the number of BCP Council's Children in Care population living within each placement type and overall percentage.

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 (3.5%)	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.

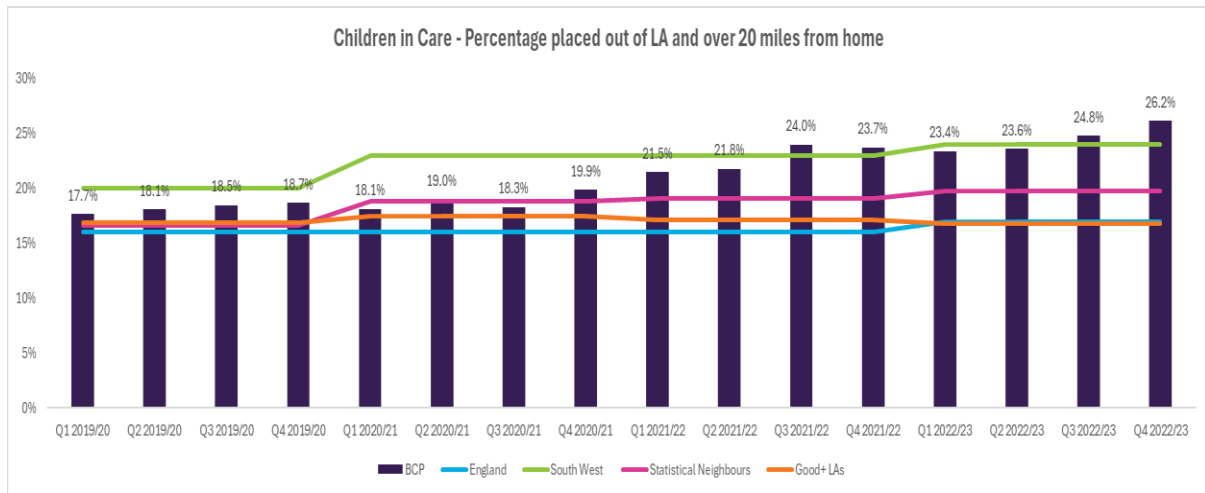
The number of children in Care placed outside their home local authority increased by around 28% between 2010 and 2020, rising from 37.0% of all placements to 41.0% over the period.

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.



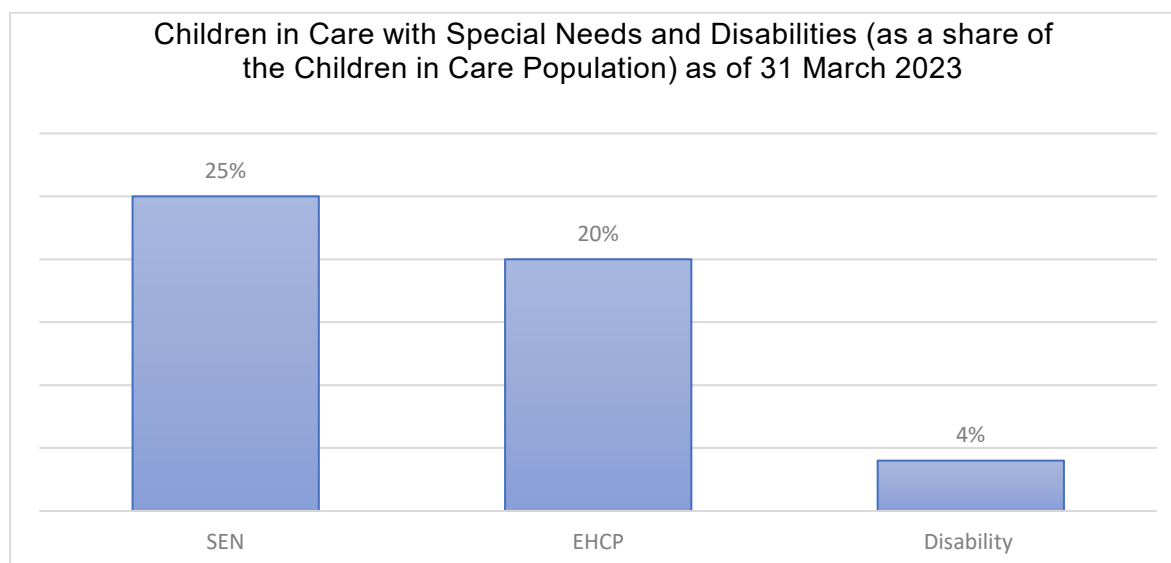
BCP Stability of placements for Children in Care	2023
% Children in Care for over 12 months	316 (60.7%)
% of Children in Care for over 12mths with three or more placements during the year	3 (1.9%)
% of children in Care continuously for at least 2.5 years aged under 16 who were living in the same placement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

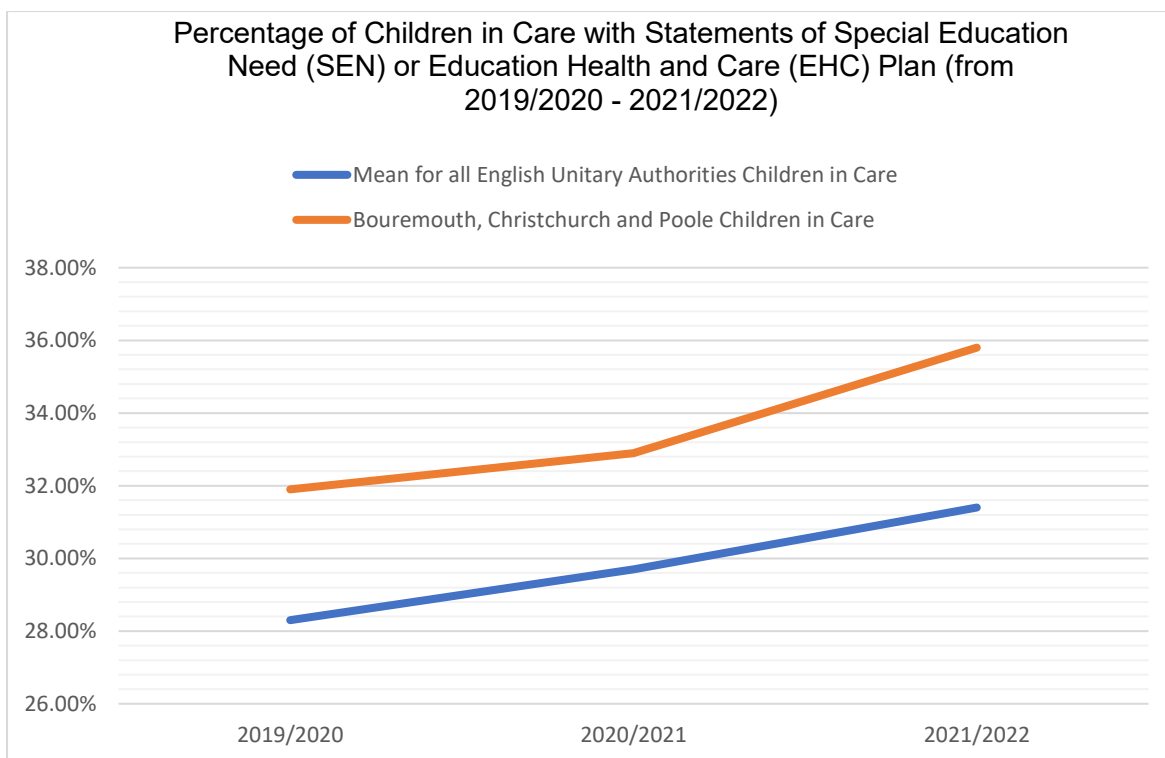
8.14 Children in Care with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

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

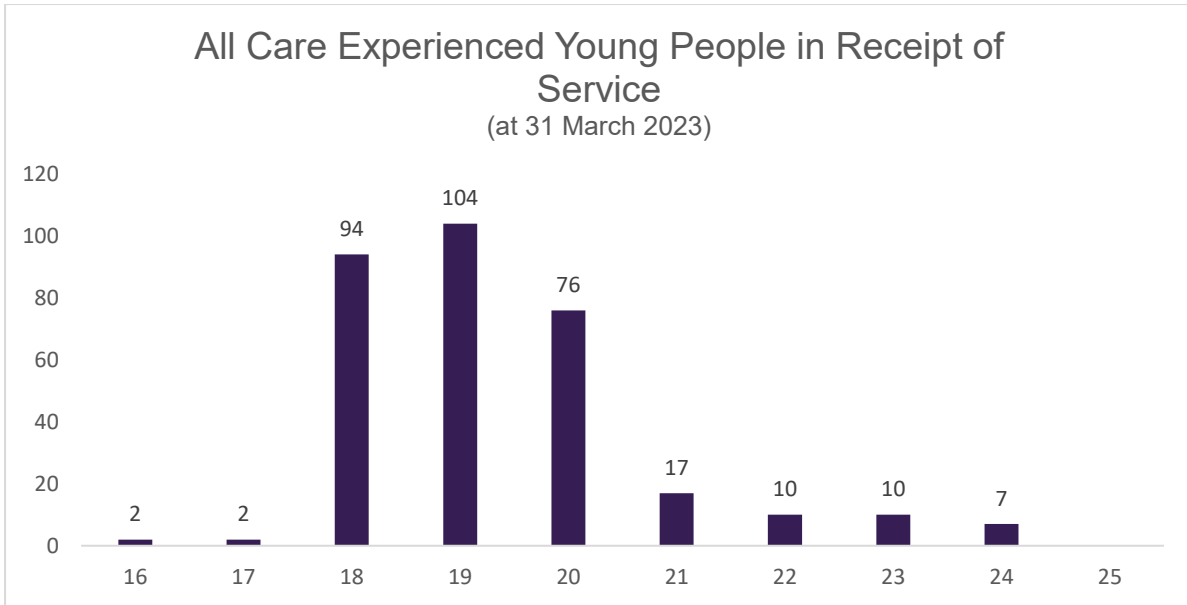
Care Experienced young people who are in receipt with the service are aged 17 – 24 years, so therefore the figures stated below will differ from those who are In-Touch with the service.

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

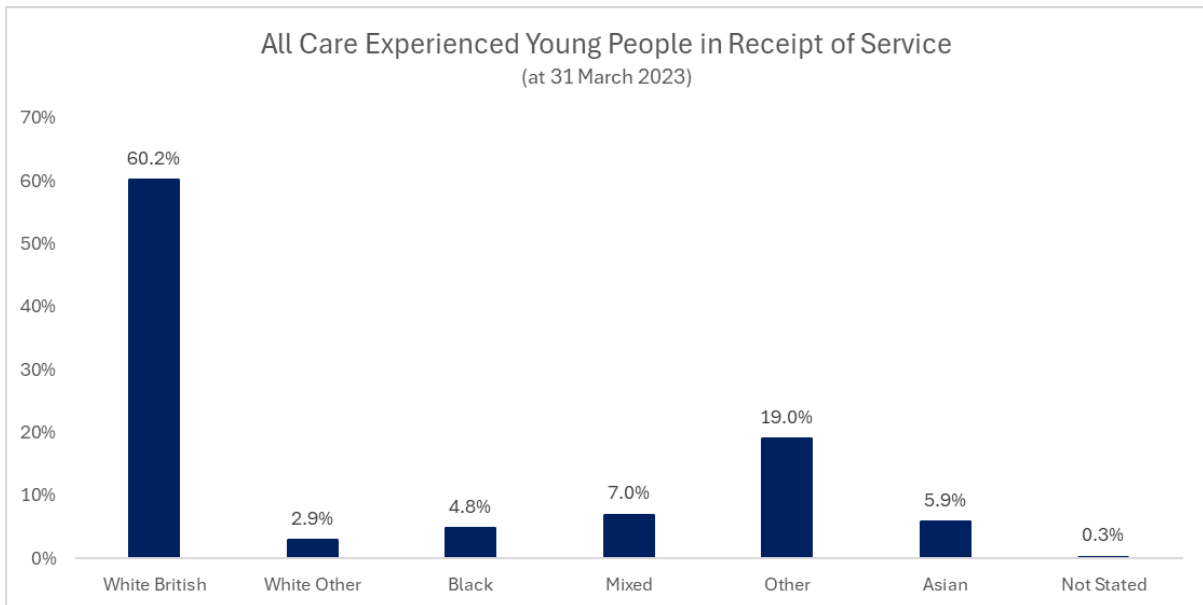
The largest cohort (27.8%/ 104) are aged 19 years, followed by 25% (94) aged 19 years, with 20% (76) aged 20 years.

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.

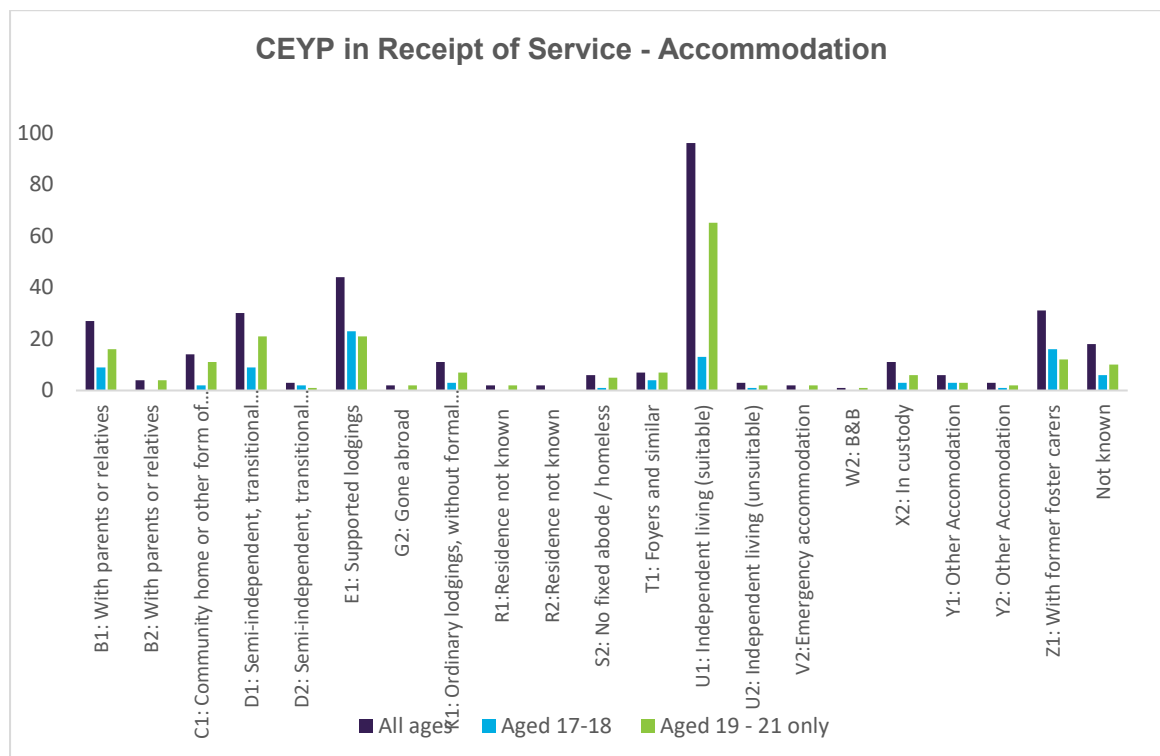
274 (97.2%) of all Care Experienced young people were living in suitable accommodation; performance is above the England rate of 88.0% of 19–21-year-old Care Experienced young

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.

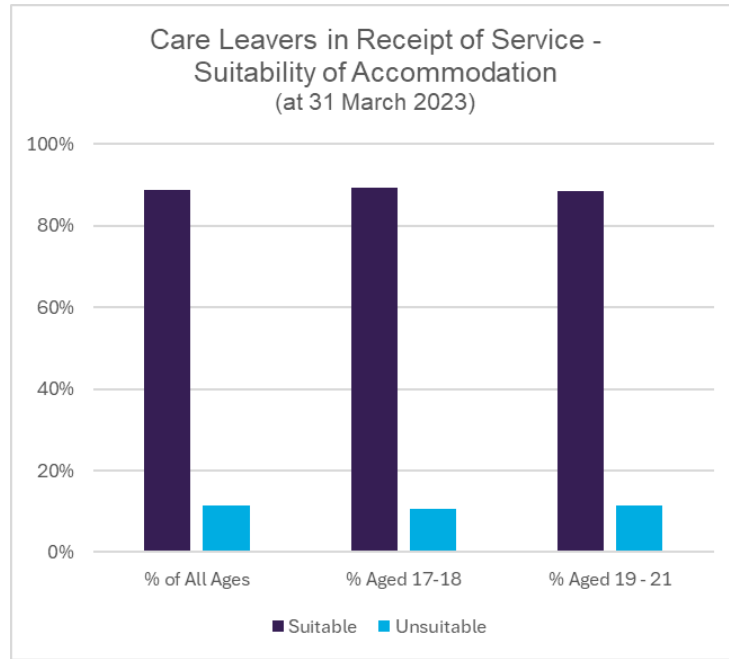
126 (45.9%) of Care Experienced young people are living in semi-independent or independent accommodation, 44 (16%) are residing in supported lodgings family-based care. There are currently 31 (11.3%) Care Experienced young people who have remained with their foster carers in a Staying-Put Arrangement.

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



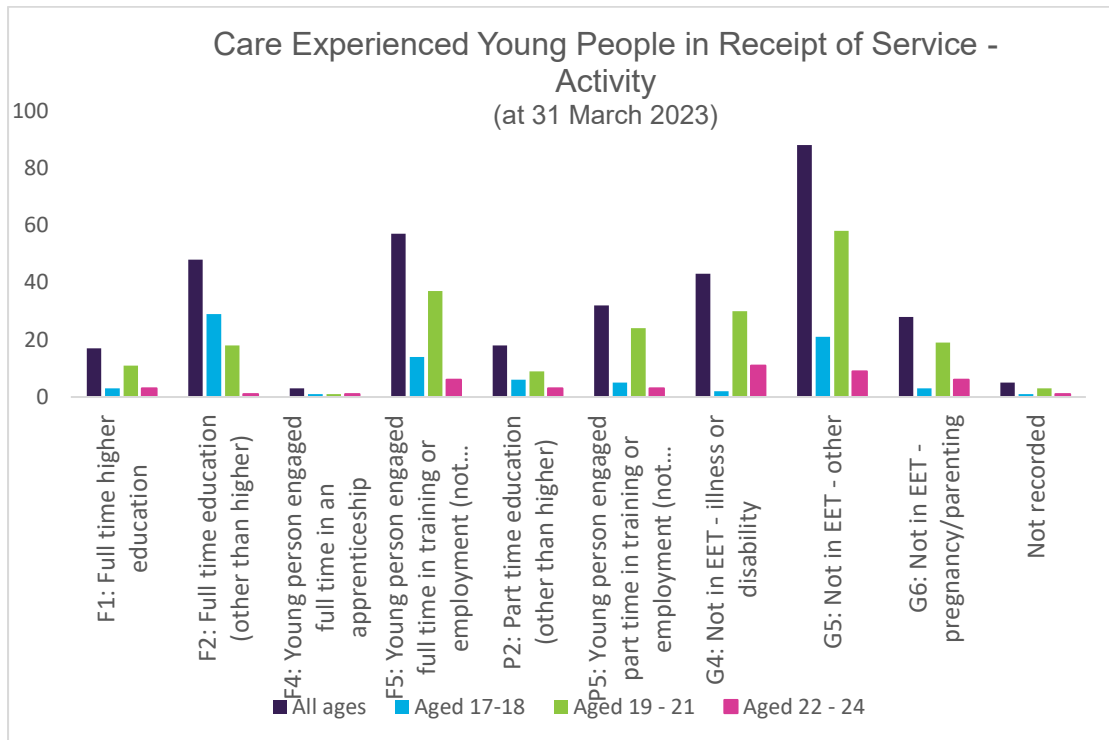
9.6 Care Experienced Young People - Accommodation Suitability by Age

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).



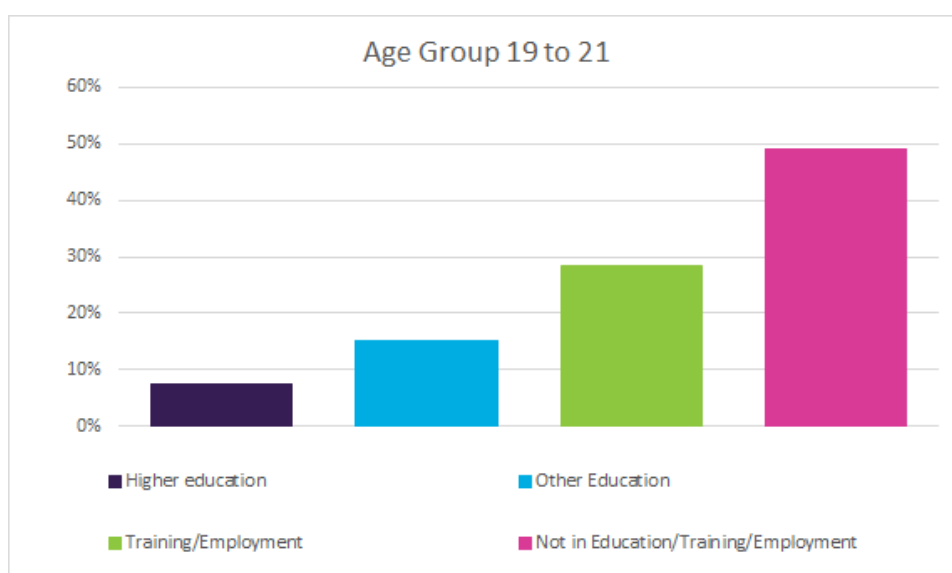
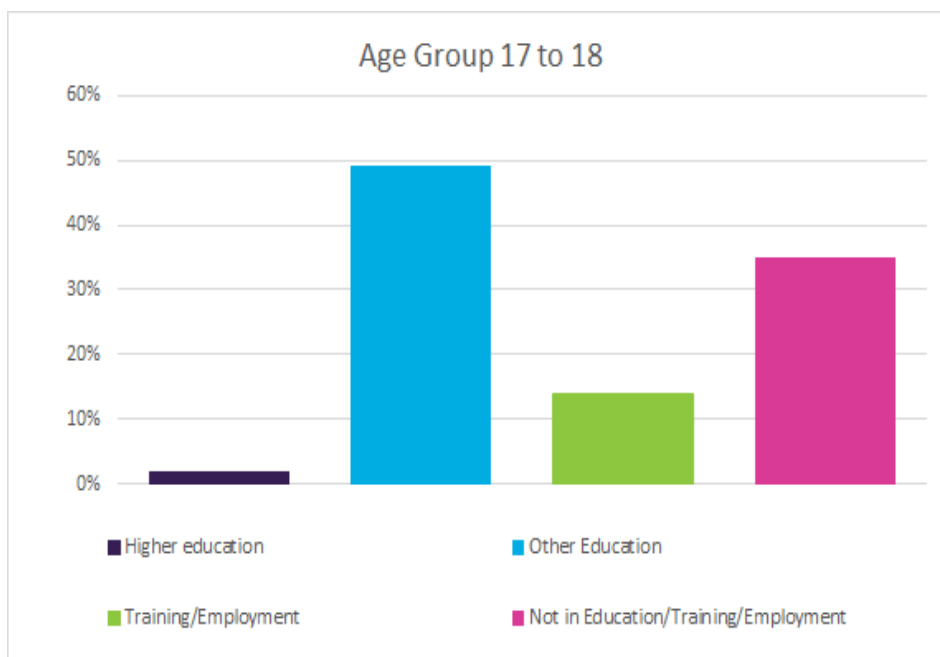
9.7 Care Experienced Young People who are in Employment, Education and Training by Education Type

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

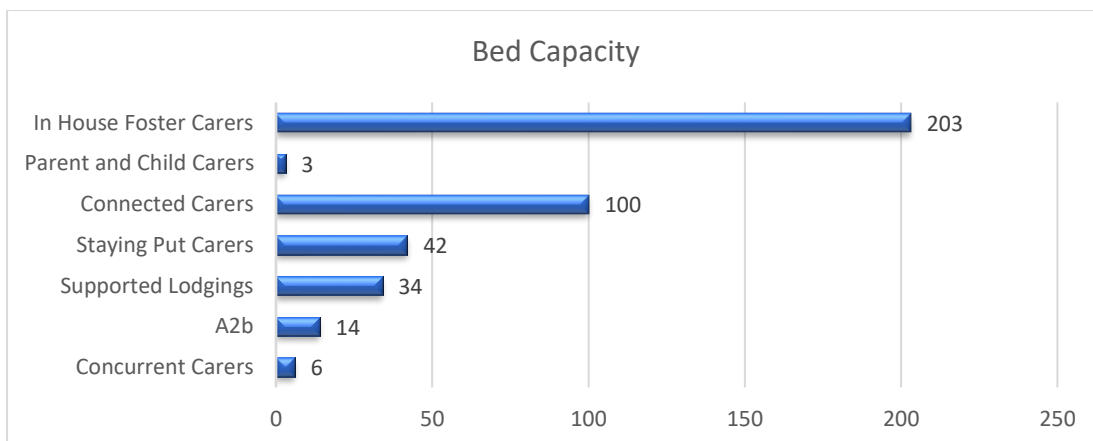
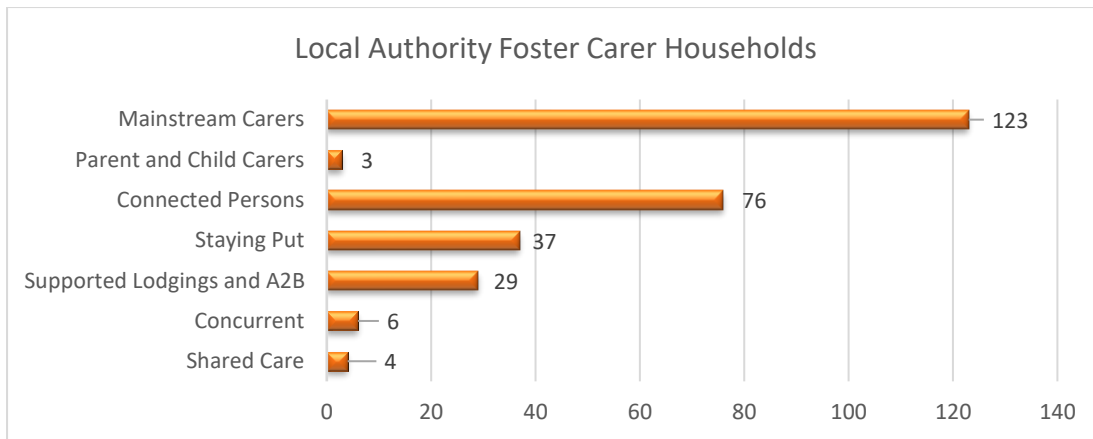
As of the 31 March 2023, there were 258 children placed with in-house foster carers, this equates to 49.6% of the overall children in Care population.

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 11years (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 (ECHP).

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).