

## **CABINET**

**8 APRIL 2014**

### **SUFFICIENCY REPORT 2013-2015**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor O'Brien, Children's Services (Lead Member)  
Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services  
Author: Helen Jones, Assistant Director Partnership Commissioning

#### **Summary**

The Medway Sufficiency Report sets out how Medway Council will meet the placement needs of our current and future Children in Care and Care Leavers and improve their outcomes in light of our understanding of their needs and current provision.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 Local Authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for Children in Care within their local area. In 2010 the Statutory Guidance for the sufficiency duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on Local Authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.
- 1.2 The Medway Sufficiency Report is attached at Appendix A to this report. This will be reviewed and updated annually but the key datasets will be reviewed and reported on quarterly to support its use in monitoring trends and planning use of placement resources.
- 1.3 This report is consistent with national policy, legislation and guidance. It is linked to key local planning documents, in particular the Medway Council Looked After Children Strategy 2013- 2015 and the Council Plan 2013-15 (linked to the priority 'Children and Young People have the best start in life in Medway Council').

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Statutory Guidance states that: "securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach which includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families, as well as better services for children if they do become looked after".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children 2010 p11

Local Authorities and their Children's Trust partners should therefore seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area.

- 2.2 However, the scope is not restricted to just making good quality placements; the intention is to co-ordinate the range of activity across Children's Services, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, thus minimising the need for children to come into care, or supporting their timely return to their families.
- 2.3 This approach is consistent with Moving on Medway – Getting it Right for Every Child 2013, which is centred on improving the quality of services provided to children in need, those in need of safeguarding and those in care. It also takes into account the Vision for Children's Services in Medway outlined in the Looked After Children Strategy 2013-2015.
- 2.4 The reduction in the level of funding for Local Authorities over the next four years means that the focus on efficiency and value for money will be stronger than before. The challenge for Local Authority Children's Services will be to sustain or improve on service quality and good outcomes for service users.
- 2.5 This report addresses the needs of children and young people from birth to the age of 21, (or 25 where children's services continue to have statutory responsibility) including children and young people with disabilities who are, or who may be, accommodated by Medway Council. It meets the requirements of the sufficiency duty by collating needs and resource information and market analysis but should be read alongside the Looked After Children Strategy 2013-15 which describes what needs to happen in relation to work with children in care of children at risk of coming into care.

### **3. Commissioning Priorities**

- 3.1 The Sufficiency report identifies a number of Commissioning Priorities:-
  - 3.1.1 Provide and Commission placements to meet identified needs:
    - Recruit more in-house foster carers with the right compensation of skills to meet the needs of children and young people in our care
    - Explore the viability of extending the in-house specialist Foster Carer Scheme, fostering and, to meet the more complex needs of children
    - Work in partnership with independent fostering Agencies to negotiate the best possible price with them for existing placements and commission future placements through the IFA Framework
  - 3.1.2 Improve our processes for accessing and monitoring placements to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness:
    - Establish an Access to Resource Team
    - Strengthen the Children's Access to Placement Panel Process
    - Ensure Contract compliance
    - Promote joint agency approaches to the provision of services for children with the most complex needs

#### **4. Advice and Analysis**

- 4.1 In adopting the Sufficiency Report, the Council is exercising a public function and must therefore comply with the duties in section 149 Equality Act 2010 to have 'due regard' to the matters set out in relation to equalities. Accordingly due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic (pregnancy and maternity, age discrimination, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it must form an integral part of the decision making process in relation to the formulation and adoption of the Strategy. A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form is attached at Appendix B and this indicates that a fuller Diversity Impact Assessment on the strategy is not necessary.

#### **5. Risk Management**

- 5.1 The Sufficiency Report in itself is not a Risk but failure to implement key actions could present a risk to the Council.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>	<b>Risk rating</b>
Insufficient suitable accommodation	There is a risk that there is insufficient accommodation to ensure right child, right place, right time, right cost. This could result in expensive accommodation out of borough	Establishing an Access to Resource Team and strengthening the placement process. Reviewing in-house recruitment.	C2

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The Children in Care Council has raised a number of issues relating to the choice and quality of placements, transition, personal safety and preparation for independence. Their views are included in Section 4 of the attached Report.

#### **7. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 7.1 The Committee considered this report on 25 March 2014 and its comments will be submitted to Cabinet in an addendum report.

#### **8. Financial and legal implications**

- 8.1 The Council's 2014-15 budget seeks to address the sufficiency issue through a number of adjustments. Additional funding of £800,000 to increase capacity within the social work teams and £1.2m of additional funding to address the cost of current placements and to some extent future demographic pressures. The budget also reflects anticipated savings of circa £450,000 through establishment of the Access to Resource Team and strengthening of the placement process.

- 8.2 Section 22G Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the local authority is able to provide looked after children with accommodation within the authority's area that meets the needs of those children, where circumstances are such that it would be consistent with the children's welfare for them to be provided with accommodation.
- 8.3 In taking steps to secure the provision of accommodation, the local authority must have regard to the benefit of having a sufficient number of accommodation providers in their area and a sufficient range of accommodation in their area capable of meeting different needs.
- 8.4 A failure to meet the general sufficiency duty could result in judicial review proceedings against the Council.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 The Cabinet is requested to approve the Medway Sufficiency Report as set out at Appendix A.

## **10. Suggested Reasons for Decisions**

- 10.1 The Medway Sufficiency Report is set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance. The purpose of this document is to set out how Medway Council will meet the placement needs of current and future children in care and care leavers, and improve their outcomes, in light of the council's understanding of their needs and current provision.

### **Lead officer contact**

Helen Jones, Assistant Director Partnership Commissioning  
Email: [helenm.jones@medway.gov.uk](mailto:helenm.jones@medway.gov.uk) Telephone: (01634) 334049

### **Background papers**

None



# **Medway Council Children's Services**

**Sufficiency Report  
2013-2015**

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Document owner	Director Barbara Peacock
Author	Sue Brunton-Reed (Commissioning)
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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out how Medway Council will meet the placement needs of current and future children in care and care leavers, and improve their outcomes, in light of our understanding of their needs and current provision.

This report is set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance. It is linked to key local planning documents, in particular to the Medway Council Looked After Children Strategy 2013- 2015.

Local Authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local area. In 2010, the Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on Local Authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

The Children Act 2008 defines Sufficiency as “a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, Local Authorities and their Children’s 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 looked after children and young people within their local area.”

However, the scope is not restricted to just making good quality placements; the intention is to co-ordinate the range of activity across Children’s Services, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, thus minimising the need for children to come into care, or supporting their timely return to their families.

This approach is consistent with Moving on Medway - Getting it Right for Every Child 2013, which is centred on improving the quality of services provided to children in need, those in need of safeguarding and those in care. It also takes into account the Vision for Children’s Services in Medway outlined in the Looked After Children Strategy 2013-2015.

The reduction in the level of funding for Local Authorities over the next four years means that the focus on efficiency and value for money will be stronger than before. The challenge for Local Authority Children's Services will be to sustain or improve on service quality and good outcomes for service users.

This report addresses the needs of children and young people from birth to the age of 21, (or 25 where children’s services continue to have statutory responsibility) including children and young people with disabilities who are, or who may be, accommodated by Medway Council. It meets the requirements of the sufficiency duty by collating needs and resource information and market analysis but should be read alongside the Looked After Children Strategy 2013-5 which describes

what needs to happen in relation to work with children in care or children at risk of coming into care.

It is consistent with our pledge to Children in Care (CIC) which is

- Don't just say it – do it
- Someone who will listen and feedback
- More leisure opportunities
- A better education
- More choice of good accommodation/placements

The priorities of Medway Council's Looked After Children Strategy 2013-2015 are as follows:

- Ensure permanence planning is robust and we work in partnership with colleagues across Children's Social Care to secure positive outcomes for children involved in care proceedings within the required timescales
- Ensure that young people in care achieve their potential academically and they have access to opportunities for employment, training or further education
- Ensure young people leaving care make a successful transition to adulthood
- Ensure that children and young people's wishes and feelings are heard in every activity
- Maintain good health outcomes for looked after children and young people
- Ensure placements meet the diverse needs of looked after children and young people in Medway
- All children who are looked after are safeguarded through the provision of robust placement planning and through trained and supported staff.

This document is consistent with those priorities, but also has a focus on reducing the numbers of children in our care where safe to do so, and using our resources in the most efficient and cost effective way, working to the objectives of the Medway Children and Young People's Commissioning Plan. The sufficiency report document also includes some impact measures which will be monitored to evidence progress on delivery.

## **2. Demographics of Medway**

The 2011 Census showed that there were 65,000 children and young people aged from 0-19 representing 24.5% of the population. The proportion of young people is higher in Medway than the South East and England.



The population of under 18s is expected to grow between 2013 and 2021 by 6.1%, with the largest growth (18.2%) anticipated in the four to eight year old age band, and a projected drop of 7.9% in the fourteen to eighteen population.

Medway has a higher percentage of children and young people belonging to a white ethnic group than England (86.2% compared to 79.9%), although this is lower than at the previous census when it was 91.9%. The White Other population has increased from 0.9% to 2.6%, the Asian/Asian British population has increased from 3.8% to 5.3% and the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British population has increased the most from 0.6% to 3.6%. 11.5% of primary school pupils and 7.7% of secondary school pupils have English as an additional language.

Medway has more cohabiting couples (16.6%) and lone parents (24.5%) than the South East and England average.

### 3. Children in Care population

Numbers of children in care of Medway Council have fallen from 445 in 2011/12 to 376 in September 2013, a decrease of 15%. This is still 4% higher than statistical neighbours. The rate of looked after children per 10,000 population of 61.3 is high compared with the national average of 59.

Analysis of new entrants to care shows that numbers have been dropping every quarter since the second quarter of 2011/12/13.

In the current financial year, the largest cohort of new entrants is the 10 to 15 age group (20), with 16 new entrants under one year, 15 aged sixteen and over, 10 aged one to four years and 7 aged five to nine years.

In September 2013, 29 looked after children had a disability.

Our aim is to ensure that we are looking after the right children at the right time and in the right place, and we will closely monitor our figures in relation to all children in our care.

For details of placement request activity over the last 12 months please see Appendix 1.

#### 3.1 Diversity of our Looked After Children

Age range	September 2012	Percentage September 2012	September 2013	Percentage September 2013
Asian or Asian British	2	0.5%	2	0.5%
Black or Black British	14	3.2%	8	2.2%
Mixed	28	6.5%	25	6.8%
Other Ethnic Groups	1	0.2%	2	0.5%
White	387	89.6%	333	90.0%

### 3.2 Age range of LAC

Age range	September 2012	Percentage September 2012	September 2013	Percentage September 2013
0 – 2 years	103	24%	69	18%
3 – 4 years	37	9%	28	8%
5 – 10 years	114	26%	100	27%
11 – 15 years	96	22%	114	30%
16+ years	82	19%	65	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>		<b>376</b>	

The only cohort which has increased in number and proportion is the 11-15 age group; this reflects the figures above on new entrants into care. This will impact on leaving care services, and the need for supported accommodation over the next five years.

### 3.3 Legal Status of LAC – December 2012

Legal Status	September 2012	September 2013
S 20	155	139
Care Order	113	123
Interim Care Order	82	27
Emergency Protection Order	-	1
Placement Order	82	86
On Remand	-	-

Legal status by age band - September 2013

Age range	Section 20	Care Order	Interim Care Order	Emergency Protection Order	Placement Order	On Remand
0 – 2 years	18	2	10	1	38	
3 – 4 years	3	3	6		16	
5 – 10 years	20	43	9		28	
11 – 15 years	59	49	2		4	
16+ years	39	26				
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>86</b>	

236 (63%) of all looked after children are subject to Interim or Care Orders, EPO or to Placement Orders so will require long term, permanent alternative family placements, including fostering, adoption or Special Guardianship

### 3.4 Disabled Children and Young People

29 children who are LAC have a disability representing 8% of LAC. The most significant needs groups are

- Learning Disability – 17 children
- Autism or Asperger Syndrome -12 children
- Behaviour Disorder – including ADHD – 5 children
- Communication – 4 children

*(NB a child may have more than 1 disability)*

Numbers of disabled CIC are increasing as a result of demographics, reducing infant mortality due to medical advances and association between disability and poverty.

Placements are needed for children with challenging behaviour associated with autistic spectrum disorders which lead to family breakdown, as well as for younger disabled children who have experienced neglect and abuse.

51 disabled children had a plan in place for overnight short break provision on a regular basis compared to 59 in September 2012.

### 3.5 Children Subject to Court Proceedings

Medway is working closely with legal services to meet the requirements of the Family Justice Review and achieve more speedy resolution of court proceedings, aiming for 26 weeks.

The 3 year average length of care proceedings for the 2010-13 was 55 weeks against the England average of 51 weeks.

### 3.6 Adoption and SGO

A total of 38 children were matched and placed for adoption during 2012-13, compared with 24 in the previous year.

The age breakdown of children placed is shown below.

Age	2011-12	2012-13
0 – 2 years	10	16
2 - 4 years	12	15
5 years and over	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38</b>

Nineteen Adoption Orders were granted between April and September 2013, compared with 20 between April 2012 and March 2013.

Over the year, 58 children had plans for adoption approved – a 41% increase on the previous year and a 108% increase on the long term (8 year) average.

16 (27%) of these children were part of sibling groups, including two groups of three. There are 30 boys and 28 girls.

There were 25 children with a placement order awaiting an appropriate match in September 2013, compared with 20 in September 2012.

This significant increase in number has been anticipated and it is expected that this increase in the number of children with adoption plans will continue into the near future.

11 Special Guardianship Orders were granted between April and September 2013, compared with 25 between April 2012 and March 2013.

14 adoptive families were approved between during 2012-13, compared with 22 for the previous 12 months.

Given the number of young children coming into care on statutory orders, the focus on adoption as a means to meet children's need for permanency must be sustained.

### 3.7 Siblings

From October 2012 until end September 2012, there were 12 referrals for placements for sibling groups. All of these were groups of two siblings; four of them were able to be placed together with in house carers, one pair was placed with an Independent Foster Agency carer, four pairs were placed separately and other others were no longer required.

There are currently (September 2013) 14 sibling groups placed with Independent Fostering Agency foster carers, comprising:

<b>Number of sibling groups</b>	<b>Group composition</b>
10 groups of	2 siblings
3 groups of	3 siblings
1 group of	4 siblings

These are placed as follows:

<b>Number of sibling groups</b>	<b>Group Composition</b>	<b>Placement details</b>
6 group of	2 siblings	Placed together
4 group of	2 siblings	All split – solo placements
2 group of	3 siblings	All split - solo placements

1 group of	3 siblings	1 solo placement and 2 placed together
1 group of	4 siblings	2 in solo placements, 2 placed together

Recruiting more carers able to keep siblings together where that is in their interests is a priority.

### 3.8 Young People Known to Youth Offending Service

The 'Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012' introduces changes to the remand powers of Courts with a view to achieving a reduction in the numbers of children and young people who are remanded into custody. It also brings about the change of Children in Care (CIC) status for all remanded young people and leaving care status for those who remain in custody for 13 weeks or more as well as the transfer of financial responsibility to local authorities. The policy direction is to manage all young people on remand in the community unless there is a serious concern for public safety.

From October 2012 to September 2013 there were 5 custodial remands. Four of these young people have had placements in Youth Offender Institutions, 1 was in a Secure Training Centres.

### 3.9 Young People leaving care - 16+

There are currently (September 2013) 63 young people aged 16+ who are in care and 203 eligible for leaving care services.

Duties and responsibilities for young people leaving are outlined in the statutory guidance and regulations associated with the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The level of support to which they are entitled depends on their status.

Status	Responsibilities
<b>Eligible</b> – a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and is still looked after	Same responsibilities for all other LAC Pathway plan Personal adviser from 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday
<b>Relevant</b> – a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and has left care	Take reasonable steps to keep in touch Assessment of need re advice and assistance required Pathway plan Personal adviser Safeguard and promote welfare by maintaining them in suitable accommodation in order to meet needs re education, training and employment Access to advocacy

<p><b>Former relevant</b> – young person aged 18-21 (24 if in education) who was previously eligible or relevant</p>	<p>Take reasonable steps to keep in touch                  Review of Pathway plan                  Personal adviser                  If welfare requires it, provide financial assistance by contributing to living expenses to enable them to live near job or training                  Pay for higher education bursary                  Access to advocacy</p>
<p><b>Qualifying</b> - Any young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who ceases to be looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes a young people who is under a special guardianship order</p>	<p>Consider whether the young person needs help of a kind that the local authority can give in relation to advice and assistance, including financial assistance</p>

The Southwark Judgement 2009 clarified the responsibility of Local Authorities to assess the needs of a young person who presents as homeless and to provide accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 if that young person is assessed as a ‘child in need’. In all but the most exceptional cases, 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless are, by nature of their homeless status, children in need. An assessment must determine whether they need to be accommodated under S20 of the Children Act 1989. Where this is not appropriate or the young person refuses, they will be considered a child in need and offered services and support as required.

16 young people came into care between October 2012 and September 2013 aged 16 or 17 years, and numbers have reduced year on year (56 in 2010-2011, and 28 in 2011-12).

### Use of placements for young people in care and leaving care

Placement type	16-18 year olds Sept 2012	19-21 year olds Sept 2012	16-18 year olds Sept 2013	19-21 year olds Sept 2013
Foster care	29	0	8 (IFA)	1 (IFA)
Residential	17	4	12	2
Parents/relatives	18	19	10	1
Supported lodgings	40	14	11	26
Supported accommodation	29	7	29	15
Independent living	23	62	6	59

Prison/custody	6	4	3	5
Unknown/unsuitable <sup>1</sup>	4	8	2	10
University			2	6

IPC carried out an analysis of LAC and Leaving Care needs in January 2013<sup>2</sup>, which projected the number of young people eligible for leaving care services up to 2020.

	2013	2014	2015	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Eligible LAC aged 16 and 17	56	55	55	54	52	51	51	52
Care leavers aged 18-24	190	188	186	181	175	173	170	169
Total	246	244	241	235	227	224	221	221

The report highlighted that approximately 11% of this number will have high level needs including emotional and mental health problems, criminal behaviours and substance misuse, which will impact on the ability to find appropriate accommodation for them.

#### 4. Views of Children and Young People about Choice and Sufficiency of Placement

Medway has a strong history of appropriate and effective engagement with its Looked After Children. Medway Challengers is a service provided by a the voluntary organisation Young Lives who support looked after young people ranging in age from 9– to –25 (where appropriate) in meeting their peers to view their options and concerns, as well as accessing support and guidance

The Children in Care Council (CICC) provides the platform for young people in care to bring collective issues and concerns to the Council via the formal Corporate Parenting Group. Though this forum the Children in Care Council hold the council and its partners to account for the services each provide. Other participative structures such as Medway Youth Parliament, Young Commissioners and Young Inspectors enable further consideration and evaluation of some of the issues raised by the CICC.

The national Children’s Care Monitor 2011<sup>3</sup> gives children’s and young peoples’ views of their placements. Of these:

- 10 % of children surveyed said that the placement was not right for them
- 11% of care leaver surveyed rated their accommodation as bad or very bad
- 21% thought they were living in accommodation that was wrong for them

Looked after children within the CICC have raised a number of issues relating to the choice and quality of placements, transition, personal safety and preparation for independence.

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes young people who have chosen not to engage, or who are in unsuitable accommodation because of behaviour. Work is underway to move these young people to more suitable accommodation

<sup>2</sup> LAC and Leaving Care Needs Analysis Report January 2013 IPC

<sup>3</sup> Children’s Care Monitor 2011 Ofstead

In particular young people felt that they were offered a limited choice of options of a similar nature. They suggested that there needed to be more 'supported lodgings' placements in Medway.

With regard to independent housing, they felt that they were given only two choices. They suggested that more options and styles of accommodation should be offered to cater for different needs and levels of competence; that a choice of where the placement is can be helpful as young people are likely to feel more comfortable in an area they are familiar with and where they have an existing support network.

Young people felt that the standard of some of the supported placements was poor. They suggested that all housing for young people should meet approved standards and should be more regularly monitored, similar to the ways foster carers and some semi-independent accommodation are inspected.

They reported that support offered to young people following a move to new accommodation was not adequate. They required more intensive support, sometimes daily, whilst adjusting to semi-independence or independence

A key message was that support should be offered consistently and should be long term by somebody trusted and known to the young person, rather than short term and reactive to when there are issues.

Many young people have suggested they would find it helpful to have more opportunity to prepare for independence whilst in their foster placement and to be offered 'trial' sessions to go and live independently for a period of time *"to see how it feels, but if it does not work out your foster placement is still open for you...like a natural family would be"*.

## **5. Current Placement Provision**

### **5.1 Placement Mix and Cost**

Whilst 76% of our children are placed with foster carers, only 191 of these are with Medway's in house fostering service.

30 children are placed with approved connected persons, and 65 are placed in Independent Foster Agency placements. This figure is down from 77 a year ago – an decrease of 16%.

However the number of young people placed in external residential provision has increased from 12 to 22 (85% increase). A significant number of these have moved from IFA or in-house fostering placements to residential because of escalating complex behaviours.

Medway's residential home is used to its full capacity of 8 young people.

The mix of placement is shown below:



Placement type	September 2012	September 2013	Direction of travel
Medway foster carer	222	191	↓
IFA carer	77	65	↓
Friends, family, connected person	33	30	↓
Placed with parents	13	12	↓
Placed for Adoption	28	25	↓
In-house Residential	8	8	→
Private and voluntary residential home	12	23	↑
Residential school	5	6	↑
Secure accommodation	1	0	↓
YOI or prison	1	0	↓
Supported accommodation	13	18	↑
Living independently	10		
Other			

All the young people placed in external residential provision are outside Medway's boundaries, although all but 3 of these are in Kent.

There are 23 children and young people placed inside Medway boundary in IFA foster placements.

38 children and young people are placed in IFA foster homes outside of Medway.

## Placement Cost

The current weekly unit cost for the Medway fostering service has been calculated at £380. **NB** This is lower than the Fostering Network calculation of national Local Authority fostering services (£425 to cover allowances, fees and respite plus £294 for training, management and support; total £719<sup>4</sup>).

Placements are currently spot purchased from a total of 26 different IFA providers, with costs varying from £500 to £1800 per week, dependent on the age of the child and complexity of their needs. In September 2013, Medway had an average weekly spend per IFA placement of £1,261 against a national average of £877<sup>5</sup>. IFA placements are costly because Medway is placing children with a higher/complex (and more expensive) levels of need which cannot be met by in house foster carers. From January 2014, Medway will join Kent County Council in the use of an IFA Framework contract which will regulate the cost of placement.

<sup>4</sup> Update to **The Cost of Foster Care**, Lisa Holmes and Jean Soper, Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University 2010 for the Fostering Network

<sup>5</sup> CIPFA 2010/11

The average weekly cost for external residential provision is £2395. These placements are spot purchased from 13 different providers and are used for children with the most complex needs that require specialist provision, including those with disabilities

The residential providers used are listed below:

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Number of placements</b>	<b>Average weekly cost</b>
Benecare Ocean Lodge	1	£2800
Benecare Charleston	3	£2706
Benecare Madison	1	£3150
Strode Park	1	£2160
Stone Bay School	1	£750
Chailey Heritage School	1	£1231
Childhood First Gables	1	£3010
Acorn Homes	4	£2700
Oasis	2	£2907
Branas Isaf	1	£3659
Little Acorns	1	£2030
The Boulters	2	£3250
Ethelbert Micawber	1	£3582
Rubicon	1	£3800
Cornerways	1	£3800

## **5.2 In-House Fostering**

Medway has its own in-house fostering service responsible for the recruitment, assessment and support of foster carers.

As of September 2013, there were a total of 130 standard fostering households approved for 287 placements (based on full occupancy) and 13 respite carer households approved for 13 placements.

Between October 2012 and September 2013 there were 214 new enquiries resulting in 12 new households approved providing 20 placements.

In this same period, 12 households providing 26 placements had their registrations terminated. This means there was a net loss of 6 placements over this period.

The fostering service has developed a recruitment strategy which will respond to the needs identified in this document and target recruitment at known gaps in localities and needs groups.

### **5.3 External Fostering – IFA framework**

Medway has worked in partnership with Kent County Council (KCC) to establish a framework for the purchase of independent placements. This will be operational in Medway from January 2014.

There are 35 providers on the framework, providing for a range of high priority needs including:

- Complex and Challenging Needs
- Young People on remand
- UASC
- Children with disabilities
- Rehabilitation
- Short term/bridging
- Parent and Child
- Residential migration

Joining the Framework means that placements will be made at pre-determined costs with suppliers who have been assessed through the procurement process, and have demonstrated that they meet the quality standards.

The commissioning team will make placements in a more streamlined way, contract compliance and outcomes monitoring will be standardised and shared with KCC, and there will be greater opportunity to work with providers to manage the market and stimulate recruitment according to identified needs.

The Framework will run until June 2015, when there will be an opportunity to influence renegotiation on price and placement type.

### **5.4 Residential Provision**

Medway has a local residential provision for 8 young people currently managed on contract by Northern Care.

There are currently an additional 23 children and young people who are in external residential care placements with 13 different providers, 10 of which are located in Kent.

### **5.5 16+ Accommodation Provision**

Statutory guidance associated with the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 places responsibilities on local authorities to prepare young people for leaving care, and supporting young people who have left care.

It states that:

‘it will therefore be good practice for local authorities to commission a range of semi-independent and independent living options with appropriate support.....’

This should include:

- Staying on in foster care
- Supported lodgings
- Supported housing
- Specialist supported accommodation
- Independent accommodation – with floating support as required

Medway has two Foyers – Springboard in Rochester (9 places, low to medium need) and Endeavour in Chatham (25 places high level need).

In addition, supported accommodation is commissioned on a spot purchased basis from a range of providers, and there is a supported lodgings scheme, managed through the MILAC service which works with 18 providers offering 27 places.

Providing a choice of accommodation to support young people in their transition from foster care or residential care to greater independence is a challenge and work is ongoing with Medway housing authority and other accommodation providers to extend this range of provision. In addition, Children's Commissioning team is joining with adult services and housing to put in place a Framework Contract for provision of supported accommodation.

## **5.6 Other Support Services**

Medway Children's Services have invested in a range of services to support children, and these services will be available to all CIC in order to support placements and improve placement stability.

These services include:

- Community CAMHS which are contractually required to prioritise LAC, and who provide Tier 3 and 4 services
- Tier 2 CAMHS provided by the in-house CAST service
- Virtual School – a service to work with LAC and support them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes
- Outreach service

The Moving on Medway Improvement Plan, developed in response to the recent Ofsted inspection of services for looked after children, which found the authority to be inadequate, has prioritised improvement activity in the assessment, planning and review processes for looked after children, and the importance of listening to, recording and responding to children's views, wishes and feelings.

The work of the Children in Care Council and other mechanisms for collating children's views about the range of placements available will be an important element of implementing the strategy for Looked After Children.

## 6. Commissioning Priorities

### 6.1 Provide and commission placements to meet identified needs

We need to be sure that we have the right range of placements to meet the assessed needs of LAC. We do not currently have enough capacity in our in-house fostering service in Medway, which means we are increasing our use of Independent Fostering Placements and external residential placements.

We want to ensure that our range of placements provide good value for money.

In order to support this we will:

- Recruit more in-house foster carers with the right combination of skills to meet the needs of children and young people in our care. We particularly need foster carers who can manage challenging and risk taking behaviour, provide care for sibling groups and disabled children, and placements for parents and child(ren) to support our care proceedings work and to reduce our reliance on external placements..

Where long term fostering is the care plan we will be actively recruiting carers for those young people according to their individual needs.

Carers must be supported to develop their capacity to equip them to meet the specific needs, which will include supporting contact arrangements, providing transport and contributing to assessments of need to support legal action.

The fostering service will work to implement the recruitment strategy which will increase the number of placements from the current level of 218 standard placements to 240 by March 2015, targeted on the known needs and localities.

We are currently in the process of developing a parent and baby scheme within Medway and aim to have 3 carers in place by March 2014 within a fully operational scheme designed to undertake assessments of parent/s and their babies utilising local resources instead of externally located and expensive residential units.

- Explore the viability of extending the in-house specialist foster carer scheme, Fostering +, to meet the more complex needs of children, most of whom are currently being placed with IFA carers. The needs will include challenging and risk taking behaviour, young people on the Autistic Spectrum, young people at risk of sexual exploitation, and young people who have been abused and require therapeutic input. This will mean investing resources in the training, support and remuneration of a specially trained group of in-house carers, and working closely with our CAMHS service providers to support this initiative. We aim to develop a scheme with initially 10 carers, providing single placements to young people with challenging and complex behaviour and a different payment structure. We are liaising with partners and with Medway Foster Care Association about the viability of such a scheme. In addition to CAMHS input, the scheme will require education input, outreach support and access where required to specialist services to work with young people.

- Work in partnership with Independent Fostering Agencies, to negotiate the best possible price with them for existing placements, and commission future placements through the IFA Framework which will achieve efficiencies through reduced unit costs and inclusion of support services. The framework arrangements specify types of placements for groups of children with identified needs, at an agreed price. The Framework will be operational from January 2014.
- Work with our residential providers to increase the capacity within Medway. We recognise that there will continue to be a group of young people with complex needs requiring specialist provision, including for young people with ASD, but we want to reduce the number of young people placed out of area; some of our providers may be willing to establish new provision within Medway to meet the needs of this group of young people, and enable them to maintain family, school and friendship relationships.
- Develop a strategy with partners to meet the accommodation needs for 16-18 year olds who are LAC and 18-21 year olds for whom we have a statutory responsibility (24 if in higher education) . This work will include setting up a Dynamic Purchasing Contract for Supported Living which will specify that providers must be able to meet the needs of young people with high level needs including emotional and mental health problems, criminal behaviours and substance misuse, and a Supported Accommodation contract led by housing to meet lower level needs of young people
- Increasing the number of supported lodgings providers to 25 carers to enable more young people to live in semi-supported accommodation on their transition to adulthood and independent living.
- Work with our Housing colleagues to re-establish 10 Council tenancies per year for care leavers assessed as ready to live independently once they have reached the age of 18. Support will be provided by the leaving care team and other support providers from CAHMS, MYT, and Adult Social Care as appropriate.

## **6.2 Improve our processes for accessing and monitoring placements to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness**

- Establish an Access to Resources Team to streamline placement commissioning (in-house and external), monitor placements and outcomes for children, and collate needs data to inform future commissioning and fostering recruitment arrangements.
- Monitor requests for and use of placements and outcomes achieved through the Children's Access to Placement Panel (CAPP). CAPP has been re-formulated to ensure that all new placements, whether planned or emergency, are presented to the next available meeting. CAPP will produce a quarterly report on trends and themes in relation to looked after young people and placement needs.
- Put contracts in place with all placement providers and monitor these to ensure compliance

- Promote joint agency approaches to provision of services for children with the most complex needs through the Continuing Health Care (CHC) Panel
- Put in place a performance monitoring process to establish a better understanding of the needs of children coming in and out of care on a monthly basis, and to monitor the use of in-house and external placements.

## **7. Monitoring progress on the Looked After Children strategy and Sufficiency Report**

A detailed Action Plan will be developed to support implementation of the Looked After Children Strategy and the Sufficiency report, which will be supported over the next two years. Progress on the action plan will be reported to the Children in Care Council and the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure it continues to reflect changing needs and priorities of our children.

As part of the ongoing Performance Monitoring function, the Improvement Board, Children's Services Management team and CADMT regularly receive performance reports which included indicators for LAC.

The Sufficiency report will be updated on an annual basis to reflect changes in needs or supply information, and respond to emerging policy initiatives.

All partners should be supported to recognise their role in implementation, through leadership, communication, supervision to promote good care planning practice, and clear accountability frameworks.

### **Key Impact Measures for LAC Strategy and Sufficiency Report Action Plan**

The following impact measures have been identified as the key indicators of the success of the strategy and will be closely monitored and reported on formally for the duration of the strategy.

- Overall Number of CIC
- Current and Projected Spend on placements with independent providers
- Number of Children beginning/ceasing to be CIC per month, by area and age band
- Proportion of Residential, In house Fostering, IFA fostering and supported living placements
- Numbers of CIC placed for adoption and made subject of SGO
- Level of capacity, referrals to and actual placements made in in-house foster service
- Net gain of in-house foster placements by locality and placement type
- Increase in the numbers of young people leaving care in appropriate accommodation.

### Appendix 1 Placement request activity – in house fostering (October 2012 – September 2013)

Placement request activity	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-18	Total
Number of fostering placement requests	32	14	32	24	127
Number of these that were emergencies	19	12	9	5	45
Number of children placed with in-house carers	47	12	23	27	109 <sup>6</sup>
Number of in-house placement disruptions			5	11	16
Number of in-house parent/child placements	6				6
Number of children using respite placement (from foster placement)	13	16	15	21	65
Number of children ceasing to be looked after in a Medway foster home	49	43	25	10	127 <sup>7</sup>
Number of unable to place resulting in an IFA	8	9	9	8	34
Number of unable to place resulting in a residential placement			4	5	9
Number of children placed for Adoption , SGO or Residence order with existing Foster carers	2	5			7

<sup>6</sup> NB some of these children had more than one placement

<sup>7</sup> 10 of these endings resulted in an IFA placement, plus one who went to an IFA mother an baby placement. 37 went home



## Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Name of Function</b>		
<b>C&amp;A services</b>	<b>Sufficiency Strategy</b>		
Officer responsible for assessment <b>Helen Jones</b> Assistant Director – Partnership Commissioning	Date of assessment <b>March 2014</b>	New or existing? <b>New</b>	
<b>Defining what is being assessed</b>			
<b>1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives</b>	<p>This Diversity Impact Assessment addresses the implications of the Sufficiency Report for Medway Council.</p> <p>The report sets out how Medway Council will meet the placement needs of current and future children in care and care leavers, and improve outcomes for them, in light of our understanding of their needs and current provision. The report discusses how Medway Council will meet the requirement on the Local Authority to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local are in accordance with the Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty issued in 2010. Taking account of this duty is a requirement of local authorities and their partners, and will be one of the key documents under review in any future Ofsted Inspection.</p>		
<b>2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?</b>	<p>Children and young people who are looked after by Medway Council, or whose circumstances and well-being require them to be provided with accommodation, or who are leaving care.</p> <p>They will benefit by having an appropriate range and choice of placements able to meet their identified needs.</p>		
<b>3. What outcomes are wanted?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placements for children in care are provided and commissioned to meet identified needs</li> <li>• Processes for accessing and monitoring placements achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness</li> </ul>		
<b>4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b>	<p><b>Contribute</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear strategy and action plan to support recruitment of foster and adoptive placements</li> <li>• Use of Framework Contract for Independent Fostering Agency placements</li> </ul> <p>Improved monitoring and reporting on the needs of children and young people coming in to care</p>	<p><b>Detract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing complexity of needs of children coming in to care</li> <li>• Shortage of appropriate placements in the market</li> <li>• Budgetary pressures with priority placed on meeting high levels of need at the most cost effective price</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Who are the main stakeholders?</b>	Children and young people in care, parents, foster carers, social workers, IFA providers, residential care providers		
<b>6. Who implements this and who is responsible?</b>	Director of Children and Adults		

<b>Assessing impact</b>		
<b>7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial groups</i>?</b>	YES	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?</b>	YES	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?</b>	YES	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?</b>	YES	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?</b>	YES	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's <i>age</i>?</b>	Yes	
	NO	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due</b>	YES	

<b>to being trans-gendered or transsexual?</b>	<b>NO</b>	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. young parents, commuters, people with caring responsibilities or dependants, young carers, or people living in rural areas)?</b>	YES	
	<b>NO</b>	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	
<b>15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?</b>	YES	
	<b>NO</b>	
<b>What evidence exists for this?</b>	Placement services will continue with better targeted outcomes for the children, young people and families involved. No changes are being made to the existing accessibility of placements.	

<b>Conclusions &amp; recommendation</b>		
<b>16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?</b>	YES	
	<b>NO</b>	
<b>17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?</b>	YES	n/a
	NO	
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
<b>NO</b>		
NO	<b>What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?</b>	

YES	<b>Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)</b>	
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<b>Action plan to make Minor modifications</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Actions (with date of completion)</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>

<b>Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review</b>		
<b>Date of next review</b>	1 April 2015	
<b>Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)</b>		
<b>Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?</b>		
<b>Signed (completing officer/service manager)</b>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)</b>	<b>Date</b>	