

Middlesbrough Placement Sufficiency Assessment

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Each child or young person has a right to be looked after following a full assessment of need. When a child becomes looked after, this will be a positive choice which is intended to meet their assessed needs and this decision will have been made, wherever possible, with the agreement of the child/young person, their family and significant others.

1.2 When a child becomes looked after, there needs to be a sufficient range of accommodation options available to be able to match the child to a placement that will meet his/her needs. It is our aim that children and young people experience being cared for in a nurturing environment with a sense of belonging which will support the child experiencing stability at the earliest opportunity and this can only be achieved if we have quality carers and provision is varied and can meet a range of needs.

1.3 This document sets out how Middlesbrough Council aims to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation of all types for children in care and how it will meet its sufficiency duty as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The Act requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area, which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty')

1.4 Any placement for a child looked after will, so far as possible and in the child's best interests, enable the child to remain close to home, have continuity of education and health care provision, enable siblings to live together, promote positive contact with family if appropriate and ensure suitability of accommodation if the child or young person is disabled. The education and health needs of a child should be given priority consideration where accommodation or placement change is being considered. This will be in conjunction with the Head of Middlesbrough's Virtual School and the lead of the health of Looked After Children.

The Vision

1.5 The vision is that all children and young people in Middlesbrough are able to enjoy a happy, safe and healthy childhood, participate in making decisions that affect them and are able to realise their ambitions and aspirations. We will work in partnership with children, young people and their families to support them to identify, at the earliest opportunity, what services and support they require to transform their lives.

1.6 This will be achieved through the delivery of services which are of the highest quality, timely and accessible to all. Services provided will be based upon a sound

understanding of the individual needs of each child or young person and his or her unique circumstances and designed to make a real difference to their lives. This will be supported through the implementation and embedding of the Signs of Safety Framework in all children's service areas.

1.7 The work of Children's Services is based upon the following values which determine the way we will work together to achieve the vision:

- We will work to protect children from significant harm;
- We will keep children and their families at the heart of everything we do;
- We understand that every child and every family is different. We will assess each child and their family so that we can offer services to suit their needs.
- We will respect each child and their family and always treat them with dignity. We will not make changes to the services we provide without good reason;
- We believe we can make the biggest difference to a child's quality of life by providing a service as soon as we find out that the child needs support from us.
- We will check our services often to make sure they are as good as they can be. We will make changes to our services if we need to, based on information we have from children, young people, their carers and key staff.
- Our workers will be skilled and will do their jobs well. Managers will give support and guidance to the staff in their teams. All workers will get high-quality training as part of their job;
- Our services will work together to make sure we provide children with the best possible start in life.

1.8 To make sure that the work we do upholds the values, our promise to those who use our services is to:

- Treat you with respect
- Work with you and your family to help you raise your children in a safe and caring family home
- Employ workers who are skilled, honest and reliable and have your family's best interests at the heart of their work
- Make sure that we keep your child's needs in mind when we make any decisions, no matter how difficult
- Make sure that everyone involved with your child and your family understands how any decisions we make will affect them

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Section 2 The Sufficiency Duty

2.1 Securing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children and young people is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for these vulnerable children and young people. In Middlesbrough we recognise the high demands around placement choice and availability – including options outside of the immediate Middlesbrough area.

2.2 Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 seeks to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people by requiring local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').

2.3 The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers. The accommodation must also meet the needs of children, which can be wide-ranging.

2.4 A local authority which is taking a strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation will include in their analysis, planning and delivery, children who are in need and are at risk of care or custody. Meeting the needs of these children will have a significant impact on the ability of the local authority to provide sufficient accommodation for those they look after. This means 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.

2.6 Local authorities already have a number of duties towards children within their area which are related to the sufficiency duty. In particular:

- Section 17(1) of the 1989 Act provides that it is the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need (as defined in section 17(10) of the 1989 Act) and their families in the local area which are appropriate to their needs.
- Section 20 of that Act requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation in accordance with the provisions of that section.
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are either removed or kept away from home under Part V of the 1989 Act or who are subject to a criminal court order.
- Section 22C (5) requires local authorities to place children in the most appropriate placement available. In determining the most appropriate

placement for a child, section 22C (7) requires local authorities to take into account a number of factors (such as the duties to safeguard and promote welfare; promote educational achievement; ascertain the wishes of the child and family; and give due consideration to religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural background).

- In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7)(a) also requires the local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent.
- Section 22C sets out the additional factors (in no order of priority) which the local authority must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - allowing the child to live near his/her home;
 - not disrupting the child's education or training;
 - enabling the child and a looked after sibling to live together;
 - meeting the particular needs of disabled children; and
 - Providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- Section 23(1) (a) requires a local authority to provide accommodation for a child who is in their care (by virtue of a care order).

2.6 In order to fulfil these duties, a local authority requires sufficient accommodation (and other services) to provide suitable placements for those children for whom placement within the local area is most appropriate. The sufficiency duty reinforces the duties set out above by requiring local authorities, when taking steps to provide accommodation within their area for the children they look after, to have regard also to the benefit of having:

- A number of accommodation providers in their area; and
- A range of accommodation capable of meeting different needs.

2.7 Existing good practice suggests that meeting the provisions set out in the 1989 Act can best be met through a step change in commissioning practice in which local authorities are active in managing their market and work with their partners to:

- support and maintain diversity of services to better meet the needs of looked after children including through the provision of preventive and early intervention services to reduce the need for care proceedings;
- place children within their local authority area where reasonably practicable and where this is consistent with a child's needs and welfare;
- support the market to deliver more appropriate placements and other services locally;
- Have mechanisms for commissioning appropriate, high quality placements and services outside of their local area, which can meet a child's identified needs (this will be necessary in circumstances where it is not consistent with a

child's welfare or reasonably practicable for him/her to be placed within the local area); and

- Have in place a strategy for addressing supply issues and reducing constraints over time (methods for doing this might include building their own capacity and expertise, as well as those of local private and voluntary sector providers).

2.8 The local authority's duty in section 22G has to be understood in the context of their duty in section 22C of the 1989 Act. In accordance with section 22C (5), the overriding factor is that the placement must be the most appropriate placement available. Next, the local authority must give preference to a placement with a friend, relative or other person connected with the child and who is a local authority foster parent. Failing that, the local authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, in all circumstances find a placement that:

- is near the child's home;
- does not disrupt his education or training;
- enables the child to live with an accommodated sibling;
- where the child is disabled, is suitable to meet the needs of that child; and
- is within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.

2.9 There is no order of priority within the categories listed in the bullet points above. All of these are factors that have to be taken into account.

Section 3 Local Context

3.1 Middlesbrough is located in the North East within the Tees Valley. It is a unitary authority with a population of approximately 140,639. Mid-year population estimates 2017 show that there are around 32,396 children and young people under the age of 18 living in the town. Middlesbrough is the most ethnically diverse local authority area in the Tees Valley with a BAME population of 11.7% at Census 2011, whilst there are no more recent statistical releases including ethnicity, it is noted that with population growth this proportion will certainly have grown in the seven years since the census.

3.2 In 2018 take up of free early education is high with 97% of 3- and 4-year-olds accessing the free entitlement, 91% of which were accessing a provision rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. In addition, 748 children aged 2 were accessing funded early education with 92% accessing a good or outstanding provider.

3.3 Middlesbrough is one of the most deprived towns in the country with 63% of children under 18 years living within an LSOA¹ in the 20% most deprived in the country and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index identifying that 37% of children in Middlesbrough live in poverty. Effects of deprivation can be seen through the uptake of food banks, the uptake for free school meals (24.2%) being almost double the national rate (13.5%) and through a range of health indicators such as the rate of poor oral health and obesity.

3.4 The rate of referrals to social services in 2016 has decreased to 465.0 from 600.1 in 2015. This is below the North East region average of 622.6 and the national average of 532.2 per 10,000 population under 18. In 2017 the rate of referrals in Middlesbrough has increased to 634.6 per 10,000 population under 18.

3.5 In 2016 Middlesbrough also had a high rate of children in need of social care services with 531.0 children in need per 10,000 population under 18. The average rate per 10,000 in the North East region is 441.5 and the national rate is 337.7. In 2017 the rate of children in need in Middlesbrough has risen to 583.5 per 10,000 population.

3.6 In 2017, 52% of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 were in education, employment or training and this is above both North East and national averages of 50% in the second quartile.

3.7 Participation of 16 year olds in education or training is in line with national average at 94%. Participation of 17 year olds is in line with the national average at 89%.²

¹ LSOA – Low Super Output Area – A geographical boundary type used by ONS for statistical purposes

Section 4 Current Position and Needs Analysis

4.1 The graph below (Figure 1) shows the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP), the number of children looked after (LAC) by the authority and the number of Children in Need (CIN) in Middlesbrough from 2015/16.

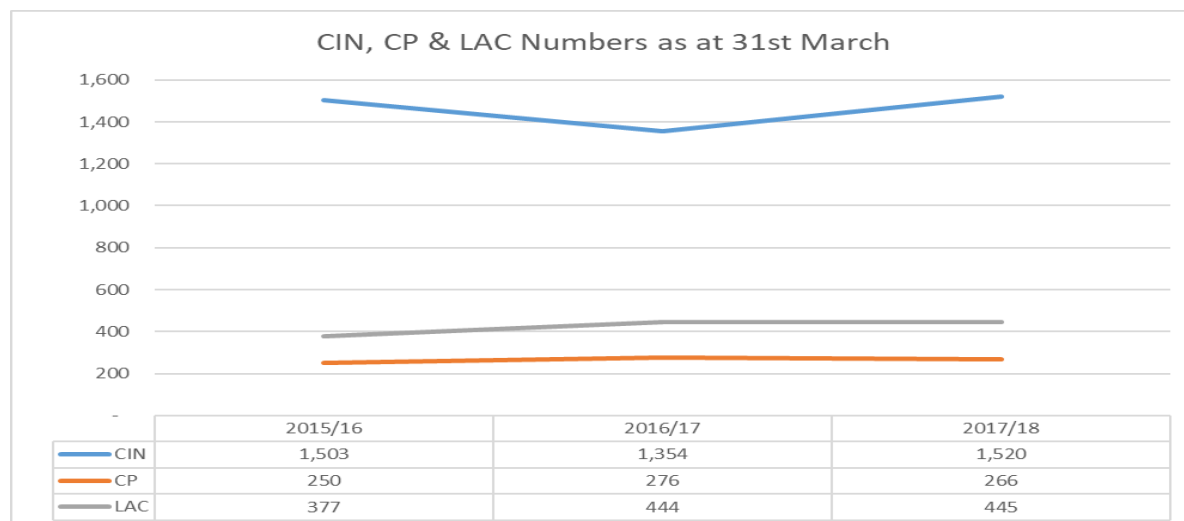


Figure 1

The number of looked after children is increasing at both a national and local level, resulting in increased demand of placements. National statistics from the Department for Education report that 75,420 children were looked after in 2017/18.

The number of children becoming looked after in Middlesbrough rose sharply from 2015/16 to 2016/17 going from 377 children to 444, with only a marginal increase of one child to March 2018.

The number of children in need decreased to 1,354 in 2016/17 but has risen again in 2017/18 to 1,520, higher than our numbers at the end of 2015/16

Over the last three years, the number of children subject to child protection plans has remained relatively stable albeit with a marginal increase between 2015/16 and 2017/18.

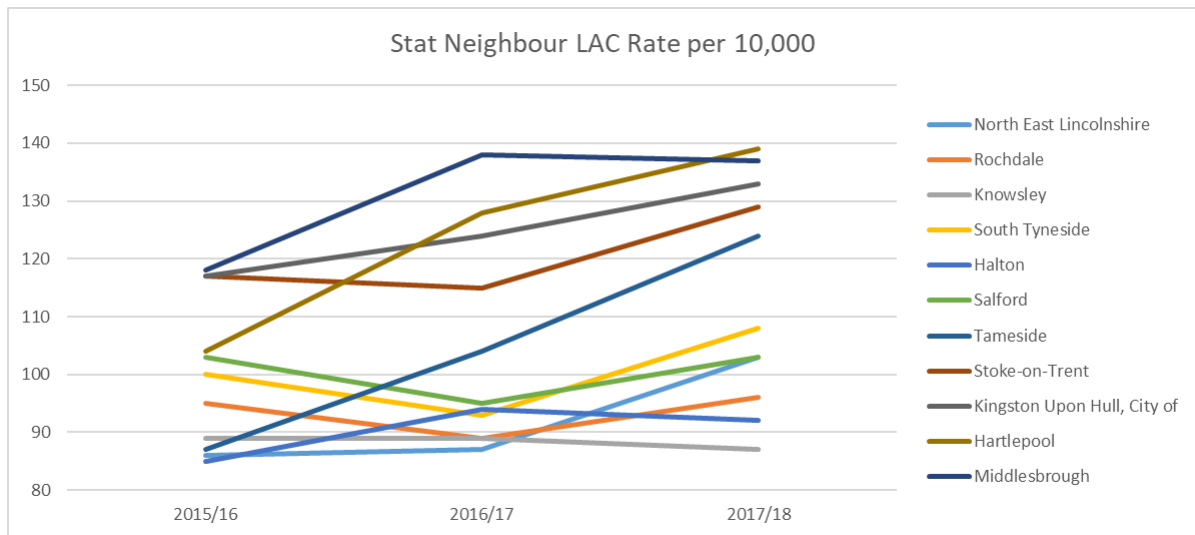


Figure 2

4.2 Middlesbrough's rate of children looked after per 10,000 as at 2017/18 is 137.0 (Figure 2) which is above the North East regional average of 95 and the national average of 64 per 10,000 population under 18. Middlesbrough has the 3rd highest rate of children looked after per 10,000 in 2017/18, behind Hartlepool and Blackpool.

Child poverty is increasing in Middlesbrough and there are high levels of need within the town. This is impacting significantly on how families are functioning and at times placing children in vulnerable situations necessitating their admission to care. Middlesbrough Council provides prevention services to support families at the earliest point. As part of Middlesbrough Council's prevention services, the Local Authority is developing an Edge of Care provision which is aimed at reducing the need for children and young people to become looked after outside of their birth family.

4.3 Gender & age breakdown

The following graph (Figure 3) provides a breakdown of the children looked after population by age and by gender. There are more males looked after than girls, with the % of males increasing over the last three years. Our looked after age breakdown shows we are increasing in the 1 to 4, and 5 to 9 range, while our highest % is in the 10 to 15 age bracket.

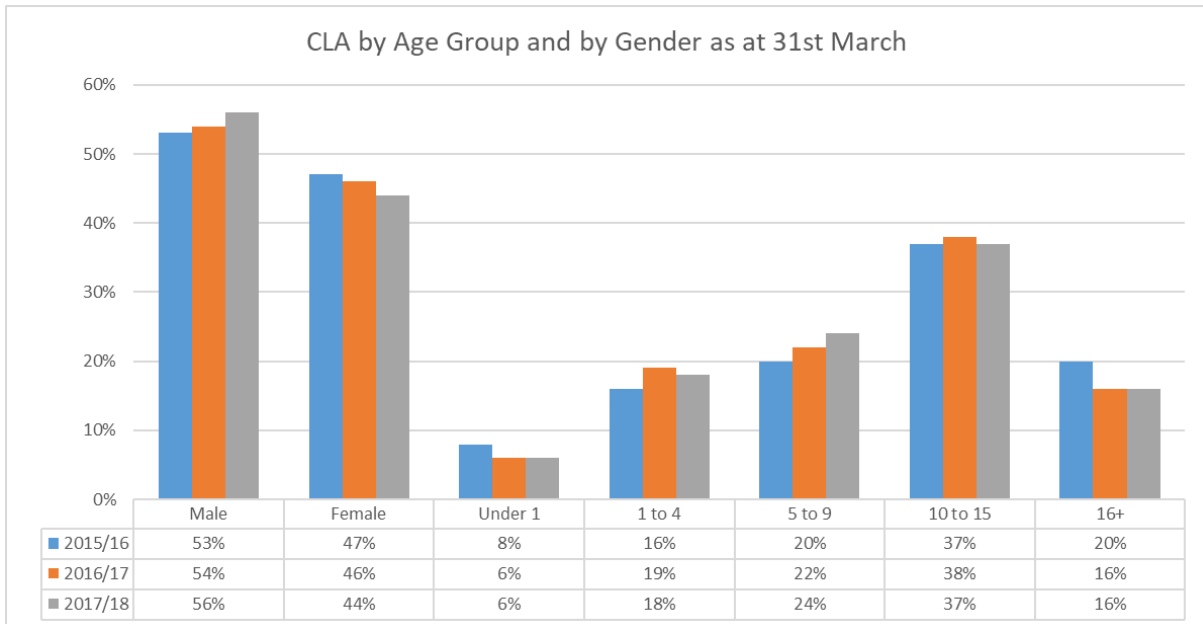


Figure 3

4.4 Ongoing monitoring will show any emerging trends in changes to the children looked after population to inform commissioning and service redesign intentions.

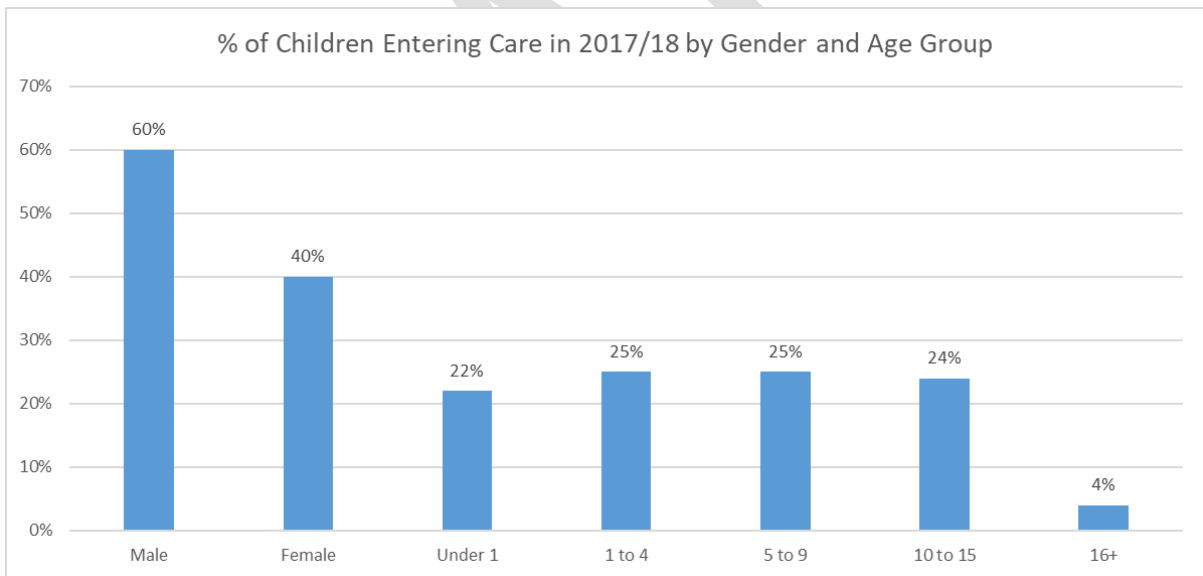


Figure 4

4.5 As the graph above shows, in 2017/18 60% of the children who become looked after were male, while 25% were in the 1 to 4 and 5 to 9 age groups. The high demand for looked after placements for the younger age group is met effectively within in house fostering provision and the local authority will continue to ensure that it has a sufficient supply of foster carers to meet this need.

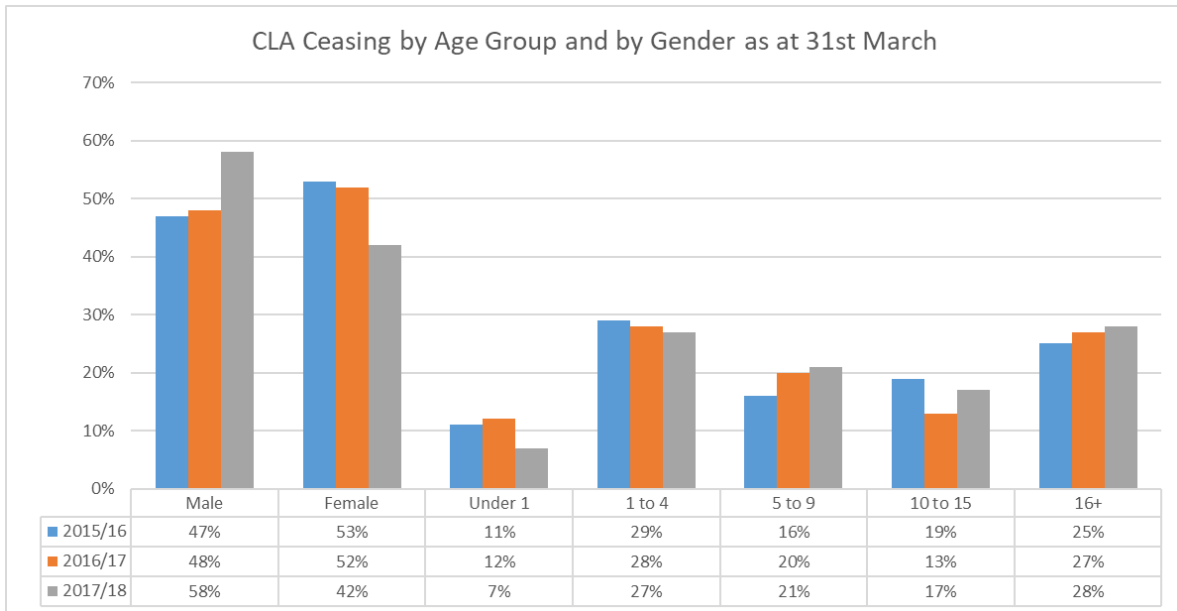


Figure 5

4.6 Of those leaving care, the % of males has been increasing, which is in line with the increase in the number of males in care within Middlesbrough. The % of those leaving care are predominantly in the 16+ age bracket, which is offset by a decrease in those in the 1 to 4 age bracket. As detailed in Section 6.4, the local authority will continue to support care leavers in developing their pathways to independence.

Due to a change in regulations, the local authority anticipates that this will have an impact on numbers of children ceasing to be looked after.

4.7 The ages of children looked after by gender are depicted below in Figure 6. The largest cohorts are the young people aged 14 and 16.

There are 69 (16% of the cohort) young people aged 16+, of these children a small number are currently in independent living arrangements. The remaining children are either expected to 'Stay put', attend University, or require accommodation with floating support.

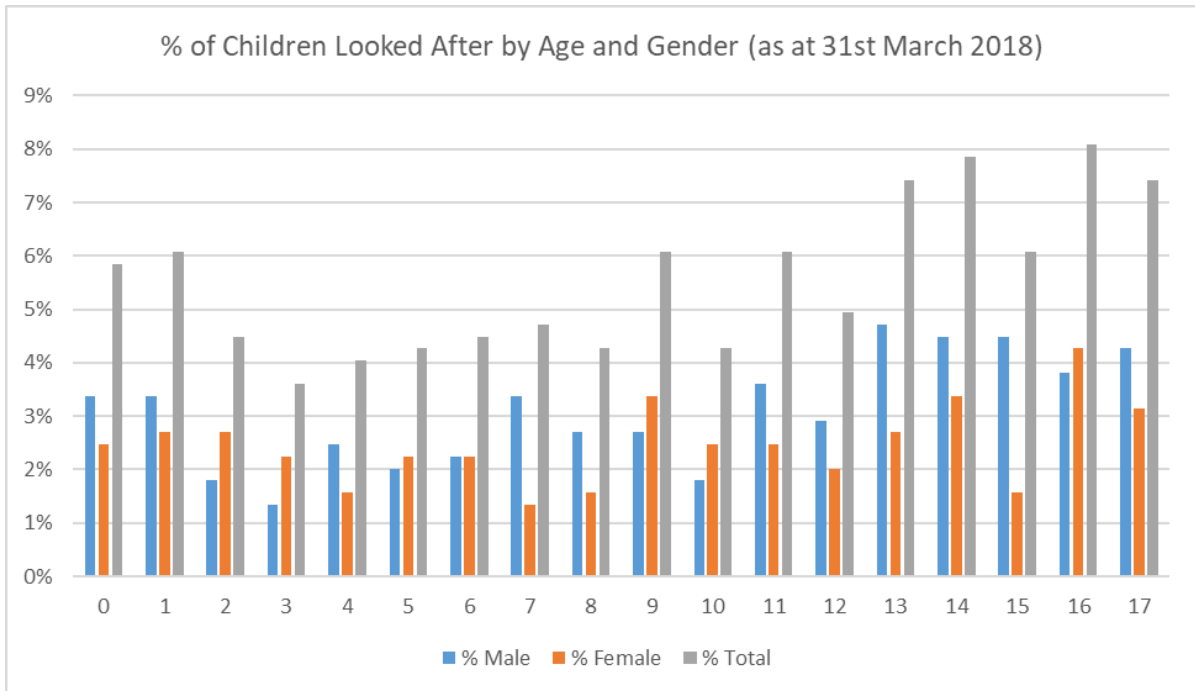


Figure 6

4.8 The majority of children in care have experienced one placement in the last year, although this is declining. Middlesbrough’s % of children looked after with 3 or more placements in one year remains stable at 5%. The cases of the children who have experienced more than one move are monitored carefully, to understand the reasons and from this analysis information is used to inform future placements, with the aim of keeping our children and young people in stable, appropriate settings. (See Figure 7).

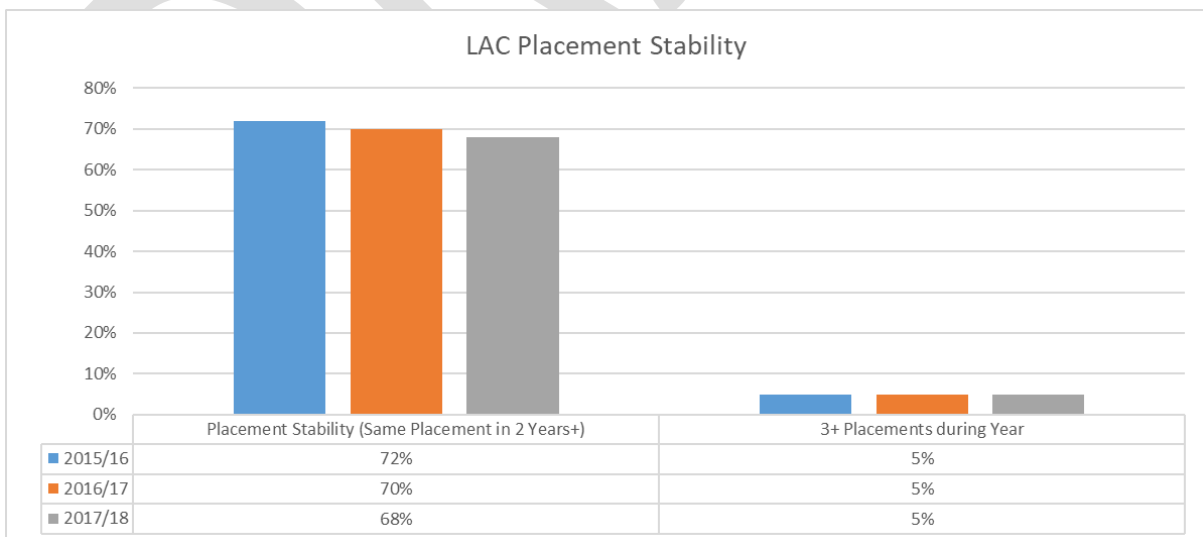


Figure 7

4.9 Children look after by duration of period in care

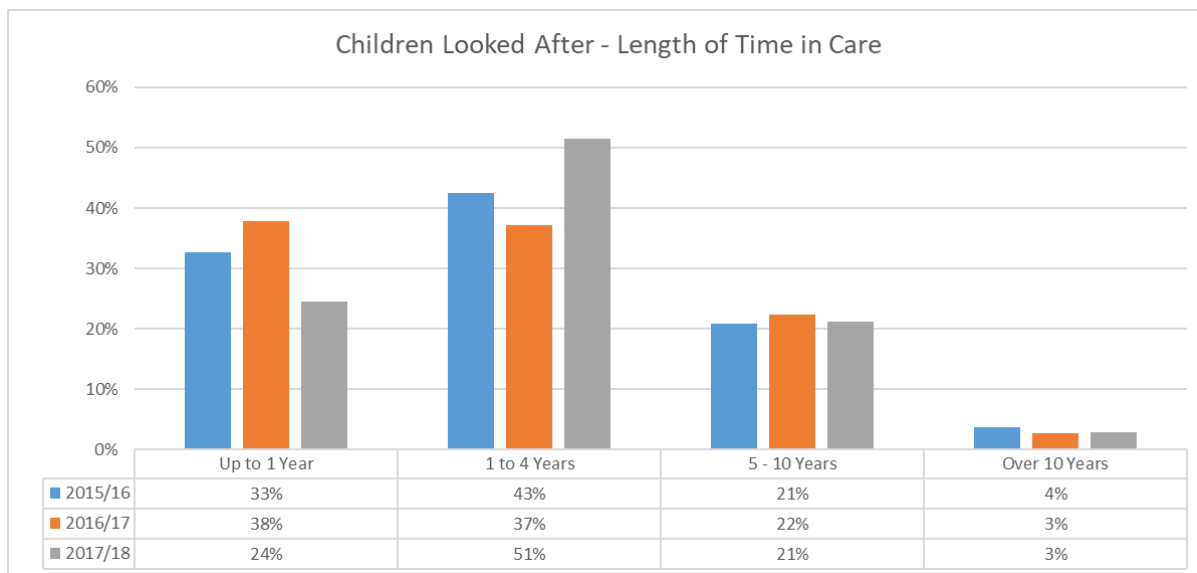


Figure 8

From the 17/18 looked after children cohort, there were 8 sibling groups of 3 or more children/young people. This equates to 25 children which is 9% of the Looked After Children Cohort. The number of sibling groups has reduced from the 2016/17 cohort however this continues to pose a challenge to the local authority as this impacts on the overall numbers of children coming into care and the availability of placements to match the needs of large sibling groups.

4.10 Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

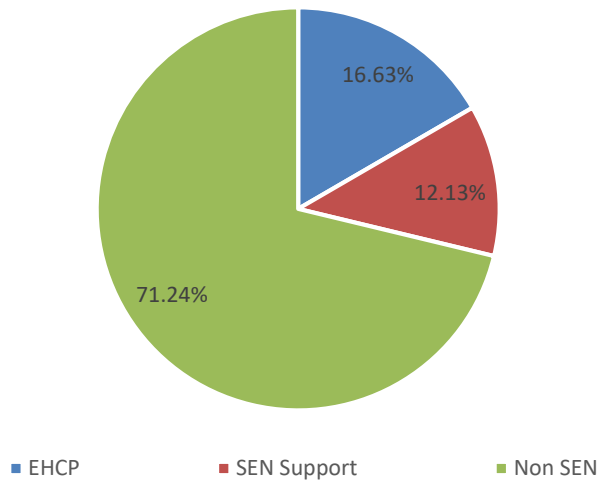
Middlesbrough has signed up to the National Transfer Scheme which means that we have pledged to take unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Department for Education has provided a bench mark for each local authority regarding the number of children that should be accommodated; this is set by government and calculated as 0.07% of the child population, in Middlesbrough this equates to 23 children.

Middlesbrough has therefore seen a rise of unaccompanied asylum seekers becoming looked after. As at 31st March 2017 the local authority accommodated 8 children, this has since decreased by 1 to 7 children as at 31st March 2018. A number of children have been accommodated via the national transfer scheme.

4.11 Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The graph below highlights the percentage of children looked after with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or receiving SEN support. A child or young person who is looked after by Middlesbrough is more likely (16.6%) to have an EHC plan than a Middlesbrough child or young person who is not in care (3.6%).

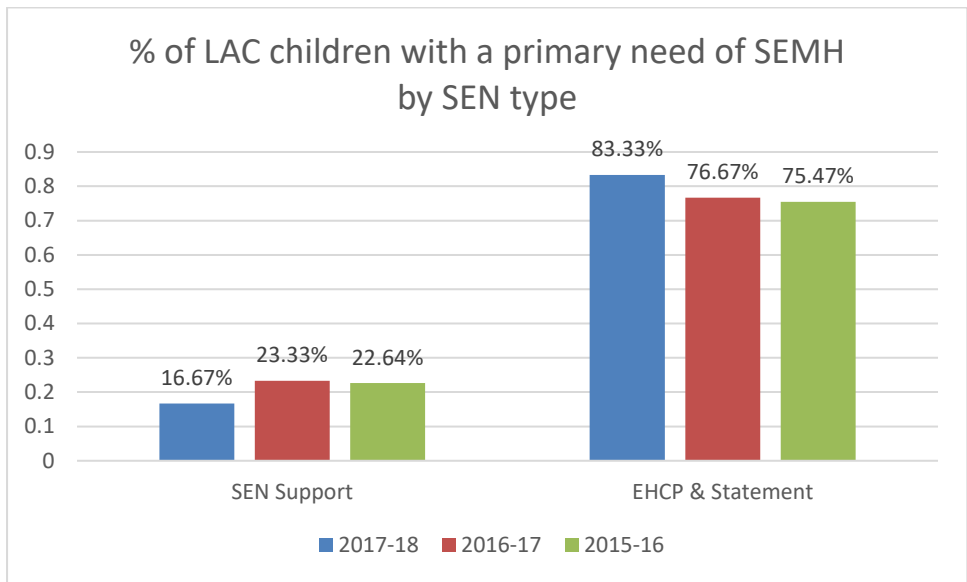
% LAC by SEN need type as at 31st March 2018



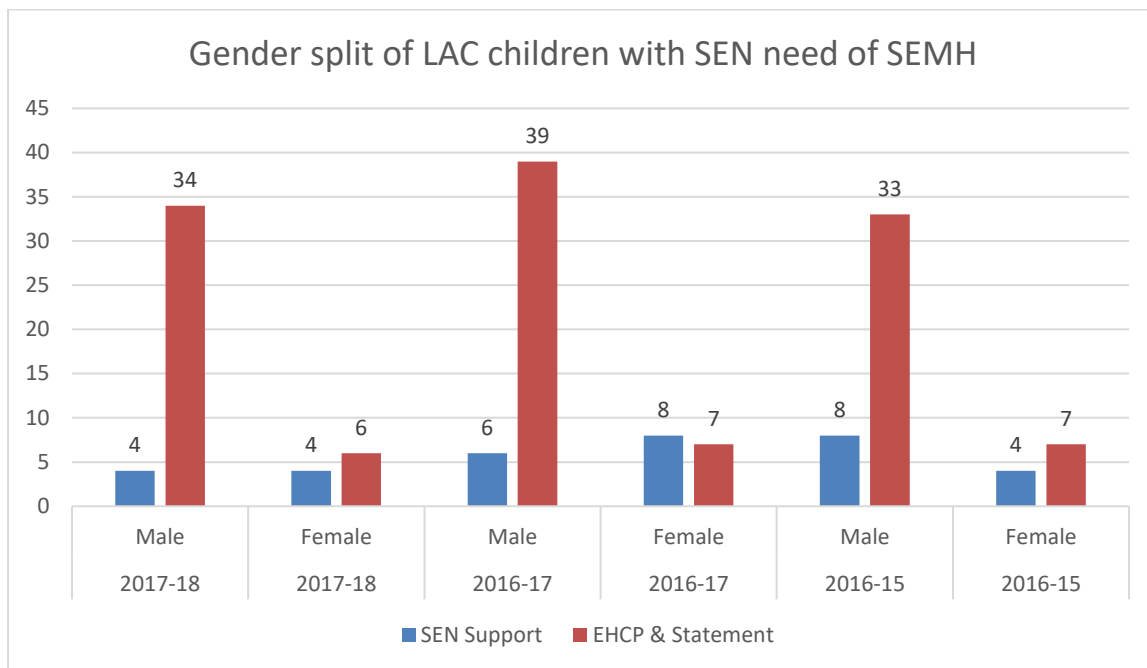
SEN Type	%	No
EHCP	16.6%	74
SEN Support	12.1%	54
Non SEN	71.2%	317
Grand Total		445

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

The three year trend data available shows that there is a large cohort of children looked after with SEMH needs in Middlesbrough. The percentage of these children/young people with complex SEMH needs and hence requiring the support of EHCPs is increasing and this places additional pressure on mainstream settings, additionally resourced provision and special school provision. Data indicates that boys are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with SEMH than girls.



Year	SEN Support		EHCP & Statement		Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	
2017-18	8	17%	40	83.3%	48
2016-17	14	23%	46	76.7%	60
2015-16	12	23%	40	75.5%	53



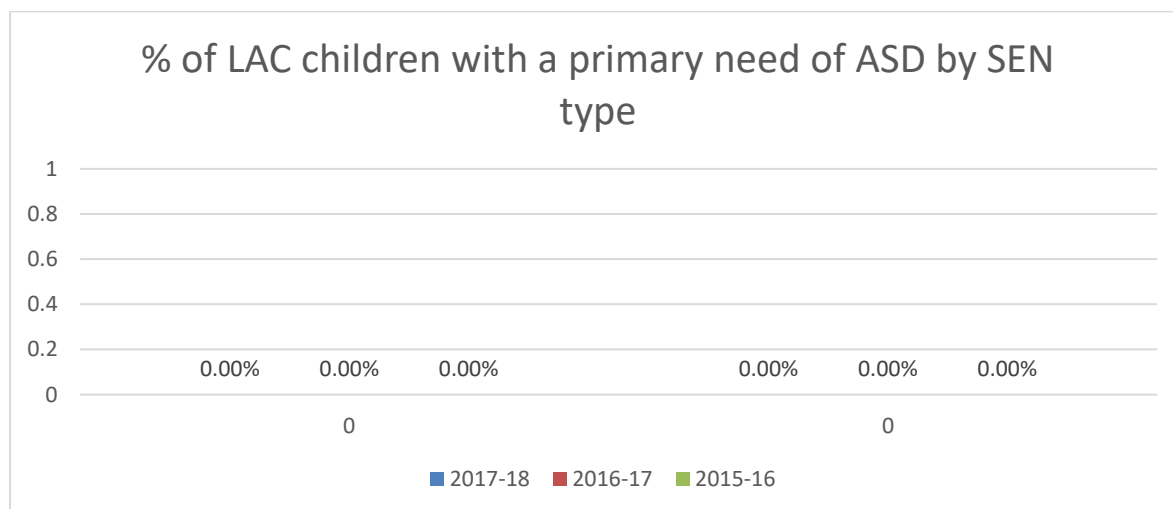
Year	Gender	SEN Support	EHCP & Statement	Grand Total
2017-18	Male	4	34	38
2017-18	Female	4	6	10
2016-17	Male	6	39	45
2016-17	Female	8	7	15
2016-15	Male	8	33	8
2016-15	Female	4	7	4

Middlesbrough's social care and education professionals are working collaboratively and with providers to explore different models that will enable more children and young people with SEMH to be accommodated and educated closer to home where possible rather than increasing the number of out of area placements commissioned.

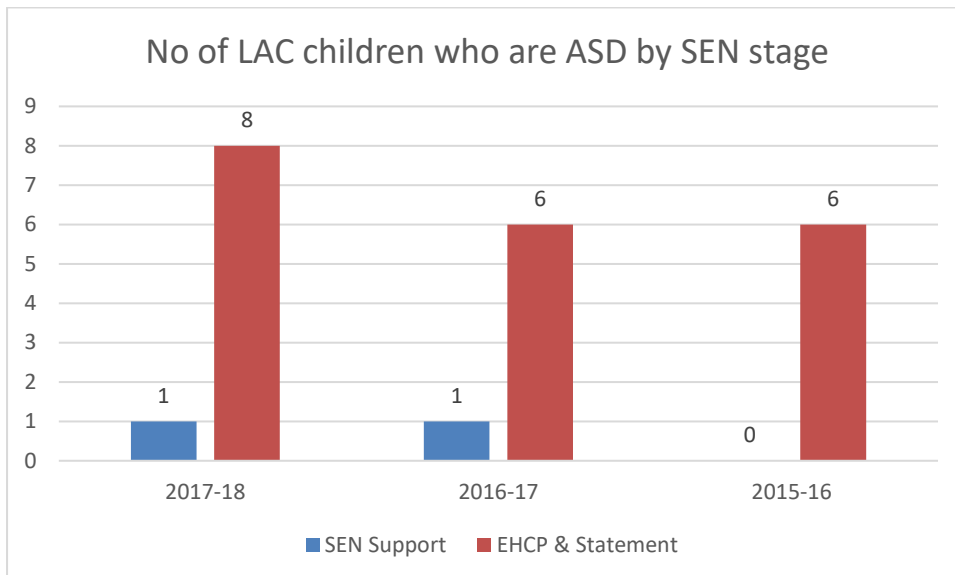
In January 2017 Commissioners in the Tees Valley explored the possibility of developing further provision by the submission of an SEMH Free School bid to the DFE to support this cohort of young people. Unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful but in October 2018, the Commissioners have recently submitted a new bid which will be considered during the next few months.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

There is steadily increasing number of children looked after with EHCPs with ASD identified as their primary need (from 6 in 2015/16 to 9 in 2017/2018) placed in specialist educational placements.



	SEN Support		EHCP & Statement		Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	
2017-18	1	11%	8	88.9%	9
2016-17	1	13%	7	87.5%	8
2015-16		0%	6	100.0%	6



Year	SEN Support	EHCP & Statement
2017-18	1	8
2016-17	1	6
2015-16	0	6

Figure 11

A review is underway to fully understand the needs of this group of children and young people to enable projections moving forwards and to explore different models that will enable more children with SEMH to be accommodated closer to home where possible.

4.14 Autistic Spectrum Disorder

There is currently a small number of children looked after with Education, Health and Care Plans or statements placed in specialist educational residential placements with ASD identified as their primary need. 100% of the current educational residential placements are outside of the Middlesbrough area.

The total number of children looked after accessing residential school or day provision in the 2017/18 academic year was 2, both of whom had ASD alongside significant complex needs and behavioural issues.

4.15 Virtual School

Local authorities have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children with *a particular duty to promote their educational achievement*. For a variety of complex reasons this cohort of young people does not achieve as well as their peers and they benefit from additional intervention and support.

The concept of the Virtual School is an organisational framework to help plan and deliver education support to looked-after children. The framework has been used in the authority for a number of years and has become increasingly formalised both locally and nationally. In Middlesbrough the Virtual School aims to ensure all looked-after children:

- Regularly attend school
- Make good progress
- Have stability in their care and education placement
- Have a high quality personal education plan.

The Virtual School ensures that every child has a PEP advisor who meets with key people to ensure that every child has an effective education plan which supports them to achieve. The Virtual School monitors the attainment, progress and attendance of every child and ensures the most appropriate intervention.

4.16 Children becoming looked after in 2017/18

The figures used within this assessment have been end of 2018 figures which offers a picture of trends however it is important to review current information on those children that have become looked after since the last statutory return. The number of children that became looked after from April 2018 to end of October 2018 totals 96 as set out below with a larger proportion being females.

Qtr.	Female	Male	Grand Total
1	33	30	63
2	14	13	27
3 (October & November)	4	2	6
Grand Total	51	45	96

The following table shows that there are a large number of children becoming looked after 4 years old and under. This is an area that needs particular focus as this age group are the hardest to find appropriate provision for and often have significant issues due to potential childhood trauma and neglect.

Qtr.	Under 1	1-4 Yrs	5-9 Yrs	10-15 Yrs	16+ Yrs	Grand Total
1	13	18	15	13	4	63
2	12	8	2	5	0	27
3 (October & November)	1	2	3	0	0	6
Grand Total	26	28	20	18	4	96

4.17 Enhanced Commissioning and External Placement Panel 2018

This Panel approves IFA placements and residential placement and is chaired by the Director of Children’s Care. The panel has recently seen more challenging cases being presented with the following issues:

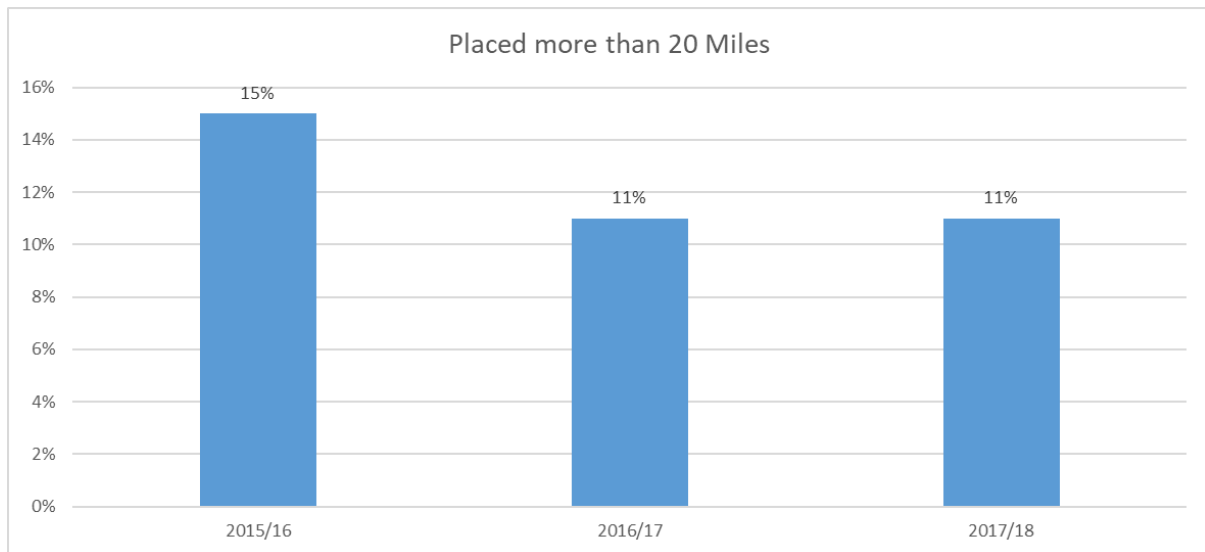
- A lack of provision for children/ young people with complex needs and high risk behaviours
- Solo placements for children/ young people who display challenging behaviours but would benefit significantly from being with a family
- Specialist provision for children and young people exiting secure accommodation

Section 5 Supply

In the Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley, there is a broad range of placement provision which is available, provided by the local authorities and private sector. Middlesbrough will continue to work with providers alongside regional partners to expand what is available, to meet the diverse needs of the children we care for.

5.1 Type of provision

5.1.1 Fostering



Internal Fostering

It is the policy of Middlesbrough Council, as part of its strategy for children looked after to, as far as possible, care for and provide placements for children through its own fostering agency. This ensures that children looked after are cared for within their home community and have continuity of education, health and family and social relationships.

Middlesbrough's Fostering Service is managed and placements matched by the Fostering Team. The service provides a range of different placements. As at March 2017 we have a total of 241 placements in the town to accommodate children, provided by 115 registered fostering households. As at October 2018, 105 children and young people looked after were placed with internal foster carers.

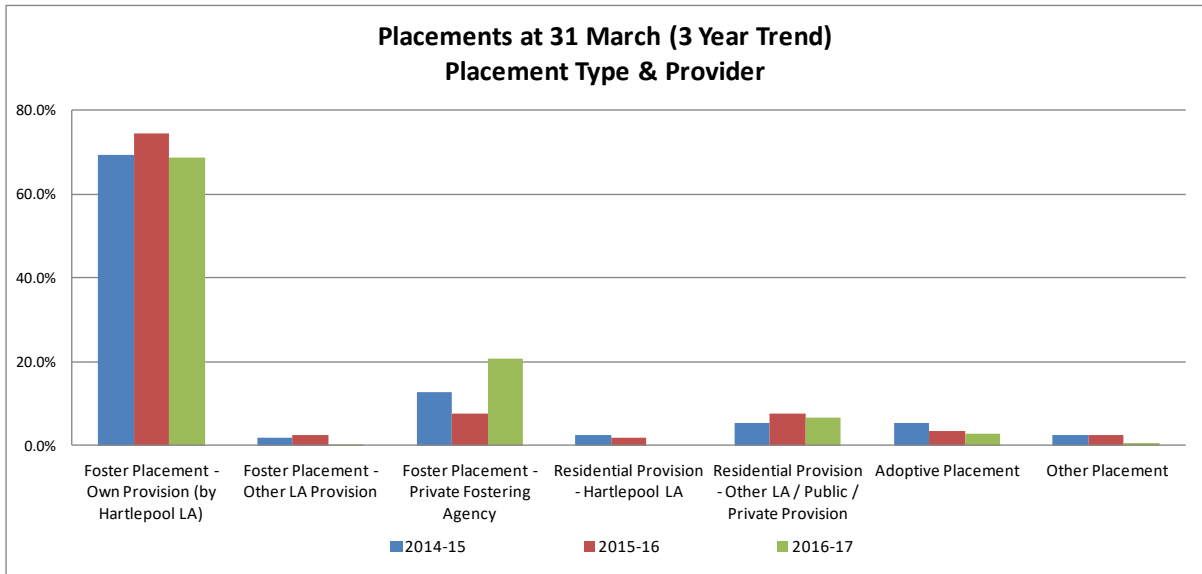


Figure 12

Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

Middlesbrough has been part of a Tees Valley Consortium Fostering Framework since January 2014. This is a regionally commissioned framework with a range of providers supplying five local authorities.

The authority currently has too much reliance on independent fostering agencies to care for looked after children and for the vast majority of children, their needs can be best met within in house provision. Where placements are commissioned from the independent sector, this generally arises from the lack of in house Foster Care provision and, occasionally, from individual needs of the young person either through a plan for permanence that cannot be met within in house provision, or placements for adolescents with some associated challenging behaviours. As at 1st October 2018 there were 139 placements, with 20 independent fostering agencies. There has been an increasing number of Foster Carers transferring to Middlesbrough from the private sector. Two Foster Care Families, caring for two of the (139) children will have become Middlesbrough Carers by December 2018.

We always endeavour to place within a 20 mile radius of Middlesbrough unless there is an identified need relating to an individual child/young person. Recent data demonstrates that we are showing improvement in achieving this.

5.1.2 Residential Care

Foster care is appropriate to meet the needs of most children in care and is the right placement type for them. However, some children and young people find significant difficulties residing within a family home setting and residential care offers a positive choice for them. The council currently has too much reliance upon residential care; and, for many of the children who require residential provision, they are placed in provision outside of Middlesbrough. Decisions to commission residential placements

for children are made through Enhanced Commissioning and External Placement Panel, which is made up of senior officers from health, education and social care. This Panel makes decisions on joint commissioning and joint funding arrangements.

Internal Residential Provision

Middlesbrough Council has three residential children's homes providing placements for eleven young people. Ofsted has rated these homes as Requires Improvement, Good and Good with Outstanding features.

Middlesbrough Council also has a short breaks provision, Gleneagles, offering placements for nine children, which is rated as outstanding.

External Residential

Cambian Group, a private provider of Residential Children's Homes, opened a 4 bedded home in Middlesbrough which we believed would enhance our placement choice and allow more children to be placed locally and as such we entered into a block purchase arrangement. This later expanded as we were also purchasing 3 beds in a home in Hartlepool so this home also became part of the block arrangement. The block contract now provides us with an additional 7 beds.

Middlesbrough Council joined four other Tees Valley local authorities to procure a Children's Residential Home Framework in April 2016, the framework runs until April 2020. The Residential Framework offers a capped price model and is now the second port of call for the commissioning of independent residential provision.

In February 2018 the North East 12 Phase 2 framework goes live for children's residential homes. At this point, the Council continues to utilise the Tees Valley Framework but is a participant of the regional framework.

Where children in care require an external residential provision, we will always endeavour to place within Middlesbrough or the neighbouring area. This is sometimes challenging, as the capacity in the North East market is not huge and as a result sometimes placing further afield cannot be helped. It is also important to note that on occasion a child's needs are such that for a very specific reason they require a placement outside of the borough.

5.2 Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

5.2.1 Short Break provision

Middlesbrough Council provides short break support in one provision within the town. The service is available for children and young people with a learning disability, and other complex needs.

Provision is available to children and young people aged from 0 – 18 years of age. As at January 2018 there were 29 children and young people accessing this provision.

There are 9 bedrooms in the main building.

The provision is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted.

5.2.2 External residential/non-residential education provision

Middlesbrough is part of a North East regional framework (NE12) for placements for children and young people 0 – 25 years in DfE registered, non-maintained and independent special schools and colleges; residential and / or day placements.

The framework went live in February 2016. As at September 2017, Middlesbrough has placed 10 young people using the framework to secure placements.

5.3 Number of Children Looked After by Placement Type

Figure 13 below shows the current placement types from 31st March 2015/16. The majority of our children looked after were in foster care placements.

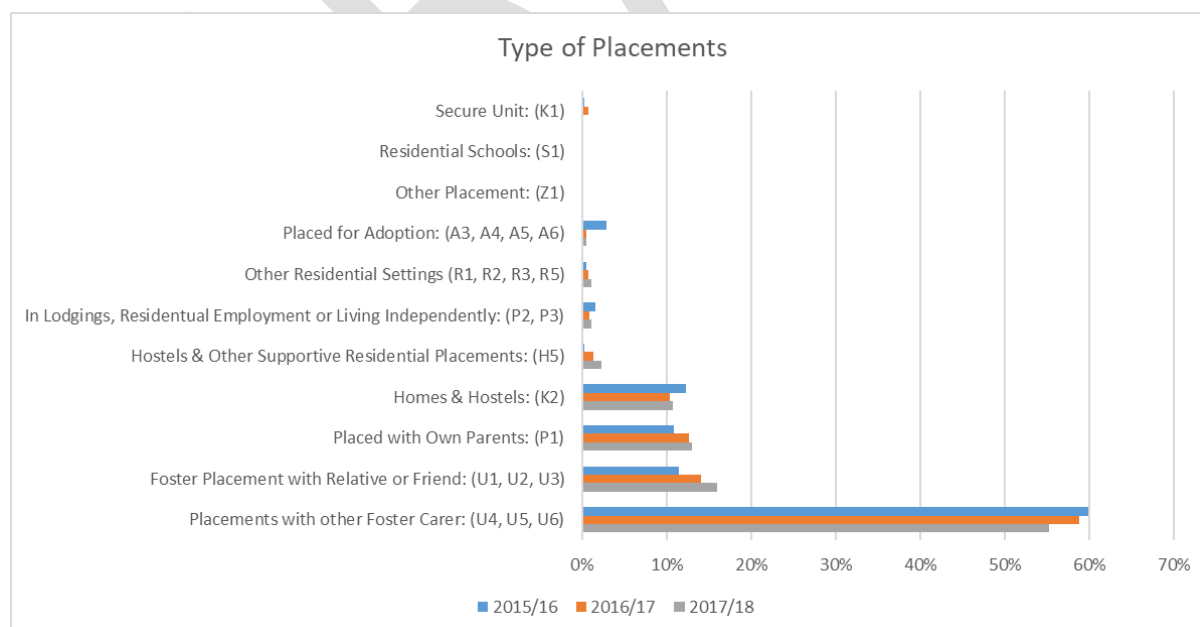


Figure 13

5.4 Care Leavers

When young people leave their care placement, the local authority must ensure that the accommodation they move to is suitable and appropriate to meet their needs.

For many young people, moving straight from care to independent living is too big a step. A young care leaver may be able to make a more successful transition if there is a choice of remaining with a former carer, or moving to supported lodgings or to a semi-independent option with some support, depending on the young person's needs.

At the 31st March 2018, 88% of the town's care leavers aged 19, 20 & 21 were in suitable accommodation (see Figure 14). This is an increase on the previous year's value of 74%.

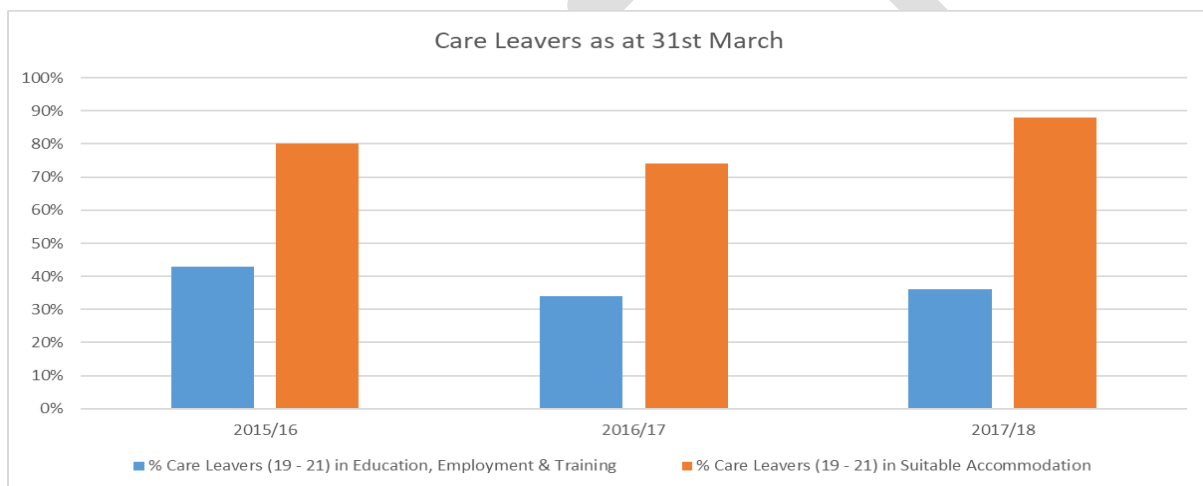


Figure 14

5.4.1 Staying Put

Middlesbrough has a 'Staying Put' policy to ensure that, where appropriate, a young person is able to remain with their Foster Carer following their 18th birthday. This will offer the young person stability during the transition to independence and adulthood in a graduated and supported way with the encouragement of their Foster family. We currently have 10 young people accessing 'Staying Put' arrangements, 8 are with in-house carers and 2 are with independent agencies.

For 2018/19 there is a projection from our cohort of young people in foster care aged 16/17 years old that staying put placements will increase by 13 which means this may have an impact on the number of fostering placements available for 2019 and going forward.

5.4.2 Supported Accommodation & Floating Support

Middlesbrough also commissions supported accommodation and supported living services for those young people who require assistance. This service is available to vulnerable 16 – 25 year olds, those young people living independent from their parents/carers who require tenancy support and to teenage parents with their own tenancy. The support aims to empower young people to take control of their own lives and focuses on;

- the development of independent living skills, such as budgeting, cooking and maintaining a home.
- transitioning towards obtaining a longer term tenancy.
- supporting young people in accessing other services within the community, as relevant to their needs.
- helping young people to overcome barriers in accessing education, employment and training.

A procurement exercise has recently been completed and newly commissioned services will commence in October 2017.

5.4.3 Supported lodgings

Supported Lodgings can be seen as a 'stepping stone' to offer a young person practical and emotional support in the safety and security of a family environment. It provides the time and opportunity to gain the knowledge and skill needed to move into their own, independent accommodation. The Supported Lodgings Provider (the person whose home it is) will provide support to help them learn these skills, working with the Young Person's Personal Adviser and other relevant workers, including the Accommodation Officer.

This offers a safe place to live, with the right balance between support offered and the opportunity to develop skills for independent living.

Middlesbrough is currently working with the Marketing and Communications Team and Fostering Team towards recruiting more Supported Lodgings Providers to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of providers available to meet young people's needs at the same time offering placement choice.

5.4.4 Market Management

Over recent years, Middlesbrough has been working in partnership with the Tees Valley authorities and local authorities in the wider region to procure collaborative frameworks to provide quality accommodation for children and young people for whom this provision is deemed most appropriate. This will help shape and manage the market moving forward, creating competition based on raising quality and needs based outcomes as well as reducing prices.

Whilst the regional procurement has developed, we now need to focus and drive our relationship management with the market and engage with suppliers at the grass routes in order to encourage innovation, especially as we are driving our own transformation agenda. The market can be a key player in supporting us to achieve our ambition to reduce LAC and ensure high quality services are supporting our children, young people and families.

This work will be driven through a Children's Provider Forum, which is going to be implemented by the Council.

5.4.5 16 + Accommodation and Community Support

This support includes facilitating access to community resources, education, social activities, supporting the development of independent living skills and personal safety.

The following groups have been identified as a priority:

- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- Vulnerable care Leavers
- Young people with additional needs (SEN, poor mental health)
- Young people at risk of sexual exploitation/being trafficked

5.5.1 NE 12 Collaborative

All of the local authorities in the North East region (NE12) have worked together as part of a regional collaborative procurement for the purchase of placements for children and young people 0 – 25 years in DfE registered, non-maintained and independent special schools and colleges; residential and / or day placements. The procurement was completed at the beginning of 2016 with the Framework going live in February 2016.

The following points formed the basis for the rationale.

1. To ensure good and improving outcomes for children and young people.
2. To ensure relationships with all providers are good and improving; open and transparent.
3. To increase financial efficiencies and value for money in all placements.
4. To achieve financial transparency in placement costs.

5. To achieve fairness of financial contribution from Health, Education and Social Care in those instances where placements are joint funded.
6. To ensure a consistency of quality across all providers.
7. To encourage and enable growth in the local market in order to provide a range of choice and suitable placements to meet the needs of children and young people.
8. To establish 'harmonised' terms and conditions for providers and purchasers.

Phase 2 of the NE12 framework went live in February 2018, the model has now been extended to include children's homes both within and outside of the North East, crisis intervention care and children's residential short breaks.

5.5.2 Tees Valley Children's Home Collaborative

Middlesbrough, Darlington, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland local authorities have procured a framework for Ofsted Registered Residential Children's Homes provision. This framework provides Middlesbrough with a structured and formal process for securing placements within the borough and wider region offering greater choice and value for money.

The framework went live on 1st April 2016. Quality monitoring and assurance processes form part of the framework requirements, providing the local authorities involved with a standardised set of documentation and procedures to ensure a common approach and assessment of provision is undertaken.

The Tees Valley collaborative is committed to working with providers to achieve the desired outcomes and effecting positive change.

5.5.3 Future areas for collaboration

Following the success of the North East regional collaborative work, Middlesbrough is currently consulting on future collaboration in the following areas;

- Alternative education provision, particularly in relation to Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision for children and young people. This will be determined following a review of the current provision available in the town and any future recommendations which emerge from the appraisal;
- Unregulated accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds. Requests for this type of provision are increasing, a collaborative approach would improve accountability and quality of provision as well as achieving value for money;
- Supported accommodation for young people with LD.

Section 6 - Views of Children and Young People

6.1

Middlesbrough has appointed a Voice of the Child and Young Person Practitioner whose role is to ensure that the voice of children and young people is integral to the work of children's services and is at the heart of corporate parenting. The Children in Care Council has been instrumental in developing a questionnaire that will be issued in October 2018 to all children looked after to gather their views and opinions about their placement. The findings of the survey will inform future commissioning of services and accommodation for children looked after. The outcomes of the survey will be reported in the 2018 - 2020 children looked after plan.

In November 2017 Middlesbrough Council in collaboration with the Children in Care Council held an event 'Nothing about Us, Without Us'. The aim of the event was to gather the views and opinions of young people in care and update accordingly the Pledge to our Looked after Young People. Young people helped to facilitate the event and the 7 key areas of the pledge were reviewed via a series of workshops. The revised pledge will be re issued in 2018.

In June 2018 Pathways ran an engagement session to create a Local Offer for Middlesbrough's Care Leavers. They had discussions about what was important to them & what they wanted from their Local Offer.

A young person's led event was held in July 2018. This event has been planned and organised by young people with the support of some professionals. The aim of this event was to consult with children, young people, families and carers about the services in Middlesbrough, and to give families the opportunity to network with services to find out what is available for them and how to access it. This event is also focused around mental health; emotional well-being; careers and employability; drugs and alcohol misuse and domestic violence

The Coram Voice – Bright spots surveys 'Your Life, your care' and 'Your life, beyond care' ran for 5 weeks through October and into November. This survey targets children and young people who are in care or are care leavers. This survey will allow us to have a benchmark and see what the current picture of life in care or as a care leaver looks like in Middlesbrough. The findings for this will be presented at the Participation conference early 2019.

On October 29th 2018 a Care Leavers celebration event was held at Newport Community Hub. Over 25 young people attended and engaged with a number of services. Services such as MIND; Harbour; Thirteen; Change Grow Live; Linx Detached Youth Project; Hart Gables; The Army; Public Health and The Navy attended to speak to young people about their services and the support they can offer. At this event we consulted with young people about how they would like to be contacted, as there are a number of ways to contact young people we wanted to explore which they would prefer. Pathways also consulted with young people about the local offer and what activities they wanted to see more of within the service.

Another aspect of this event was to encourage the young people to complete the Coram Voice – Bright spots survey.

The Mind of My Own (MOMO) app has been launched in Middlesbrough on the 31st October. Phase 1 of training was held on the 31st October and Phase 2 in early 2019. MOMO champions have been identified within each team and will be responsible for promoting MOMO and building confidence within the team. A requirement for 6 weekly MOMO workshops have been set to ensure that MOMO will be embedded into practice and colleagues will feel confident when supporting a young person to use it. The young people from the Children in Care Council have been approached to attend the training to allow them to train colleagues in how to use the app effectively.

#LetsChat roadshows have been held in 6 schools including Sunnyside Academy; Beverly School; River Tees Multi Academy Trust; Hospital Teaching School and Priors Wood. We have successfully consulted with 45 young people about EHCP's, CAMHS, The SALT services and Transitions. Work is underway to create an annual consultation pack within schools as part of the ongoing work from the Written Statement of Action. This consultation pack will be created with and piloted by Beverly School. This aims to ensure that consultation is embedded into the schools with clear link to the relevant teams.

A 'Have your Say Council' for young people aged 7-15 in January 2019. This group will run closely alongside the Children in Care Council ages 16-25. Both groups will be involved in the Regional Children in Care Council activities.

Plans are in place to launch a 'young commissioners' panel in partnership with Redcar Council. Both Middlesbrough commissioning team and Redcar's commissioning team are working to develop this.

The participation officer and HR are working together to build a 'young recruiters' panel. HR have started to review their policies and explore a training package suitable for young people to allow them to feel confident and valued throughout the interview process.

Section 7 Conclusion

7.1 The actions in this Sufficiency Strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a formal annual review through the Corporate Parenting Board to realise Middlesbrough's ambition of stability for our young people and prioritisation. This will ensure improvement continues and the changes to the number/ profile of cared for children and the internal/ external accommodation market provide appropriate influence on future actions.

7.2 Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development will remain a priority in driving forward Middlesbrough's work in delivering quality provision for children looked after and care leavers. The key to performance in this area is ensuring the levels and quality of accommodation for Looked after children across the market is maximised.

7.3 Middlesbrough will continue to monitor the placement of children looked after in care provision and to explore suitable, appropriate in house placements to ensure sustainability.

7.4 The right placement at the right time and the stability of children and young people is key to performance against the sufficiency duty. All actions will focus on high quality outcomes, effectiveness in promoting safeguarding, equality and diversity for children looked after and care leavers. Middlesbrough will encourage user engagement, enabling children and young people to continue to have a say in the services they receive and support the Council in further developing quality, stable placements.

SECTION 8 Recommendations and Next Steps

- 8.1 It is important that we use the information gathered within this assessment to inform service planning and commissioning. The following are recommendations particularly focusing on how we will address the gaps in our provision and improve our services for looked after children and their families.

Recommendation	Action	Date Achieved by
Increase the number of in-house foster carers.	<p>A working group is considering the future delivery of our in-house fostering service, which its focus is about increasing foster carers.</p> <p>There are many ways that this can be delivered and the group will be proposing various options for consideration with a recommendation of the most effective to be driven forward.</p>	<p>November 18</p> <p>December 18/January 19</p>
Improve Connected Care for young people in Middlesbrough.	Continue to improve, assessment, support and training arrangements for connected carers. Ensuring the unique circumstances that bring these carers into the fostering are recognised on an individual basis.	.February 2019
Work with regional commissioners to improve the available IFA offer.	<p>Work with NE12 collaborative to ensure the new IFA contract due to start February 2019, meets the needs of young people in Middlesbrough. In particular increase the number of appropriate providers and foster placements across the Tees Valley area to reduce the need for residential care placements for the following priority groups;</p> <p>Sibling Groups Solo Placements Teenagers Young people with complex and challenging behaviour Young people misusing substances</p>	February 2019 onwards

Implementation of the Edge of Care Project.	Develop Edge of Care Project Initiation Document Implement a Project Delivery Group	December 2018 January 2019
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Section 9 Overview of current placements, commissioning arrangements and recommendations

	Who is it for?	Current numbers (as at March 2018)	Current commissioning arrangements	Future commissioning recommendations
Foster care	Foster care is the placement of choice for all children in care aged 0-17 years. Care leavers are often able to stay with their foster carers after turning 18 as part of a “staying put” arrangement.	In House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 115 carers • 184 placements, (16 “staying put”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal service level agreement 	Recruitment strategy implemented to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase capacity • increase provision for sibling groups, permanent placements and teenagers.
		IFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 providers on sub-regional framework • 33 placements with 15 IFAs (1 “staying put”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-regional IFA Framework. Work is currently underway to explore a regional IFA model with NE12 for 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review usage and monitoring data to inform retendering exercise
Residential Children’s Homes	Children’s homes are used for young people whose needs are best met within a residential setting.	In House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 homes x 4 beds • 1 home x 3 beds • Gleneagles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase provision in line with Edge of Care Project
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block contract for 7 beds with Cambian Group Independent children’s homes on Tees Valley framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 providers on sub-regional framework with 139 children’s homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block Contract with Cambian Group • Tees Valley regional framework (expires March 2020) • Individual placements purchased • NE12 Phase 2 live February 2018 for children’s homes and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review usage and monitoring data to inform any re-procurement in future especially following the implementation of the Edge of Care Project

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently have 4 placements with 3 providers on TV framework <p>The NE12 regional framework will go live February 2018 and provide additional homes and short break services. All homes are currently going through QA procedures.</p>	short breaks residential	
Residential/Non Residential Schools	Children in care with high levels of SEN may be placed in residential special schools if local placements and/or schools cannot be identified. These schools often provide integrated therapy and may be joint funded by social care, education & health.	<p>Independent residential/non-residential schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 providers (22 settings) on framework – Phase 1 • 8 children looked after, (7 with EHC plans) placed in 8 residential schools. • 9 children looked after placed in non-residential special or independent day schools. (9 with EHC Plans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional framework • Individual placements purchased (all places jointly funded by SEND and some also part funded by CCG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to purchase placements from regional framework
Post-16 supported accommodation	<p>Supported Accommodation & Floating Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-17 yr olds in care • Care leavers • 16-25 yr olds at risk of homelessness 	<p>Independent providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young parents accommodation and floating support • Young People's accommodation and crash pads for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous monitoring of services to meet need.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers 	<p>identified priority groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's floating support 		
	<p>Supported lodgings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 to 17 years old homeless • left school • assessed as a child needing to be looked after and in need of supported accommodation. 	<p>Supported Lodgings providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 providers, 6 beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved list of supported lodgings providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of policy and procedure to be undertaken alongside supported accommodation tender.
Parent & child assessment places	<p>Young parents, sometimes themselves children in care, who need extra support to care for their child(ren) and help to develop parenting skills as well as assessing their ability to safely care for their child.</p>	<p>Foster care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 placements currently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included on IFA framework • Individual placements purchased from residential assessment units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported accommodation for young parents in place via commissioned block contract.