

CABINET

20 DECEMBER 2016

SUFFICIENCY REPORT 2016/17

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead Member)

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Interim Director of Children and Adults Services

Author: Ann Domeney, Interim Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services

Summary

The Medway Sufficiency report sets out how Medway council will meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers in such a way as to ensure improved outcomes. This report provides an update on the Sufficiency report that was presented in June 2016. This report was considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 December 2016 and its comments are set out below.

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 In exercising the sufficiency duty, Local Authorities should be mindful that under section 10 of the Children Act ('the 2004 Act') there is a duty upon Local Authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its relevant partners with a view to improving the well being of children in the authority's area. Each of the statutory 'relevant partners' in section 10 is also required to co-operate with the local authority in making those arrangements. The duty on local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation should therefore be undertaken within the context of the planning and co-operation duties which the 2004 Act places on partners in order to improve the wellbeing of the child in the area.

- 1.3 The sufficiency duty is a measure, which is part of a broad suite of guidance, and legislative provisions introduced to improve outcomes for looked after children. Local Authorities should consider the sufficiency duty in tandem with their duties towards children within their area under ss17(1), 20, 21 22C and 23 of the 1989 Act.
- 1.4 The Medway Sufficiency Report is attached at Appendix A to this report. This is reviewed and updated annually
- 1.5 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 and the Council Plan priority that '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".¹ Local Authorities and their 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 The reduction in the level of funding for Local Authorities 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.
- 2.4 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 (LAC) Strategy which describes what needs to happen in relation to work with children in care or children at risk of coming into care. The key updates from the June 2016 Sufficiency Report are listed below:
 - In September 2016 there were 414 Looked After Children representing a 6% decrease from September 2015

- During 2015/16 there were 213 new entrants into care in Medway. This is a 12% reduction compared to 2014/15 when there were a total of 243 new entrants. An increase in the number of new entrants into care was seen in one age group only (under 1).
- During 2015/16 there were 213 new entrants into care in Medway. This is a 12% reduction compared to 2014/15 when there were a total of 243 new entrants. An increase in the number of new entrants into care was seen in one age group only (under 1).
- The percentage of Looked After Children subject to conviction, final warning or reprimand has increase slightly year on year for the past three years. In 2015 this stood at 8% in Medway with the England average standing at 5.6%.
- The first two quarters of 2016/17 have seen a decrease on the past three years figures in the number of 16 to 24 year olds who are accepted as homeless, eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and as such a priority need.
- At 30 September 2016, 47.6% of Looked After Children were placed with Medway (in-house) foster carers.

3. Progress

- 3.1 The Sufficiency report identifies a number of Commissioning priorities:-
- Secure sufficiency of provision for 16+ Homeless and Care Leavers.
 - Continue to drive up quality standards of supported accommodation.
 - To continue to address the gaps in provision around emotional well-being and behavioural support for 18+ young people.
 - Drive forward improvements in performance in respect of Initial Health Assessments.
 - Drive forward improvements in the number of care leavers in education, employment and training.
 - Drive forward improvements in the management and support of children at risk of or exposed to child sexual exploitation (CSE).
 - Secure more cost effective provision for LAC.
 - Improve process for assessing and monitoring placements.
 - To secure economies of scale through working in partnership with fewer providers to meet Medway's needs and requirements.
 - To secure sufficient carers in Medway to meet the needs of Medway's children and adolescents locally, so enabling them to have access to local schools and full range of support services to meet their needs.
 - To ensure that there is greater integration between care planning, placement decision making, matching and placement finding and quality assurance.
 - To ensure that there is greater integration across social work teams and commissioned providers to prevent placement drift and that pro-active care planning is taken forward.

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 was undertaken (attached at Appendix B) and this indicated 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.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk Rating
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	Continue to strengthen the placement process and provide weekly scrutiny of appropriateness and cost. Strengthen in-house foster carer recruitment. Systematically apply the staying put policy to support care leavers remaining in placement post 16.	C2
Insufficient identification and support of children at risk or exposed to CSE	There is insufficient support provided to children at risk of or exposed to CSE	To ensure the work of the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board and the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) group are delivered on	C2

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Children in Care Council representatives will be integral in the quality assurance process and through this medium will continue to be consulted with in order to address the quality of placements, transition, personal safety and preparation for independence.

7. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6 December 2016

7.1 The Programme Lead – Looked After Children talked the Committee through the report which set out how Medway Council would meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers in such a way as to ensure improved outcomes. She reported that the number of looked after children had decreased in the last year from 441 to 414 and that there had also been a reduction in new entrants to foster care. There had been an ongoing annual increase in the number of looked after children known by the youth offending team and it was thought that this was due to the increased complex needs of children in care in Medway.

7.2 Members then raised a number of comments and questions, which included:

- **Increasing in house foster carers** – concern was raised with regards to how Medway could increase its in-house foster carer resource. In response the Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services explained that Medway foster carers were very positive about Medway, feeling well supported compared to some experiences of foster carers working for independent fostering agencies (IFAs). It was believed if Medway built on this brand and good reputation it would attract more foster carers in-house.
- **Young people's views on GP services** – the representative from Healthwatch Medway CIC explained that they would be working with a group of young people aged 16+ years to determine their views and experiences of local GP services and the outcome would be reported back.
- **Support for Care Leavers to live independently** – Officers confirmed that Care Leavers were supported to ensure they could live well and independently. The range and flexibility of supported accommodation was being increased, Personal Advisors provided support to help young people learn budgeting skills and more focus would be placed on this skill building with foster carers to ensure it is started with young people at an earlier stage.
- **Engagement with IFAs** – in response to a question about how this would work officers confirmed that a series of workshops were planned as this had been identified by providers as the best way to engage.
- **LAC and youth offending** – Following a request the Programme Lead – Looked After Children undertook to provide an update on the number of LAC subject to conviction, final warning or reprimand following discussion with the Youth Offending Team.

- 7.3 The Committee recommended the Sufficiency Report 2016-17, as set out at Appendix A to the report, to the Cabinet for approval.

8. Financial and legal implications

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 A failure to meet the general sufficiency duty could result in judicial review proceedings, and/or damages claims for breach of the Human Rights Act 1998, proceedings against the Council which could have huge costs implications.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.2 The Cabinet is asked to note the updated Medway Sufficiency Report 2016/2017 as set out in Appendix A to the report.

10. Suggested reasons for decision

- 10.1 Publication of the updated Sufficiency Report will enable the Council to fulfill its statutory requirement to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for Children in Care within the local area and will enable Medway to act strategically to address gaps in provision

Lead officer contact:

Ann Domeney, Interim Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services.
Tel (01634) 331215, Email: ann.domeney@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Sufficiency report 2016/17

Appendix B – Diversity Impact Assessment screening form

Background papers

Looked After Children's Strategy 2015 -18:

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/3.01a%20Medway%20Council%20LAC%20strat%20Final.pdf>



Medway Council Children's Services

Sufficiency Report 2016-17

Version	Date	Type	Author
1.0	December 2013	Final	Sue-Brunton-Reed
2.0	December 2014	Refreshed	Brian Atkins
3.0	May 2016	Refreshed	Lorraine Foster
4.0	October 2016	Refreshed	Lorraine Foster

Date Agreed by DMT	Date Agreed by Cabinet/MSCB/Improvement Board (if appropriate)	Date of Review	Person Responsible
9 December 2014	December 2013		

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Demographics of Medway	5
3. Children in Care population	7
3.1 New Entrants	8
3.2 Diversity of Looked After Children	9
3.3 Age range of Looked After Children	9
3.4 Legal Status of Looked After Children	10
3.5 Disabled Children and Young People	11
3.6 Parent and Child Placements	12
3.7 Children subject to Court proceedings	12
3.8 Adoption and SGO	13
3.9 Siblings	16
3.10 Young people known to Youth Offending Service	17
3.11 Young People Leaving Care – 16+	17
3.12 Care Leaver Accommodation	21
3.13 Future Care Leaver accommodation in needs	22
4. Views of Children and Young People about Choice and Sufficiency of Placement	23
5. Current Placement Provision	25
5.1 Placement Mix and Cost	25
5.2 In-House Fostering	28
5.4 Residential Provision	29
5.5 16+ Accommodation Provision	30
5.6 Other Support Services	31
6. Commissioning Priorities	28
6.1 Short to Medium Term	35
7. Medium to Long Term	37

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out how Medway Council, working with all its partner agencies, 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 provides an update on the Sufficiency report that was presented in June 2016.

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 (2015 – 2018) and the Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy and 16+ Homeless and Care Leavers Commissioning Action Plan (2014 – 2017).

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 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.

The reduction in the level of funding for Local Authorities means that the focus on efficiency and value for money will be stronger than ever. The challenge for Local Authority Children’s Services as well as partner agencies will be to sustain or improve on service quality and achieve excellent outcomes for children and young people.

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 2015- 2018 which describes what needs to happen in relation to work with children in care or children at risk of coming into care.

The objectives of Medway Council's Looked After Children Strategy 2015-18 are to:

- Ensure that permanency is at the heart of all our planning and that we will 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 a range of opportunities for employment, training or further education
- Ensure young people leaving care make a successful transition to adulthood
- Ensure that children looked after and care leavers' views and experiences inform current and future service delivery
- Improve the health and well-being of looked after young people and care leavers
- Provide timely and high quality interventions with partner agencies to help children remain living or return to their families
- Ensure all looked after young people and care leavers are safeguarded through the provision of trained, supported and motivated staff who understand and are alert to the potential for exploitation and abuse of young people and who take the right action at the right time

We will ensure that the Sufficiency Strategy is consistent with these objectives, but also ensure it 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. Commissioning Strategies which include impact measures which will be monitored to evidence progress on delivery.

2. Demographics of Medway

The 2011 Census gave Medway Council an opportunity to understand in detail its community. Some of highlights are detailed below:

- Medway's population increased from 249,288 in 2001 to 263,925 in 2011, a 5.9% increase.
- Medway's population was found to be ageing; with a decrease in the number of children aged 0 to 18 and an increase in those aged 19-65 and 65+.
- The number of households with dependent children was found to have risen.
- Medway has become more ethnically diverse since 2001, with the Black and Minority Ethnic population now at 10.4%. White British is still the largest ethnic group, 85.5% of the population.
- There were increases in the number of people working part-time or as self employed, but a fall in the number of people working full-time. Unemployment levels have also increased since 2001.
- Medway residents are now more qualified than they were in 2001, although there are still fewer residents with the highest level qualifications.
- Levels of deprivation are higher in Medway than England with proportionally fewer households who have no indicators of deprivation, and more who have one indicator of deprivation.

In June 2015 the Office of National Statistics reported that the population of Medway reached has **274,015** in June 2014. This represents an increase of 2,910 persons (1.1%) above the 2013 mid-year figure. This growth is in line with the level of growth seen in 2013 (+2,900), above the historic average since 2002 (+1,900) and above the national level in 2014 (+0.8%), but below the peak in growth in Medway in 2012 (+3.3%).

In July 2015 Medway had a larger working age population at 65% than nationally (63%), a larger younger person's population (20%) and a smaller but rising elderly population (15%). Medway ranks in the top third of Local Authorities for annual population growth at +1.1%. Recent population growth in Medway can be attributed to both natural growth – births exceeding deaths - and inward migration, with a fairly even split between these two components of growth.

In September 2015 the national Index of Deprivation reported that Medway was relatively worse off, compared to the 2010 index. Medway is ranked as the 118th most deprived Local Authority of 326 in England. This is a relatively worse position than in the previous index in 2010, when Medway was ranked the 136th most deprived of 325. In addition Medway is ranked the 53rd most deprived local authority area for crime and 86th most deprived for education, skills and training’.

Child poverty is defined as “the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of median income”. Research shows that some families are at greater risk of child poverty due to:

- Non traditional family structures i.e. lone parent households in which there is at least one dependent child. Medway rate for lone families with at least one dependent child is 24.5% which is in line with the England as a whole but considerably higher than the South East region at 20.7%
- Households with dependent children where no adult is in employment. In Medway this rate stands at 4.9% which is higher than the England average of 4.2% and the South East average of 3.1%.
- High rates of teenage pregnancy. Medway rate of teenage pregnancy is significantly than the England and South East averages.
- Medway has a higher proportion of families (7.4 per cent) with three or more children compared to the national (7 per cent) and South East (6.7 per cent) averages.

The prevalence of these determinant factors amongst some Medway families means that some children in Medway are at greater risk of childhood poverty and subsequently poorer outcomes into adulthood. The Child Poverty Act of 2010 commits the Government to eradicating childhood poverty by 2020 by focusing on a number of key areas. Amongst these key areas are; improving family support and children’s life chances; supporting families to achieve financial independence and improving neighbourhoods to transform lives. Medway’s vision places children at the heart of all Medway does in securing better lives for its residents.

3. Children in Care Population

At the end of September 2016, Medway had an adjusted number of 414 Looked After Children, representing a 6% decrease from September 2015. As of March 2016, the England national average for children in care has remained static at 60 children per 10,000. In March 2016 Medway had a rate of 68 children per 10,000, which is above the national average and the South East average of 52 children per 10,000.

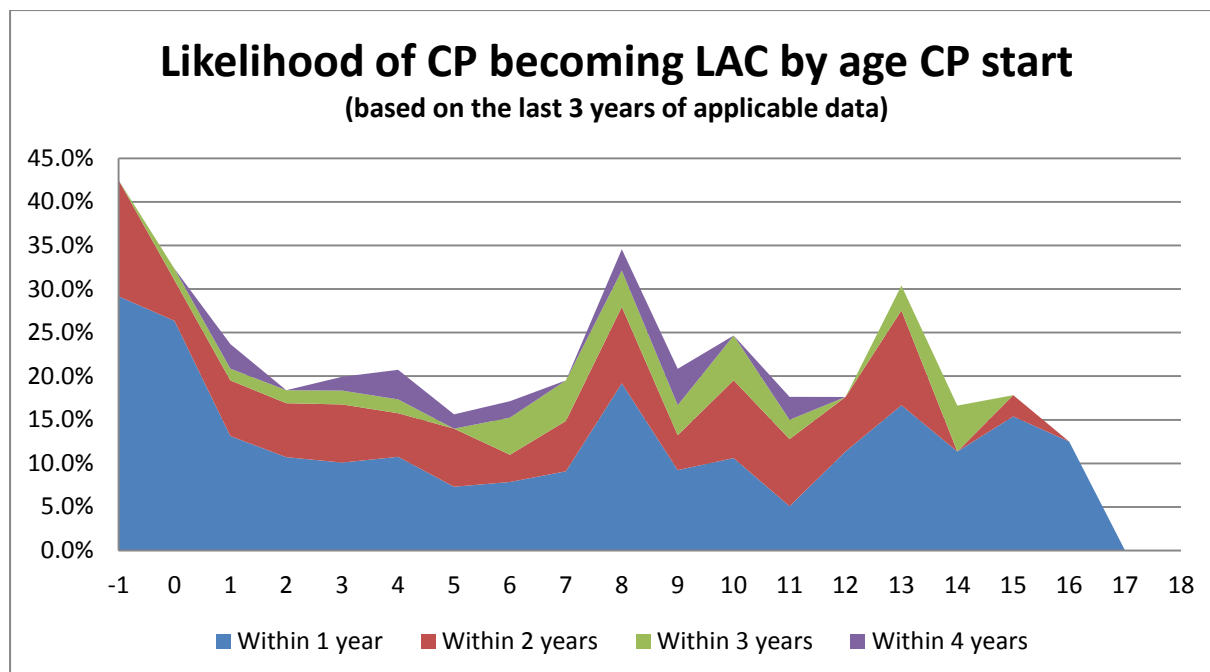
Due to pressures in the system with large numbers of children subject to Care Proceedings or Pre-Proceedings in 2015, the numbers of Looked After Children(LAC) in Medway had been forecast to rise to 465 for September 2016, 479 for September 2017 and 494 for September 2018. However these forecasts had been based on previous activity levels and did not take account of the impact of a number of changes including changes to the 'front door' CADS service, the Edge of Care preventative programmes, and developments in Early Help and intensive prevention services like the SMART team. The revised forecasts demonstrate a reduced increase in the numbers of looked after children as detailed in the table 1 below

Table 1. Forecasted numbers of Looked After Children

	In care 30 Sep 2013	In care 30 Sep 2014	In care 30 Sep 2015	In care 30 Sep 2016	Prediction Sep 2017	Prediction Sep 2018
Age 0-1	52	63	50	43	50.5	49.4
Age 2-4	47	39	54	38	41.7	49.5
Age 5-8	70	62	70	71	66.6	62.7
Age 9-10	30	45	60	46	47.9	51.3
Age 11-15	113	120	131	145	156.2	159.2
Age 16-17	63	58	76	71	69.3	79.5
Total	375	387	441	414	432.2	451.6

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

Figure 1. below visualises the likelihood of a child, subject to a child protection order, becoming LAC within subsequent years.



Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

When viewed together the prevention of escalating need by delivering an integrated, well-coordinated and holistic offer of service that is child centred, high quality and evidenced based remains a priority.

3.1 New entrants

January – March 2015 saw the highest intake of Looked After Children over the last 4 years at 74 new entrants into care. However overall in 2015/16 there were 213 new entrants into care. This is a 12 % reduction compared to 2014/15 when there were a total of 243 new entrants into care.

Age range	Year ending September 2014	Year ending September 2015	Year ending September 2016	% 2015 to 2016
Under 1	57	38	45	+18%
1-4	34	62	39	-37%
5-9	33	55	34	-38%
10-15	48	70	50	-29%
16+	12	21	19	-10%
Total	184	246	187	-24%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

Comparisons between new entrants for the year ending September 2014, 2015, 2016 are shown in the table above. This shows that in all age categories bar the under 1 there has been a decline in numbers; however they are all marginally higher than they were in 2014. The table below shows that in 2015/16 Medway brought an unusually high number of Care applications to court. And latest figures suggest that we are coming back in line with the national average.

Care applications per 10,000 children

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Medway	9.2	8.6	8.0	14.5	22.6
England	9.1	9.8	9.3	9.7	11.0

Data Source Cafcass

3.2 Diversity of Looked After Children

Ethnicity	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016
Asian or Asian British	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Black or Black British	2.4%	2.6%	4.3%	3.5%
Mixed	6.4%	5.9%	5.9%	7.9%
Other Ethnic Groups	0.5%	1.0%	2.5%	1.7%
White	90.1%	89.9%	86.6%	86.2%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The increasing diversity of the Medway LAC population is reflective of the increasing ethnic diversity in Medway as detailed in the 2011 census data.

3.3 Age range of Looked After Children

Age range	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016
Age 0-1	52 (13.9%)	63 (16.3%)	50 (11.3%)	43 (10.4%)
Age 2-4	47 (12.5%)	39 (10.1%)	54 (12.2%)	38 (9.2%)
Age 5-8	70 (18.7%)	62 (16.0%)	70 (15.9%)	71 (17.1%)
Age 9-10	30 (8.0%)	45 (11.6%)	60 (13.6%)	46 (11.1%)
Age 11-15	113 (30.1%)	120 (31.0%)	131 (29.7%)	145 (35.0%)
Age 16-17	63 (16.8%)	58 (15.0%)	76 (17.2%)	71 (17.1%)
Total	375	387	441	414

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The decreasing numbers of children in all age ranges bar the 5-8 and the 11-15 age is in part due to a changing culture across children services that has seen greater emphasis placed on early intervention, targeted family support and greater scrutiny. As anticipated in the previous Sufficiency Report this is ensuring that potential harm

to children is reduced to such an extent that need for removal from the family home whilst focused interventions occur is eliminated.

The existing numbers of children aged 11-15 in care will continue to impact on leaving care services. There will be an increased need for supported accommodation and supported lodgings over the next five years, increased in-house fostering provision, the provision of therapeutic foster placements and the need for wrap around support to reduce placement breakdowns. The work to further embed the Edge of Care Programme, the SMART team along with providing additional support to carers to support local placements will seek to address these issues by reducing the number of new entrants into care and the duration of placement.

The table below shows the September 2016 cohort of looked after children broken down by age and gender. The table clearly shows that Medway continues to have more boys than girls in care and that boys in the 10-15 and 16+ age range are significantly more than girls.

Age range	Female	Male	Total
Under 1	11	15	26
1-4	24	30	54
5-9	43	47	90
10-15	79	91	170
16+	31	40	71
Total	188	223	411

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

3.4 Legal status of Looked After Children

Legal Order	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016
S20	135	176	158	106
Police Protection	0	0	1	1
Emergency Protection Order	1	0	0	0
Interim Care Order	29	23	64	61
Care Order	121	124	155	182
Placement Order	88	63	63	61
On Remand	0	0	0	0
PACE	1	1	0	0
Youth Rehab Order	0	0	0	0

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

Children accommodated under care orders make up over 44% of all legal status for looked after children in Medway as of September 2016. Care orders have increased by 17% from 155 in September 2015 to 182 in September 2016.

During the same period Section 20 cases have decreased by 32% from 158 in September 2015 to 106 in September 2016. This decline was facilitated by a detailed review of Section 20 cases which led to clear plans for permanency being developed. As such applications were made to the courts for the local authority to share parental responsibility leading to more stability for a child who previously would have remained Section 20.

3.4.1 Legal status by age band - September 2016 (figures in brackets compare with September 2015)

Age range	Section 20	Police Protection	Interim Care Order	Care Order	Placement / Freeing Order
0 – 2	17 (15)	0 (0)	22 (26)	1 (0)	17 (23)
3 – 4	5 (16)	0 (0)	5 (10)	2 (2)	11 (12)
5 – 10	15 (28)	1 (0)	19 (18)	56 (63)	26 (21)
11 – 15	26 (48)	0 (1)	15 (10)	96 (66)	6 (6)
16+	43 (51)	0 (0)	0 (0)	27 (24)	1 (1)
Total	106 (158)	1 (1)	61 (64)	182 (155)	61 (63)

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table above shows a more detailed breakdown of legal status by age on 30th September 2015 and 2016.

3.5 Disabled children and young people

At 30 September 2015; there were 32 LAC who have a disability. This represents just under 8% of all LAC and is the same as September 2015. The most significant needs groups are detailed in the table below:

Disability Type	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016
Learning Disability	29	23	19
Autism or Asperger Syndrome	18	15	14
Behaviour Disorder – Including ADHD	11	10	9
Communication	6	7	7
Physical disability	5	5	4
Total with a disability	44	35	32

N.B children may have more than one disability and as such are represented in more than one needs group Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

3.6 Parent and child placements

As at 30 September 2016, Medway had a total of 5 Parent and Child placements at an average cost of £1,197 per week. This is a significant improvement from 30th September 2015 when the average cost was £1,984 per week. Two placements were in supported accommodation; and three placements were with Independent Fostering Agencies. The average length of stay across the 5 placements is 11.6 weeks. This compares favourably to the situation as of the 30 October 2014 when there were 12 parent and child placements and the average length of stay in an IFA was 21 weeks. The focus of parent and child placements during 2016 has been on assessing parental capabilities within a 12 week period with a view to supporting the parent and child back home where safe to do so. Where it is safe to do so, community assessments of a parent and child at home are now a first option.

The average cost of the 2 placements in supported accommodation was £1,000 and again this is an improvement on 30th September 2015 when the average cost was £1,200. This provision is being utilised to support parents into independence where they are unable or unwilling to return home. This approach and a process of ongoing scrutiny has also enabled a number of children and families to stay together where it is safe to do so after having received support and instruction around parenting skills.

3.7 Children subject to court proceedings

Children's and Legal Services are working together to meet the requirements of the Family Justice Review and achieve more speedy resolution of court proceedings, aiming for 26 weeks.

For the three years ending February 2016 Medway's performance of 689 days for 'average time between a child entering care and moving in with the family (A1)' was behind the national performance of 628 days and well outside the target of 596 days which was set in line with government ambitions. However, as a 3 year rolling average, it is not reflective of the significant progress that has been made in addressing timescales. In the year ending February 2016, Medway performance has been 543 days.

Medway's performance against the timescale from application to completion of proceedings was below national figures in 2013-14 but was in line with the national average as detailed below

Time from application to the completion of proceedings (CAFCASS):

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Medway	44 weeks	30 weeks	31 weeks
National	36 weeks	30 weeks	30 weeks

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

3.8 Adoption and SGO in support of achieving permanency

The DfE describes permanence as:

The framework of emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability) and legal permanence (the carer has parental responsibility for the child) which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity. The objective of permanence is to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond. Permanence provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and their families; from family support through to adoption. This can include situations where the Local authority and birth parents share PR but where the carer has made a long term commitment to the child”.

During the period from October 2015 to September 2016, 36 children have been placed for adoption, with a further 2 children matched but not yet placed as legal proceedings have not concluded. This represents an increase of 20% increase on 2015/16 figures. This includes five sibling groups of 2 children and one sibling group of 4 children. The age breakdown of children placed for adoption is below:

Age at placement	Year ending September 2012	Year ending September 2013	Year ending September 2014	Year ending September 2015	Year ending September 2016
0 - 1	12	17	29	19	17
2 - 4	15	15	18	6	12
5+	8	8	8	1	7
Total	35	40	55	26	36

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

During 2016 7 children aged 5+ years have been successfully placed for adoption. These children are traditionally “harder to place” and this reflects considerable work by the team, in particular as 6 of these children are part of sibling groups and successful placements have enabled them to stay with their younger siblings in their new families.

Panel decisions	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Year
Matches	1	0	3	2	2	3	2	2	10	4	2	5	36
Decision that adoption is the plan for the child	2	7	4	1	2	14	4	9	5	6	1	2	57
Adoptive families approved	2	1	1	1	1	3	0	2	3	3	5	1	23

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table above provides further detail on adoptions for the period October 2015 to September 2016.

Panel decisions	Year ending September 2014	Year ending September 2015	Year ending September 2016
Matches	50	29	36
Decision that adoption is the plan for the child	26	48	57
Adoptive families approved	26	19	23

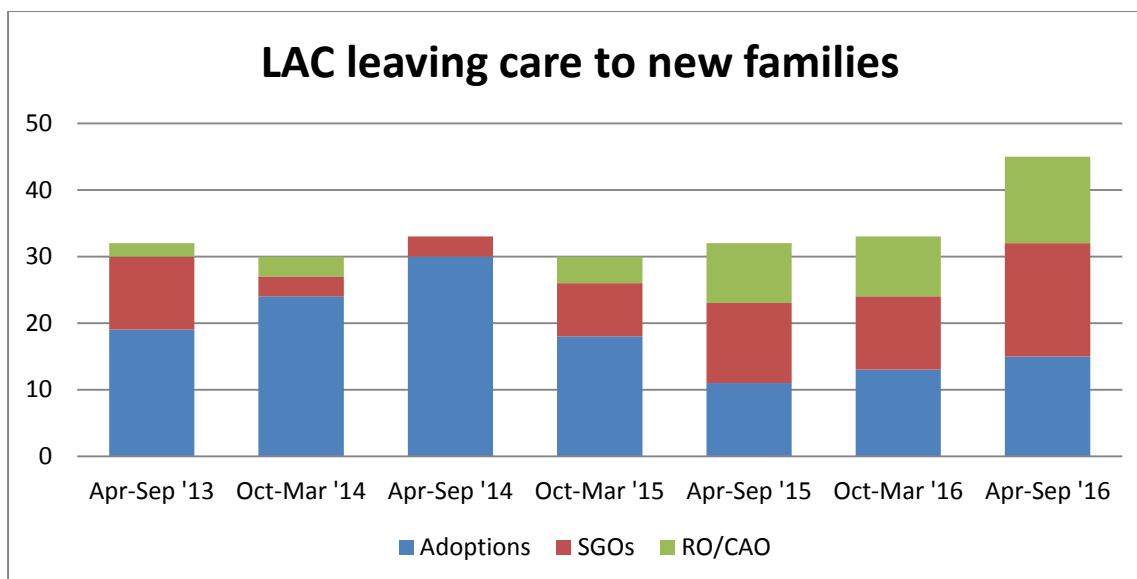
Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table below shows that Medway continues to have relatively high numbers of children for whom adoption is the identified care plan at the point that final evidence is lodged with the court. It is not however unusual for family members to come forward at the point of the final hearing; and as such not all the children identified as needing adoption will be made subject to a placement order.

During the period October 2015 to September 2016 there were 36 matches as detailed in the table above, that is children who were matched and successfully placed with their prospective adoptive parents. When children are placed for adoption the full legal process has not yet been completed and prospective adopters still need to apply to the court to become the child's legal parent.

In the same 12 month period there have been 23 new families approved to adopt a child/ren. This figure includes 2 families who were fostering the child/ren prior to their application to adopt them and a further 2 families who are related to the children involved. One of the adoptive families was approved under "Fostering to Adopt" regulations which allowed a child to be placed with them under fostering regulations prior to the final hearing.

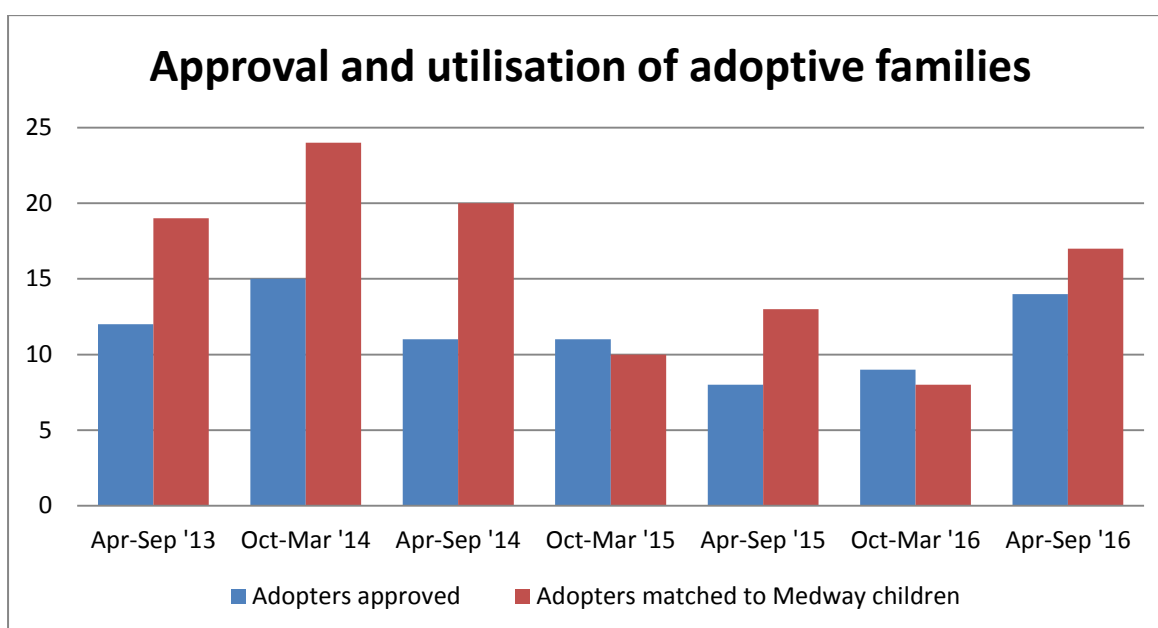
During 2016 no adoption placements have disrupted in the early stages, and only one disrupting in the previous year. This reflects the considerable work that goes into identifying the right match for a child and the support that is provided to placements when the adopters are struggling to cope with the demands of their new family.



Data Source: Children Services, Medway Council

The graph above details the numbers of children leaving care to Adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders, and demonstrates the changing use of these orders, with more children staying in family arrangements under alternative orders, rather than being adopted outside the family. This reflects the national picture and has been the subject of comment by both the government and the judiciary.

Medway actively promotes the use of Special Guardianship Orders to secure permanency for children, where appropriate. As well as the use of Special Guardianship Orders for family members and connected carers, it is also often taken by former foster carers who develop a bond with a child and wish to formalise that child's place within the family.



Data Source: Children Services, Medway Council

At the current time there are 21 children for whom Medway Council has Placement Orders but are not yet matched at panel. 7 of these children will be presented to the next adoption panel for matches to be considered.

The graph above indicates the numbers of adopters approved over time and the numbers subsequently matched with Medway children. There is no cost to the local authority when Medway children are placed with Medway approved adopters. In contrast placing children with adopters approved by any other local authority or voluntary agency incurs a considerable cost, which is agreed nationally. It is therefore beneficial to the Council to approve sufficient adopters and enable and support them to take Medway children, whenever appropriate.

In addition Medway continues to explore the government's proposals for Regional Adoption Agencies with neighbouring authorities so that recruitment, assessment and support of adopters can be shared locally with benefits for Medway children seeking adoptive families.

When adoption or SGOs are not a viable option Medway actively recruits carers to support placing children in long term care through its in-house fostering service and with Independent Fostering agencies.

3.9 Sibling Groups

Of 476 children who became subject to CP plans in the year ending September 2016, 75% were part of a sibling group.

The table below denotes the number of sibling groups placed onto a CP plan in the year ending September 2016:

Number of sibling groups	Group composition
51 groups of	2 siblings
32 groups of	3 siblings
19 groups of	4 siblings
6 groups of	5 siblings
7 groups of	6+ siblings

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The placement of large sibling groups in order to facilitate children staying together where appropriate remains a key pressure point for Medway. Recruiting more carers able to keep siblings together where that is in their interests is a priority, however carers can only be approved for 3 children, with more children requiring an exemption to be put in place.

3.10 Young People Known to Youth Offending Service

The table below shows the percentage of Looked After Children subject to conviction, final warning or reprimand during the period 2013 – 2015.

	2013	2014	2015
Medway	6.7	7.0	8
South East	7.6	6.10	6
Statistical neighbours	6.46	6.48	7
England	6.2	5.6	5.6

Data Source: Local Area Interactive Tool

The data suggests that Medway has in the last 3 years been above its statistical neighbours, the South East and England; with the gap widening. A possible reason for this is the increasing numbers of children with complex needs we have coming into care.

3.11 Young People Leaving Care - 16+

In September 2016, there were 71 young people aged 16+ in care. This is a decrease from September 2015 when there were 78 young people aged 16+ in care. In addition, there are also a significant number of young people eligible for leaving care services. The Children (Leaving Care) Act defines eligible children as aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since aged 14 and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17, and who have left care.

Projected number of care leavers in the table below shows that there will be an increased demand for leaving care services over the coming years.

Date	Care Leavers by age									Total
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
31/09/2014	1	8	46	66	77					
31/09/2015	4	5	36	46	66					
31/09/2016	2	11	39	36	46	10	5	2	0	151
31/09/2017	2.9	6.5	58.7	39	36	7.8	3.9	1.6	0.0	156.4
31/09/2018	3.1	10.1	36.5	58.7	39	8.5	4.2	1.7	0.0	161.8
31/09/2019	2.2	10.8	56.3	36.5	58.7	12.8	6.4	2.6	0.0	186.1

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

- Figures shaded in pink are statistical projections based on the historical data shown, and hence shown as a decimal.
- Care leavers aged 16 to 20 are defined by eligibility – not by the case being open to the 18+ team.
- Care leavers aged 21+ are identified by being still open to the 18+ team. Data prior to 2016 did not appear to be sufficiently accurate to use.

Duties and responsibilities for young people leaving care are outlined in the statutory guidance and regulations associated with the Children Act 2000 and subsequent updates including The Care Leavers Regulations 2010.

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.

The table below shows the number of young people (16-24) accepted as homeless, eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need – i.e. those that the local authority has a duty to accommodate.

16 -24 homeless eligible for assistance

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Quarter 1	26	58	47	26
Quarter 2	28	38	31	15
Quarter 3	50	42	26	
Quarter 4	35	31	21	
TOTAL	139	169	125	

Data Source: Housing Department, Medway Council

The table below shows the number of Joint Housing Needs Assessments (JHAs) completed during the period September 2015 and September 2016. The service only became available in Medway from July 2015.

JHA's Sept 2015 to Sept 2016

Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
6	2	3	3	3	1	4	4	2	5	2	1	5

Data Source: Housing Department, Medway Council

JHAs provide a consistent approach to assessing the housing needs of a young person regardless of which service they present to. The JHAs stop young people bouncing between services when they present as being homeless and also reduce the number of young people who slip between services. The JHA process enables the Local Authority to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation and helps to ensure that they receive appropriate services as close as possible to the point of need.

3.11.1 Needs of Young People Leaving Care

As part of Medway's Staying Put Policy, a number of young people will stay on with their foster carers after the age of 18. Some young people who are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies or in Residential Care will make the transition into Supported Accommodation or adult services as defined by their needs.

In September 2014 a desk based needs analysis was undertaken of young people aged 15-17 who were in care. At that time it was anticipated that 26% would require an enhanced or intensive level of support when moving into semi independence.

In May 2016 the same desk based needs analysis methodology was utilised to determine what level of support would be required for young people aged 15 -18 who were currently in care. It is anticipated that 35% percent will require an enhanced or intensive level of support package when moving into more 'semi independent provision'.

The table below is a summary of both the September 2014 snapshot (written in black) and the May 2016 snapshot (written in red). As detailed in the Sufficiency Report 2015/16 an escalating need for enhanced and intensive support is being seen.



Snap shot of the needs of young people age 15+ who are currently in care at September 2014 & May 2016. Data extract was taken from Frameworki in August 2014 & May 2016.

Total No. in care	Age	M	F	Ethnicity	Numbers children who came into care due to reasons of:	Estimated numbers of young people who will need an enhanced/or intensive support package (Based on SDQ score above 18+)
33 31	15 15	15 6	18 2	29 (white) 2 (Black) 2 (not known) 8 (white)	19 (2) Abuse & Neglect 3 (2) Disability 2 Family in Acute Stress 7 (1) Family dysfunction 2 Other 1 Emotional abuse 1 Physical abuse 2 Neglect	Estimate of 5 young people. Estimate of 13 young people
28 41	16 16	14 6	14 7	25 (White) 2 (mixed race) 1 (other) 1(mixed) 1(black) 11 (white)	13 (3) Abuse & Neglect 3 (2) Disability 2 Family in Acute distress 9 (7) Family dysfunction 1 Other 1 Neglect 1 Unsafe sex 1 Absent parent	Estimate of 11 young people Young people reported to have drug abuse/risk taking behaviours, self harming behaviours and severe emotional & behaviour difficulties and vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. Estimate of 13 young people
34 (2 left care) 42	17 14	15 4	19 10	32 (White) 1 (Black) 1 (other) 2 (mixed) 12 (white)	15 (3) Abuse & Neglect 2 (4) Disability 1 Parental Illness/ Disability 1 Family in Acute distress 11 (7) Family dysfunction 2 Socially unacceptable behaviour 2 Other	Estimate of 8 young people with self-harming behaviours, drug abuse and emotional & behavioural difficulties. Estimate of 14 young people
2	18		2	2 (white)	1 Family dysfunction 1 Abuse & Neglect	One young person.
95 (114)		44	53			25 (40)

The table below details the support and accommodation services that will be required against the level of need.

Needs of Young People	Services required
Standard level of support/low level needs Young people may not have complex and challenging behaviours but require ongoing support and further preparation for independence	Staying Put Supported Lodgings Outreach Shared tenancies Floating support
Enhanced level of support needs Young people may be transitioning from fostering/residential into Supported Accommodation	Staying Put Supported lodgings Supported accommodation
Intensive level of support needs Young people who require more intensive support either due to multiple or profound disabilities and require high level interventions	24 hour support

3.12 Care Leaver accommodation

The tables below shows the number of Care Leavers aged 17 to 21 who were in suitable accommodation on their birthday during the period October 2015 to September 2016.

Care leavers in suitable accommodation on their birthday (17th to 21st birthday)

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Year
Suitable Accom	14	15	9	11	22	14	16	14	8	14	13	10	160
Total with birthday in month	16	15	9	14	23	15	18	15	10	16	14	11	176
	88%	100%	100%	79%	96%	93%	89%	93%	80%	88%	93%	91%	91%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

% of care leavers in suitable accommodation on the birthday

	Care Leavers	Number in suitable accommodation	% suitable
17 th birthday	3	2	67%
18 th birthday	38	38	100%
19 th birthday	31	29	94%
20 th birthday	41	39	95%
21 st birthday	63	52	83%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table below shows how many care leavers were in unsuitable accommodation during the same period. Of concern is the number who were in custody and is

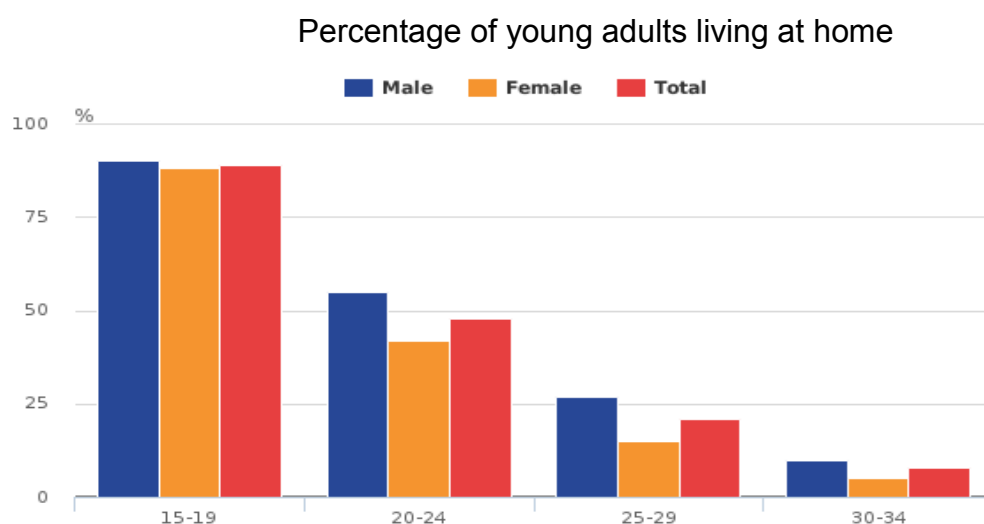
reflective of the numbers of young people known to youth offending services detailed in 3.8

Unsuitable accommodation

	Number
Residence not known	1
No fixed abode / homeless	2
Bed and breakfast	2
In custody	11
Residence not known	1

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

In 2015 the Office of National Statistics reported that over 90% of all 15 to 19 year olds live at home with parents. This is an option often not open to our looked after children and young people by the very nature of the fact that they are in care or care leavers.



Data Source: Office of National Statistics

3.13 Future Care Leaver accommodation needs

At present Staying Put can only provide care leaver support to those who were in fostering and connected carer placements, and primarily to those in Medway Council provision. Young people accommodated in Children's Homes and other residential placements also have the need for post accommodation support, but the option of staying on in a placement past their 18th birthday is rarely available and requires specific dispensation from Ofsted.

In October 2015 a needs analysis was undertaken which identified that:

- Staying Put provision needs to be enhanced and understood by all in order to be a real option for care leavers
- The development of supported lodgings must be a priority
- Supported Accommodation that focuses consistently on developing independence skills is very much needed even in those services that continue to be spot purchased.
- The development of therapeutic foster carers can aid in providing step down from residential or rehabilitation back home
- That preventing placement breakdown could be well supported by Medway fostering and residential staff in order to deliver outreach.
- The provision of temporary accommodation to provide a cooling off period; may help to prevent placement breakdown
- Shared Carers and parallel parenting can facilitate young people return home where safe to do so.
- The recruitment of specialist foster carers to support young people with disabilities is needed.
- Affordable, quality social housing and increased support in order to secure privately rented housing is needed. As well as access to floating support.

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.

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 Corporate Parenting Group. Through this forum, the Children in Care Council aim to hold the Council and its partners to account for the services each provide. Other participative structures such as Medway Youth Parliament, and Care leavers and Disability Group enable further consideration and evaluation of some of the issues raised by the CICC.

In 2015 The Children's Commissioner has published her first State of the Nation. The report is an analysis of the views of looked after children and care leavers. The main findings are listed below:

- 81% of children and young people reported that they were currently living in the right place for them.
- Of the 46% of children who said they sometimes don't feel good about the future a key theme for this was placement stability and a sense of not knowing "I will be happy if my placement becomes permanent".
- When asked what would make life better for children and young people in care a key theme that was highlighted was support – for as long as you need it.
- Just over half (54%) of care leavers stated that they felt they left care at the right time.
- Of those who felt they did not leave at the right time the two main reasons for this were; feeling settled in their placement and being forced to leave. "I wanted to stay put but because my carer would not receive funding they said I could not stay with them."

Children also highlighted a not having a choice in placement type as a key issue

Looked After Children over the past 3 years through the CICC, Care Leavers Group and Disability Groups have raised a number of issues relating to the choice and quality of placements, transition, personal safety and preparation for independence. 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 limited 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 opportunities 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"*.

As a result of this feedback young people were supported in 2015 to be involved in the tender for supported accommodation providers. This process ensured that children and young people visited potential provider premises, were able to speak to staff and young people in placement and then score providers against a rating scale that they had developed. The successful providers are now delivering the service and have signed up as a part of the contracting process to having annual site visits undertaken by young people as apart of the performance and quality monitoring regime.

Adherence to the monitoring regime has meant that during 2016 providers have been required to submit monthly outcome reports against agreed criteria for every young person. These reports have been reviewed by commissioners and have helped to identify providers who are supporting young people to develop skills for independence and to realise their full potential through education, training and employment opportunities. This process is also supporting council officers to identify providers who are not yet offering a quality service and to be able to offer advice and support in order to drive up quality. Further advice and support was offered to providers via a one day workshop held in September 2016. Over 25 attendees to the "Raising Aspirations" workshop listened to speakers from the Job Centre, Virtual School, NACRO, Care Leaving Team, and Oakfield Psychology Services to ensure that they are aware of the full raft of services open to young people.

During July and August 2016 young people have again undertaken site visits of all supported accommodation providers including those who have been spot purchased. Young people have assessed the providers accommodation and support and their findings have added to council officers assessments and provider self assessments. Final reports are still being collated however this combined monitoring and assessment regime has led to the cessation of further placements and the withdrawal of current placements from one spot purchase provider and the request for additional information from other providers which will have a bearing on their final assessment.

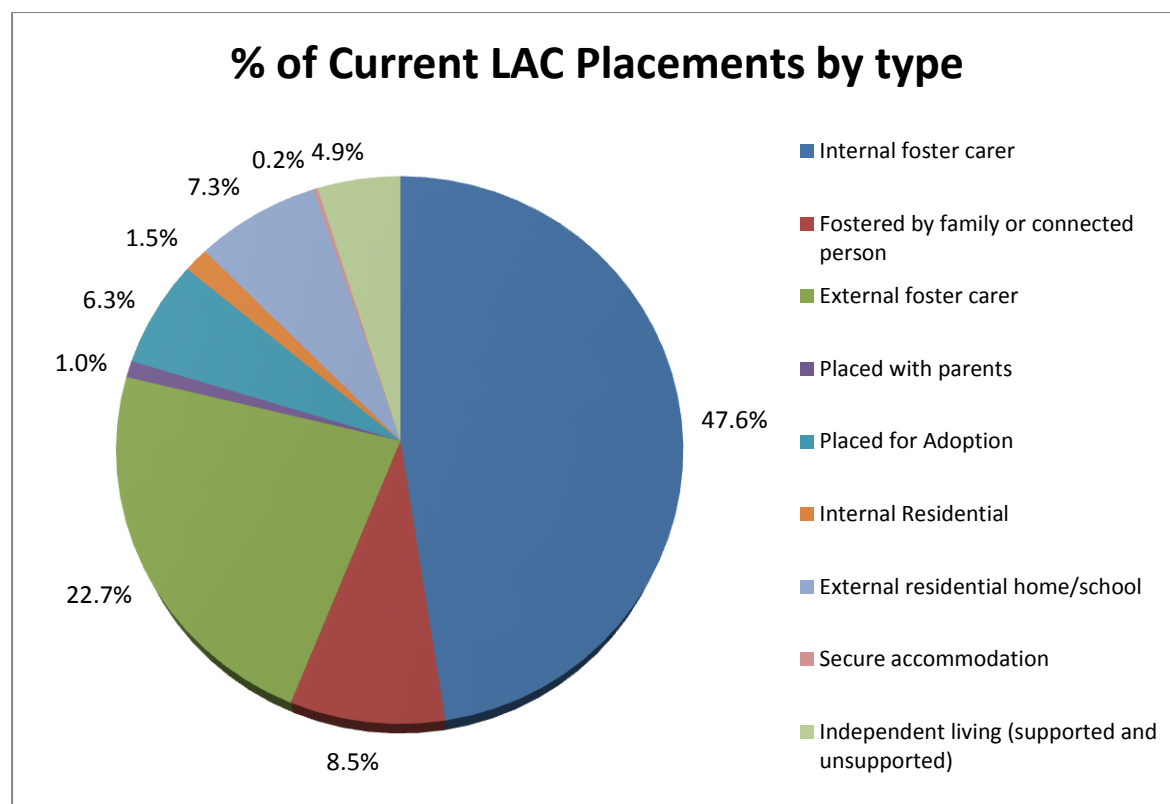
5. Current Placement Provision

5.1 Placement Mix and Cost

In September 2016, 195 children were placed with Medway in-house carers. This is an increase of 9 children from September 2015 (186).

35 children were placed with approved connected persons, and 93 are placed in external foster agency placements. External fostering is primarily through independent fostering agencies (IFAs), but also includes provision by other local authorities and charities providing fostering services.

The number of young people placed in external residential provision (including schools) has decreased from 35 to 30 (14% decrease).



Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table below shows the trend over the past 4 years by placement type. It also demonstrates that on reliance on external foster care and residential services has reduced, with a 5% increase in internal fostering placements, a 54% increase in supported and unsupported independent living along with the overall reduction in the number of children in care.

Placement type	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016	Direction of travel
Medway foster carer	191	183	186	195	↑
Fostered by family or connected person	30	41	55	35	↓

Placement type	September 2013	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016	Direction of travel
External foster carer	65	95	116	93	↓
Placed with parents	12	10	6	4	↓
Placed for Adoption	25	25	23	26	↑
In-house Residential	8	6	6	6	↔
Private and voluntary residential home/school	29	30	35	30	↓
Secure accommodation	0	0	1	1	↔
YOI or prison	0	0	0	0	↔
Independent Living (Supported and unsupported)	18	10	13	20	↑
NHS	0	1	1	0	↓

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

There are currently 26 children and young people placed inside the Medway boundary in external foster placements. 67 children and young people are placed in external foster placements outside of Medway.

5.1.1 Placement Cost

Accommodation Type	Average Weekly cost	Numbers of children in Placement September 2016
Supported Accommodation	£ 878	28
Supported Lodging (Internal)	£ 222	25
IFA (net)	£ 933	93
In house fostering	£ 534	230
Mother & Baby	£ 1,197	5
Residential	£ 3,334	24

Data Source: Access to Resources and Performance and Information, Medway Council

Although the numbers of children coming into care has fallen, the overall spend on placements has risen beyond what was forecast. Average weekly placements costs in almost all accommodation types have risen compared to November 2015 with a reduction average cost only being seen in mother and baby placements which have fallen from £1,726 per week to £1,197 per week. A number of factors may have impacted on this including:

- The limited capacity within in-house fostering
- The impact of large sibling groups and children staying longer in care
- Increasingly complex needs of children entering care, particularly those who late entrants to care who may require 24 hour staffed supported accommodation provision.
- Increasing competition in securing placements particularly in emergency situations.

The current joint IFA provider framework with Kent is limited in what it can achieve for Medway and the use of mini competitions to drive down the cost, proved an inappropriate tool for securing any efficiencies. The contract is due to end in June 2017 and Medway is currently looking at other options.

5.2 In-House Fostering

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

Our fostering data is currently being prepared for the completion of the annual fostering return to Ofsted and the information below is draft data from that submission.

As of March 2016, there were a total of 126 standard fostering households (a increase of 3 from the previous year) approved for **302** placements. However many of these placements were not available for use as a foster placement due to being otherwise utilised. Common reasons why a placement is not available are:

- Multiple placements only available to siblings able to share a room.

- Placement is being utilised by a fostered child who “stayed put” when they turned 18.
- Placement is being utilised by child who is now living with the carer as an adopted child or under a special guardianship order.
- Foster carer is not taking new placements as they are planning to retire.

The internal fostering service is utilised to almost maximum capacity, with between 10 and 20 placements tending to be available at any one time offering a mixture of placement suitability.

Between April 2015 and March 2016 there were 172 new enquiries to become a foster carer, 53 of which proceeded to the statutory check / assessment stage. In the period, 16 new households were approved (15 generic and 1 short-break) and 15 households were deregistered (12 generic and 3 short-break), leaving the overall number of households increased by 1. In the previous year, the number of foster carers had reduced by 10. The 15 carers left for the reasons below:

Reason	Number leaving
Approval withdrawn	3
Resigned - left area	0
Resigned - move to IFA	0
Resigned – other	4
Withdrawn from fostering	8

The Fostering Network has indicated that, in the main, there is a national shortage of carers and carers resign when they have reached retirement. However, within the recent period, they have noticed a trend where carers have given financial reasons for ending their fostering roles.

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.

5.4 Residential Provision

Medway has a shortage of local Residential provision to accommodate children and young people including young people with special educational needs.

Medway Council owns a six bed residential unit for young people with complex and challenging behaviours. This unit is managed directly by Medway Council after a period of being outsourced. The unit is now operates at full capacity most of the time.

There are currently 21 children and young people who are in external residential care placements, who are placed out of Medway.

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

As at March 2016, Medway was supporting 18 young people in Supported Lodging provision as a care leaver, of which 13 were "staying put" with their former foster carer and 28 young people in Supported Accommodation. Supported Accommodation services are both purchased from framework providers and spot purchased.

Despite the completion of the Supported Accommodation Tender in 2015 a gap in provision of high quality Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers in Medway, especially to support young people requiring a more enhanced and intensive level of support still exists.

There are numerous challenges in obtaining sufficient social housing for care leavers to assist them step down and move on to independence in Medway. Some are outlined below:

- Medway only has 13% of social housing stock and hence is reliant on private landlord accommodation.
 - The Welfare Reforms, requiring a subsidy for under occupancy has increased the demand of one bedroom flats however there is insufficient supply to meet demand. This makes single care leavers one of the hardest groups to find accommodation for.
 - Social housing can now charge rent up to 80% of the market rate which is increasing the cost of social housing. Social housing under the 'Allocations guidance 2012 and 2013' has the ability of offer more flexible and responsive
-

tenancies to a wider population e.g. low earners and key workers which is impacting on the availability of social housing for care leavers nationally.

- The bidding process for housing can take time and young people are all bidding against one another in an increasing limited pool of provision.
- In some cases private landlord accommodation is of poor quality and does not always provide long term stability for young people, as most tenancies are for a period of 12 months. This presents a particular pressure in finding suitable accommodation for young people 18+ who have Autism/ADHD and other disabilities that do require long term social housing.
- As of February 2015, Universal Credit for under 35 year olds has been paid directly to the young person. This represents a significant risk for private landlords who fear rent arrears and who may choose not to accept tenants using Universal Credit.
- Young people who have been evicted due to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and other reasons which housing may deem deliberate, result in young people being considered 'intentionally homeless' and hence are no longer eligible to for housing. In these cases they become the responsibility of Social Care to fund temporary accommodation and to provide support to secure alternative accommodation. If alternative privately rented accommodation is found, a guarantor is required but it is not Medway Council's policy to act in this capacity. Often the rental of these properties exceeds Housing benefit and hence here is often an expectation that Social Care services will pay the top up amount of rent not covered by housing benefit.

5.6 Other Support Services

Medway Children's Services have invested in a range of services to support children, and these services are available to all LAC 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 services
- Tier 2 CAMHS provided by an in-house service but managed by Tier 3 CAMHS provider
- Psychological services for care leavers up to the age of 21
- Specialist post abuse and post sexual abuse service
- Virtual School – a service to work with LAC and support them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes

- Outreach services

5.6.1. Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Support Needs of Young People:

Children often enter the care system with a poorer level of physical and mental health than their peers, and their longer-term outcomes remain worse. Two thirds of looked after children have at least one physical health complaint, and nearly half have a mental health disorder.

The recent report of the National Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce 'Future in Mind', establishes a clear and powerful consensus about how to make it easier for children and young people to access high quality mental health care when they need it. In response to this, Medway CCG, in partnership with Medway Council have developed a Local Transformation Plan (LTP). The draft service model has been developed and includes specialist support services like Children in Care CAMHS, eating disorders and perinatal mental health. Detailed below are some of the improvements to Children in Care emotional health and welfare services including CAMHS over the recent months and update on the development of the Local Transformation Plan.

Improvements 2016

1. In 2015 additional funding was secured via Parity of Esteem monies to increase the availability of emotional health and welfare services for Children in Care. This has enabled the Oakfield Psychology Service to increase its provision from a case load of 30 to 80 at anyone time. The service now provides in addition to one to one consultations, group sessions, training and support for foster carers and residential staff as well as the production of court assessments in order to support permanency for children. This service is now Medway's main provider of emotional health and welfare services for Children in Care. There are currently no waiting times for this service and further funding has been agreed to ensure the service runs through until September 2017 when the new contract for emotional health and welfare services on a Medway only foot print is due to start.
 2. The Single Point of Access (SPA) has been refocused and now has systems in place to support a multi-agency review of all new referrals to ensure that children receive the most appropriate service in a timely manner. This service is also developing processes to ensure that routine reviews of cases across all providers takes place at 24 weeks to ensure that drift doesn't occur and the local authority is aware of the plan of care for each child.
 3. Liaison with schools under the "Early Help" banner is ensuring that schools are aware of their responsibilities and have access to better information about what quality services are open to them to purchase.
-

Development of the Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental health.

- 1 During 2015 Joint Commissioners have led on the development of a Local Transformation Plan (LTP) for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing. As the proposed changes represent a substantial variation to health care NHS Medway CCG recommended that a draft service model went out to public consultation during April to June/July 2016. This approach was endorsed by Medway Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 March 2016. As such a 90 day consultation period began in April 2016.
- 2 Analysis of the consultation has supported the refinement of the proposed service model and has been reported back to the, prior to finalising Service Specifications and initiating the formal procurement process in Autumn 2016.
- 3 The current procurement timeline plans for a new service to be in place from 1 September 2017. Current joint contract arrangements with Kent County Council and the seven Kent CCGs have been extended to 31 March 2017 to facilitate Kent's parallel procurement process. Dialogue with other localities who have undertaken similar procurements and service transformations have highlighted the importance of adequate mobilisation time, following contract award. Initial discussions with SPFT were positive and work been undertaken to disaggregate the Medway Tier 3 service which had close operational ties with Swale.
- 4 In line with Medway's Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Local Transformation Plan (2015), in the future Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health support services will be designed to:
 - Promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing in ante-natal services, pre-school settings and schools and colleges
 - Establish Early Help and ensure clear pathways to that help are known about by the people who need it
 - Ensure there is accessible information and support that is easier to find by children, young people, and families.
 - Ensure all schools and services take a "Whole Family" approach in working with children and young people, also having regard to the impact on parents, siblings and family life
 - Work closely with staff in primary and community health services, and wider children's services including schools and children's social work teams to ensure effective and holistic multi-agency team working.
 - Support and sometimes take the lead in specialist or 'contract' fostering placement schemes to maintain and support the child or young person within a family placement and within area where possible, and to achieve better outcomes for those children and young people
 - Provide effective support for recovery following treatment; the development of the resilience skills of every child and young person, and stronger attention given to effective transition at key life stages

The expected outcome is of a whole systems pathway designed to meet the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people within

the context of their family. Services for Looked After Children will be commissioned under this wider umbrella.

5.6.2 In education, employment or training

Care leavers in education, employment or training on their birthday (17th to 21st birthday)

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Year
Total number	8	12	3	6	11	6	11	9	5	7	11	4	8
Number in EET	16	15	9	14	23	15	18	15	10	16	14	11	16
%	50%	80%	33%	43%	48%	40%	61%	60%	50%	44%	79%	36%	53%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table above shows the number of care leavers 17 to 21 years old during the period October 2015 to September 2016 who were in education, employment and training. The monthly figures are variable however the total figure of 53% is recognised to be not good enough and that more needs to be done to increase this figure. It is expected that delivery on the new Medway 14 -19 Strategy will be a key driver in achieving this.

% of care leavers in education, employment or training on their birthday

	Care Leavers	In education, employment or training	% EET
17 th birthday	3	3	100%
18 th birthday	38	26	68%
19 th birthday	31	17	55%
20 th birthday	41	16	39%
21 st birthday	63	31	49%

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The table below also gives a breakdown by age and is reflective of national figures that show the longer a young person who is Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains so, then the likelihood they will continue to be NEET into the long term increases. Current research attributes this not just to the well known characteristics of NEET but also to the current difficult economic climate that makes it difficult for any young person to secure employment that pays a living wage.

Not in education, training or employment

	Number
Because of illness/disability	24
Due to pregnancy or parenting	15
Other reason	44

Data Source: Performance and Information, Medway Council

The total numbers of care leavers who were NEET at the end of September 2016 was 83 and is also an area of concern that requires concerted effort through the delivery of the Medway 14 to 19 Strategy in the first instance.

6. Ongoing commissioning priorities (short to medium term)

6.1 16+ Homeless Young People and Care Leavers

Partnership Commissioning, will continue working with Social Care, Housing, Youth Services, Health and Education, to deliver on the 2014 six objectives for homeless young people aged 16+ and Care Leavers aged 16 to 25 :

- To embed an integrated pathway to support the smooth transition for young people moving into independence, when they are ready and are prepared to do so.
- Secure a sufficient range of good quality Supported Accommodation and floating support that is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people.
- Support young people to access the best possible health, education, training and employment opportunities so that they can achieve their potential, and for these services to be delivered in a more joined up way.
- Ensure funding is spent efficiently and effectively in securing sufficient provision.
- Involve young people in informing the commissioning approach
- Improve communication, information sharing and more joined up working across partner agencies to achieve better outcomes for Care Leavers.

We will achieve the following objectives by:

- Robustly monitoring the outcomes of 16+ homeless and care leavers to determine if the integrated pathway to independence is effective in preventing young people entering care, and that Care Leavers and those 16+ homeless who are accommodated, follow a clear pathway into independence and are supported by all partner agencies to do so.
- Ensuring that those young people with complex needs who are transitioning to adulthood are supported to do so through consideration at the Transition Panel meetings. The multi agency network meetings will ensure that these young people receive continuity of service even as they move into adulthood and that through this process they are safeguarded.

6.1.1 Secure Sufficiency of Provision:

- To spot purchase cost effective and quality supported accommodation and floating support, when framework providers are unable to meet the needs of young people.
-

- To develop relationships with supported accommodation providers in such a way that the market is further stimulated to meet the needs of Medway 16+ homeless, care leavers and those with disabilities.
- To robustly monitor performance and quality of provision against key performance indicators as set out in the contract.
- To support the Staying Put scheme being extended to IFAs who are currently caring for some of our young people with complex and challenging behaviours.
- To put in place revised Individual Placement Agreements including updated Pathway Plans as to expectations and outcomes to be achieved for the young people, including strong focus on educational attainment, employment and training.

6.1.2 Drive up quality standards of existing Support Accommodation

Providers:

- To continue to monitor the Supported Accommodation providers standards through the application of the quality assurance and performance framework.
- Put in place performance improvement plans with providers, where necessary, and regularly review provider's progress in achieving performance targets – throughout the year. Where providers do not meet quality standards despite support from the local authority to prohibit further placements and where appropriate to remove young people as a last resort.
- Host provider forums such as that seek to raise aspirations and achievements of looked after children and care leavers.

6.1.3 Address the gaps in provision around emotional well-being and behavioural support Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- To support the development and delivery of new service model for Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing as a part of the Local Transformation Programme.
 - Take forward a process of robust contract management across all providers of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
 - To continue to support the implementation of routine, multi agency clinical review of all children receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 services via the Single Point of Access. This approach will assist the Local Authority in determining the impact of therapeutic interventions on children's and young peoples lives.
-

6.1.4 Drive forward improvements in performance in respect of Initial Health Assessments:

- To work with the Clinical Commissioning Group in order to Increase the capacity within the clinical team to drive up performance standards to achieve the target of Initial Health Assessments being carried out within the 28 day timescale.

6.1.5 Drive forward improvements in number of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training:

- To work under the auspices of the Medway 14 to 19 Strategy in order to work effectively across all partner agencies and providers to ensure a joined up approach is taken to supporting Care Leavers enter education, training and employment. Support provided will include, increased sharing of information and where possible, preventing placement breakdown and finding innovative ways to overcome barriers and obstacles, preventing young people access EET.

6.1.6 Drive forward improvements in the management and support of children at risk of or exposed CSE

- To ensure we have the right services in place to prevent CSE and support young people at risk or victims of abuse
- To ensure that providers of accommodation and support have routine CSE training and awareness
- To ensure that children and young people identified as at risk of CSE are referred for appropriate support services including emotional health and welfare support.

7 Commissioning Priorities (medium to longer term)

Vision

Medway is ambitious for it's looked after children and care leavers and seeks to give each child the best opportunity to succeed in life. Placing the needs of children at the heart of all that Medway does is the key driver for transforming the way care and accommodation is currently commissioned.

Medway's vision is to offer children services and support that is tailored to meet the individual needs of children at each stage of their journey in care. Getting it right first time as means to preventing escalation of need is essential.

We aim to prevent the escalation of need by delivering an integrated, well-coordinated and a holistic offer of service that is child centered high quality and grounded in evidence based practice that stretches across our Edge of Care and LAC Service.

We seek to secure the right intervention, at the right time and try to get it right first time so to enable effective step down and rehabilitation home and secure far more cost effective sufficiency of local provision to meet core need groups.

Through working in partnership with our providers seek to build services and support that facilitate families staying together and where this is not safe to do so to secure permanency for the children as quickly as is practicable to do so.

Priorities

- Secure high quality and evidence based intervention and care that makes a positive and sustained impact in improving the lives and outcomes for children and young people
- Secure sufficiency of local provision ensuring the right care and intervention is delivered at the right time, so we get it right first time so to enable effective step down, rehabilitation home and permanency
- Secure more cost effective sufficiency of local provision to meet core need groups and achieve sustainable cost savings.

Key requirements for Commissioning

- To secure economies of scale through working in partnership with fewer providers to meet Medway's needs and requirements.
- To reduce the level of competition and duplication between in-house fostering and IFA's in recruiting foster carers in the Medway area.
- To secure sufficient carers in Medway to meet the needs of Medway's children and adolescents locally, so enabling them to have access to local schools and full range of support services to meet their needs.
- To ensure that there is greater integration between care planning, placement decision making, matching and placement finding and quality assurance.
- To ensure that there is greater integration across social work teams and commissioned providers to prevent placement drift and that pro-active care planning is taken forward
- To drive forward a culture that is focused on achieving positive impact and outcomes for children.



8 Monitoring progress on the Looked After Children Strategy and Sufficiency Report

Detailed commissioning action plans have been developed to support the implementation of the Looked After Children Strategy and the Sufficiency Strategy.

Progress on achieving the LAC Strategy performance targets 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 include 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 encouraged to recognise their role in implementation, through leadership, communication, supervision to promote good care planning practice, and clear accountability frameworks.

Key Impact Measures for Care Leavers and 16+ Homeless:

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.

Activity	Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Number of CIC • Increase in numbers of CIC placed for adoption and made subject of SGO • Increase in the level of capacity, referrals to and actual placements made in in-house foster service • Net gain of foster placements by locality and placement type • Reduction in 16 - 24 year olds presenting as homeless. • Reduction in homeless acceptances of 16-24 year olds. • Reduction in number of young people aged 16+ becoming looked after. • Reduction of babies becoming looked after through use of mother and baby placements where appropriate. • % of 16-17 who left care • Increase in number of LAC 16+ with pathway plans. • Reduction in the number and % of LAC over 16 NEET. • Increase in % of young people looked after 19 in EET. • Increase in % of care leavers in suitable accommodation. • Increase in the number of LAC in higher education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in out of authority placements. • Increase in the maintenance of tenancies. • Satisfaction of service users including those living in supported accommodation (qualitative indicator). • Young people agree accommodation is suitable and meets needs. • Young people are satisfied with the accommodation process and outcome of intervention. • Children in Care and Care Leaver's success in EET in line with their peers.

Diversity Impact Assessment

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Sufficiency Report 2016/17 (2)
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	24th October 2016
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name and title of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Lorraine Foster, Programme Lead, Looked After Children.

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

This Diversity Impact Assessment addresses the implications of the Sufficiency Report 2016/17 (2) for Medway Council.

The report sets out how Medway Council will meet the placement needs of current and future Looked After Children 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 and support for children in care within their local area 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.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

Comparison of progress against the 2016/17(2) Sufficiency report as detailed in Appendix A demonstrates progress against previously agreed targets. The data utilised for this comparison has come from a range of sources including Data produced by performance and information, the Local Area Interactive Tool produced by The Department for Education, The Office of National Statistics and Children’s Services.

In addition the report provides evidence for further work that needs to be done to ensure that an appropriate range and choice of placements and support is available to meet the identified needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Diversity Impact Assessment

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age			
Disability		✓	
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race			
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other (eg low income groups)		✓	

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

- Placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers are provided and commissioned to meet identified needs
- Processes for accessing and monitoring placements achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness
- Management and support provided to children at risk of or exposed to CSE is successful in protecting looked after children and care leavers from further abuse.

Diversity Impact Assessment

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- Are there alternative providers?
- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

Accommodation and support commissioned by Medway Council is expected to meet the individual needs of a person and this includes all of the protected characteristics.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers that are eligible for accommodation and support services will continue to have a choice of quality placement and support.

Medway Council will continue to provide statutory services to the most vulnerable and will commission services in line with its core values and priorities.

6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Inform the Council of progress against previous updates and any proposed changes.	Lorraine Foster	December 2017

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing action plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

To proceed with the changes outlined in the Sufficiency Report 2016/17 (2).

Diversity Impact Assessment

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Ann Domenev

Date

2016

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC: phone 2443 email: annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk

C&A: (Children's Social Care) contact your normal P&I contact

C&A (all other areas): phone 1481 email: paddy.cahill@medway.gov.uk

BSD: phone 2472/1490 email: corppi@medway.gov.uk

PH: phone 2636 email: david.whiting@medway.gov.uk

Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication (corppi@medway.gov.uk)