

Hertfordshire Sufficiency Statement: The Accommodation of Children & Young People Living Away from Home



2017 – 2018

**Children and Young People's Commissioning
Service: Children Looked After and Safeguarding**



Executive Summary

The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the Authority's area boundaries 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').

When assessing 'sufficiency', Hertfordshire County Council takes into account:

- The condition of the local market, including the level of demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- The development capacity of local providers; and
- The current resource and overall budget priorities of the council.

This Hertfordshire Sufficiency Statement reports achievements in 2016/17, current levels of demand, priorities for 2017/18 and our capacity to respond to demand. Updated data within this document relates to the period 1 April 2016 - 31 March, 2017.

Section 1

1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of progress against our priorities for 2016-2017, our commissioning intentions for 2017-2018 to further improve service delivery and how we will address some of the challenges that Hertfordshire face in delivering services for children who are looked after.

A children and young people's sufficiency will be published in 2017 and shared with Hertfordshire children looked after, written by Hertfordshire Young Commissioners (including members of the Children in Care Council).

Since the last Annual Sufficiency Statement, Hertfordshire has developed and is embedding an outcome framework across all Children's Services in order to measure the distance travelled by individual children receiving services, and to shape how we commission services. These are entitled the 'Outcome Bees' which have been co-produced by families, providers, professionals and young people. These are based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely 'Be Happy', 'Be Safe', 'Be Resilient', 'Be Ambitious', 'Be Healthy' and 'Be Independent'. A quarterly performance group with multi-agency professionals across Children's Services, the CCGS's and the Virtual School will review and contribute to CLA commissioning intentions, reflective of the outcome framework.

Hertfordshire County Council continues to host the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group, demonstrating commitment to regional working and reducing inefficiencies through sharing of monitoring and fee increases nationally.

Section 2: Strategic Position 2016/2017

2.1 Hertfordshire Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy

Children's Services is continuing to co-ordinate the range of preventative support available with a clear focus on supporting families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so, thus

minimising the need for children and young people to come into care, and supporting a timely return to their extended family network. In order to continue working towards achieving the CLA Strategy targets, placement and financial, the 2016/2017 sufficiency audit reflects the need to:

- Maintain the number of in-house residential placements;
- Increase the number of in-house foster placements;
- Reduce the number of independent foster placements used;
- Reduce the number of independent placements outside Hertfordshire;
- Increase the level of support to families who are in crisis to prevent family breakdown and/or to support children and young people to return home post breakdown; and
- Reduce the number of 16 year olds coming into care through more timely mediation and support for families.

2.2 Children Looked After (CLA) Population Data

The number of CLA (including UASC) has continued to reduce to 918 in March 2017 from 958 in December 2016, which is an 11% reduction from the last quarterly reporting period of last year. This represents a decrease in the rate to 34.7 from 36.3 per 10,000 (39.3 at March 2016) and places us in the top quartile nationally.

The number of CLA excluding UASC has reduced to 840 and remains well ahead of the target of 941 in the 'Reducing the Number of CLA Strategy'.

Compared to April 2016 the number of CLA at March 2017 in the:

- Under 1 age group has decreased by 22% from 45 to 35 (10 children);
- 1-4 age group has decreased by 22% from 118 to 92 (26 children);
- 5-9 age group has decreased by 30% from 202 to 142 (60 children);
- 10-12 age group has increased by 12% from 159 to 178 (19 children);
- 13-15 age group has increased by 4% from 204 to 213 (9 young people); and
- 16+ age group has decreased by 12% from 292 to 258 (34 young people).

There is a continued decrease across all age groups apart from the 10-15 year olds where those coming into care aged 13-15 has remained relatively steady. Those coming into care aged 10-12 years had increased by 10 in the last 7 months but steadied in April 2017. The range of family support including the family safeguarding model and support for teenagers on the edge of care is continuing to have an impact on the overall numbers. It is also noted that the teenage population in care have increasingly complex needs and we therefore have to consider future commissioning intentions to ensure services are fit for purpose. We have noted that teenagers in particular are presenting with a range of needs which require health as well as social care intervention so it is critical that we work jointly with our colleagues in CAMHS to ensure we meet need.

Section 3: Key Achievements in 2016/17

Robust contract management of 16+ semi-independent accommodation and support framework with a transparent pricing schedule to reduce the costs of placements.

Reduction in the number of 16+ young people coming into care for the first time by launching the prevention of homelessness service providing intensive support to work with the young people and their families to enable them to return home.

Providing 2 practice flats to enable the young people to develop their skills as they transition through from fostering, residential or semi-independent services to independent living.

Providing quality accommodation for families that have no recourse to public funds and 18+ young people seeking asylum ensuring value for money is achieved.

Prevented spend of £2m across the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements group (as of March 2017) from sharing monitoring visits and shared fee processes

Herts Practical Parenting and Wrixon Care have continued to contribute to reducing the number of children and young people coming into care by working with just over a 100 children.

Procurement of local placements for fostering through IFA's and providers offering support packages to work alongside families to stay together, with detailed pricing schedules to ensure value for money and transparency over cost

Over 50 young people from the Young Commissioner programme being actively involved in commissioned activities, working cohesively with the Children and Care Council (CHICC) to shape service delivery (CLA and Safeguarding)

Commissioned service which will provide a preventative service to families and provide timely and good quality mediation to reduce the number of 16 year olds coming into care /reduce homelessness applications, and to support families to stay together.

A robust recruitment strategy for in house foster carers yielded a net approval of 14

CLA population reduced to 840 (exclusive of UASC) and 918 (inclusive of UASC)

Section 4: Demographics

4.1 Gender

There are a slightly higher proportion of males to females within the CLA population, however, this has evened out to 58% of males from 63% in the previous financial year.

4.2 Ethnicity Data

The number of children and young people from a BME background has remained virtual static at 27.8%, increasing by only 0.4% from 31st March, 2015 to 31st March 2017. This indicates that children from BME backgrounds are very slightly more likely to be looked after than non-BME children.

4.3 Care Leavers

The number of care leavers per annum as a total has increased in the last financial year from 503 to 528. The figures for the 16 – 19 year group remain relatively static, however, a number of over 18s are appealing Home Office decisions. There is a delay for under 18s in receiving notification of leave to remain which often runs through to post 18.

The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation has risen from 89.9% to 97% in the past year.

4.4 Length of time in care

There have been some developments in the length a child is in care over the past year proportionate to the decreasing CLA numbers:

- Under 1 year decreased from 33% to 29%*
- 1 year increased from 18% to 22%
- 2+ years remained at 49%

28% of CLA who left care returned to their family or someone with parental responsibility during 16/17 year to date. The average duration spent in care by those who ceased to be looked after during 2016/17 was 825 days.

* Links to dually approved adopters to enable foster to adopt arrangements for children aged 0 – 2 years

4.5 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The % of UASC is 8% of the overall CLA number. This group of children are more likely to be placed out of area due to cultural matching of placements. The majority of UASC originate from Eritrea, Iran, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Hertfordshire are part of a regional scheme accepting new arrivals on a rota basis.

Section 5: Placement Information

5.1 Placement Stability

Performance in this area will require on-going focus to ensure that stability for children in foster care continues to improve. Current performance indicates that for the majority of CLA long term stability is improving.

There are 11.6% of CLA population who have at least 3 placement. This is a 1% decrease from March 2016 across the whole CLA population. Work continues to further reduce this figure to further reduce this to 11.5%.

This has been a key area of scrutiny for the Placement Stability Working Group, in particular for the 10 – 16 age groups where placement instability is more likely. The Working Group

Action Plan for 2017/18 is focussing on key areas, namely education provision, reunification and sustainability of return home, involving children in their placement planning, improved identification of need and support to prevent breakdown. This working group contributes to the targets within the Reducing CLA Strategy.

Challenging behaviour is the main factor in placement moves. We are exploring additional training and support, new models of fostering, therapeutic interventions and work with health and education colleagues to tackle this.

5.2 Summary of all Placements

Below is a summary of placement types for Hertfordshire children and young people over the last year.

	31/03/2016		31/03/2017	
Placement type	Number of CLA	Proportion	Number of CLA	Proportion
Family and friends foster care	84	8%	67	7%
HCC fostering	496	48%	457	50%
HCC residential	22	2%	22	2%
Independent Provider, fostering	215	21%	171	19%
Independent Provider, residential	47	5%	50	5%
Mother and baby	0	0%	3	0%
NHS/Health Trust or other establishment	1	0%	2	0%
Placed for adoption	50	5%	38	4%
Placed with parents or other with parental responsibility	7	1%	8	1%
Residential school	17	2%	18	2%
Semi Independent living	81	8%	75	8%
Supported lodgings	5	0%	5	1%
Young Offenders' Institution, secure unit or prison	3	0%	2	0%
Total	1028		918	

The table identifies that although the numbers have reduced significantly, that the categories of placement types are relatively unchanged.

5.3 Location of Placements

Ensuring that children and young people are placed within Hertfordshire continues to be a challenge for commissioners. This continues to be a key priority for commissioners going forward to commission more local provision.

90% of all CLA are placed in Hertfordshire or neighbouring authorities, whilst 10% are placed at a distance. We have noted a stable proportion of children placed out of area but a 1% increase in the proportion of those placed at a distance. This reflects the continued challenge of sourcing placements for teenagers with complex and challenging behaviours.

5.4 Emergency Placements Information Summary

The majority of emergency placements are foster placements. During the period of April 2016 – February 2017, 184 emergency placements were made with in-house fostering and 57 with independent fostering. This equates to 60.4% of all emergency placements. Challenging behaviour is the main cause of placement breakdown.

Section 6: Types of Provision

In House Services

6.1 In House Fostering Service

The percentage of 10-16 year olds in foster or adoptive placements is 86% of the overall CLA population. 73% of all placements are foster placements. 399 placements were made with in house fostering between April 2016 and March 2017.

The reported performance in fostering regarding the percentage of 10-16 CLA population is a very positive outcome as the opportunity to live within a family setting will support good preparation for transition to adulthood. It will also in many cases provide an opportunity to extend the arrangement beyond 18 years through staying put. There are also challenges to be managed with this CLA population in foster care, as we also know that this specific demographic group are more likely to have 3 or more placement moves due to difficulties in meeting their specific needs. A clear action plan is in place to minimise this risk but more placement capacity is needed to improve choice and matching. The in-house fostering recruitment strategy reflects the demand for new fostering options for this age group.

6.2 Staying Put Arrangements

As at 31st March 2017, 82 young people over the age of 18 were in (former) fostering or supported lodgings placements under staying put, 75 of whom were placed in in-house provision (staying put supported, staying put lodgings and supported lodgings) and 7 were with independent providers.

‘Staying Put’ represents a significant challenge both financially and in recruiting additional foster carers as young adults remain in placement. However, Hertfordshire County Council is committed to ensuring young people are able to ‘stay put’ wherever possible.

6.3 Supported Lodgings

From April 2016/March 2017 the Supported Lodgings Service provided 7897 bed nights which equates to 21.63 full time places. The service continues to work to recruit additional supported lodgings providers, targeting areas of demographic need across the county (predominantly Stevenage, Welwyn and Hatfield and Watford). The total supporting lodgings service costs is £344,436 for 2016/2017.

6.4 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)

The number of new SGOs during 2016/17 to the end of February was 94, which is a new increase of 82 during the year.

6.5 Adoption

The demand for adoption has stabilised over the last two years and the Adoption Service matches its recruitment activity to the predicted placement order rate and the number of adopters not yet matched who remain available for matching. A key driver in the service in

the last two years has been to identify a greater adopter pool for children who may be harder to place due to age, being in a sibling group or complex needs. The service has been successful in reducing the number of children who are waiting not matched, especially in the hard to place group.

During 2016/17, we anticipate the placement order run rate to be similar to 2015/16 and will be seeking to recruit around 60 new adopters and for growth of dually approved adopters able to consider foster to adopt arrangements especially for children aged 0-2.

6.6 Residential Homes

In-house residential have a total of 21 beds available. ARC have 3 six week families together beds for children where the plan is to return home and short break provision. Over the past year the average occupancy level was 92.4%. Occupancy for February 2017 is 97.1%. The number of independent residential placements has reduced from 57 in March 2015 to 46 in February 2017.

The cost of in-house provision continues to remain lower than that of the independent sector. In-house costs have risen as we have reduced the number of beds in each provision to reflect the growing need for more specialised provision that can manage those children with very complex behaviours.

In house residential have maintained good occupancy levels and at the time of writing all homes are rated Good by Ofsted. It is acknowledged that there may be a need to think about creating more specialist provision and options will be explored to maximise the potential of the current service.

6.7 ARC services

Hertfordshire operate multi-agency therapeutic provision through the delivery of the ARC model.

The services are working well and achieving strong outcomes as outlined below:

- Demand is high on outreach, short breaks and families together programme
- Short breaks is effective in keeping children with their families
- Outreach support is effective in building relationships and moving families forwards
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour service pilot-capturing service data/addressing the needs of those deemed to be at high risk/working with NCATs to provide appropriate assessment and intervention-this service is in place whilst a broader strategy is developed

Waiting lists are a challenge in relation to need to respond in crisis when child is on the edge of care. Options will be explored in Sept October re any possible reconfiguration of services.

6.8 Sexually Harmful Behaviour Team

From September 2016 – March 2017, the SHBT have completed 4 Assessments and 8 interventions. These have all maintained their placements.

6.9 Short Breaks

A weekend residential short breaks service under sec 17 to support teenagers to remain in the family home. 67 young people have accessed this service during this period. 64 have maintained their current placement and only 3 went up the care continuum. This has been a successful service overall in keeping children with their families. Demand is growing and a waiting list has developed for the first time.

6.10 Families Together Programme

This is a 3 bed provision providing residential support over 6 weeks for young people where the plan is to return them to their families. From June 16 – Mar 17, 16 young people have accessed the FTP. Most children remain or became CLA. Further analysis of the programme is needed.

6.11 Outreach across ARC Service

ARC have worked with 165 young people. The aim is to maintain children in their family unit. 8 have gone up the care continuum, 11 down and 146 maintained placement.

Section 7: Review of Residential Provision

7.1 Introduction

There is a need to commission residential provision close to or within Hertfordshire borders. Effective matching of needs has proved extremely difficult over the past few months due to a lack of supply of residential provision that can meet the needs of young people who have behaviours that challenge, particularly between the ages of 11 – 16 years of age.

In order to effectively commission services to meet the needs of this age group, we have reviewed in-house residential services alongside our needs analysis of externally commissioned services to identify next steps.

7.1.1 Externally Commissioned Services - Commissioning Intentions

The following commissioning arrangements are underway to meet the sufficiency for residential accommodation:

7.1.2 A Local Residential Unit

- A block purchase agreement for 1-2 beds with a therapeutic and highly skilled residential provider.

7.1.3 Emergency Beds

- A block purchase arrangement for 2/3 emergency beds locally. 2 of these will be with foster carers and at least one will be with a residential provider.

7.1.4 Regional Commissioning

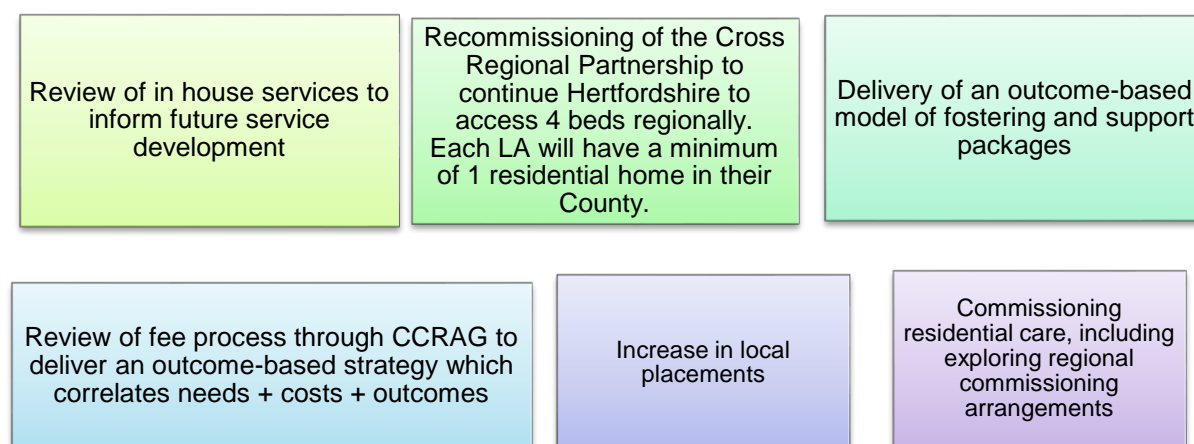
Commissioners are discussing the potential to regional commission placements with neighbouring authorities in order to maximise efficiencies and secure placements.

7.2.2 Next steps

In order to support the review of ARC and in-house residential homes, the following steps have been identified:

- Data collection will be reviewed
- Service specifications developed
- KPIs will be developed and embedded to reflect Outcome Bees
- Option appraisal

Commissioning Priorities 2017/2018



Section 8: Accommodation and Support for Young People Aged 16+ Years

8.1 Introduction

The framework for the 16+ semi-independent sector has provided some local regulation of this demanding and challenging sector. A new structure within the commissioning team provides robust contract management of provision in order to safeguard young people within the unregulated sector.

The housing related support contracts for the provision of supported accommodation for 16 – 25 year olds continue to be delivered by Registered Social Landlords across the 10 districts. A cohesive working relationship fostered through the Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board between HCC and District Housing leads has enabled a more flexible package of support to meet housing needs. 5 crash pad beds for young people aged 16 – 17 years old are now available within these provisions to support families in crisis, with a view to return home.

8.2 Over 18s Accommodation and associated costs

8.2.1 Bed and Breakfast/Hotels

In exceptional cases, bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation is used only when the alternative for the young person is street homelessness and whilst more appropriate accommodation is sourced. Commissioners have sought rental accommodation to reduce the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation and to provide better quality provision through quality monitoring visits. The average cost per person per night was £58.31 per night as opposed to £68.85 per night in the previous financial year.

8.2.2 Families with 'No Recourse to Public Funds'

A key priority for 2016/17 was to provide suitable accommodation for families with no recourse to public funds whose children are therefore 'children in need'. The Commissioners will be going out to tender in 2017/18 to set up an approved provider list in order to increase provision locally. As an interim measure, rented accommodation has been sought and currently supports 41 people.

8.2.3 Preventing Homelessness 16-25 years

Herts Young Homeless were commissioned to prevent homelessness for this age group, split into 3 services areas (each of these is outlined below). The impact of that contract during the last financial year was:

- **Advice and Information**

This service supported 806 young people in 2016/17. Out of this group 143 young people were prevented from a S20 request being required and the intervention prevented a potential 157 homeless applications.

- **Mediation**

155 referrals were received into the Mediation Service of which 151 families were accepted into the service. 61 (46%) of those whose mediation ended remained or returned home to family.

The Advice, Information and Mediation Service has an overall annual case load target of 125. The service is operating on average at approximately 39% of target overall.

- **Floating Support**

Floating Support accepted 302 referrals; of those leaving the service 56 completed a programme of support and remained, returned/moved to their accommodation choice.

The Floating Support Service has an overall minimum average target of 625 hours per week. The service has reported on average 227.2 hours per week which is 36% of the target.

- **Crashpad**

29 young people were provided a service with crash pad hosts (514 bed nights) and 51 young people were provided with hostel provision and received 1162 bed nights. From the cases closed over the year 20% returned home and 15% went to stay with extended family/friends.

The Crashpad service has an overall minimum target of 1300 bed nights per year. The Service delivered 1676 bed nights, 129% of service target.

8.2.4 Practice Flats

There are 2 types of practice flat available to be used by looked after young people in Hertfordshire who are 17 years+:

- **4 Week Taster**

This is a furnished flat that is provided with 5 hours support per week completing a targeted programme to provide the young person with the experience of living independently.

- **12 Week Programme**

This is a small furnished house in Hatfield that is provided with 60 hours support across the 12 weeks.

8.3 New Service for Preventing Homelessness 16 – 25 years

The contract with Herts Young Homeless had reached its date of completion and needed to be retendered. During the financial year 2016/2017 a robust outcome-focussed contract management of the service had enabled clarity over what was needed going forwards to reduce the number of 16+ coming into care.

The new service is currently being mobilised and will be delivered by 'One YMCA' as the hub for advice, information and mediation. Crashpad beds for 16 – 17 year olds will now be offered through the hostels.

Floating support for 18+ young people to enable them to sustain their tenancies is being re-tendered, having not had any successful tenderers through the initial procurement process.

8.4 Floating Support

The new contract for floating support will be for 18 years plus only to support tenancy sustainment. The quality of submission did not enable an award of contract during the initial procurement phase therefore it is going back out for re-tender in July 2017.

8.5 Hostel Accommodation

Housing related support contracts for the provision of supported accommodation for 16 – 25 year olds continue to be delivered by 5 Registered Social Landlords/Housing Associations across the 10 districts. A cohesive working relationship fostered through the Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board between HCC and District Housing leads has enabled a more flexible package of support to meet housing needs.

8.6 Provider forums

The forums provide an opportunity to inform and shape practice and deliver key strategic messages for 16+ services. The forums have also developed well over the last two years and have evolved into collaborative sessions where providers share good practice and outcomes, allowing us to consistently engage key stakeholders and partners to address the forums and make use of existing expertise.

Commissioning Intention for 16+ Services Actions for 2017/18

Vary the contract for Hertfordshire residential and support provision for asylum seekers to 16 - 17 year olds only

Mobilise the contracts for the new 16+ prevention of homelessness service

Continue to robustly contract manage the 16+ semi-independent sector

Utilise the registered social landlord provision more flexibly and reduce the number of placements into private semi-independent provision

Section 9: Cost of Provision

Average Costs of Placements 2016/2017

9.1 Fostering

	Direct costs		Gross cost	
Fostering	Weekly cost	Annual cost	Weekly cost	Annual cost
In-house	£ 344	£ 17,936	£ 535	£ 27,895
Independent (IFA)	£ 918	£ 47,865	£ 951	£ 49,585

We often look to IFAs to source more specialist placements and/or those where appropriate in-house provision is up to capacity which can be reflected in the cost differentiation between IFAs and in-house. A detailed and transparent method of cost calculation in the fostering framework will enable commissioners to more effectively track cost and understand the correlation between needs, costs and outcomes.

9.2 Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings Team and Allowances Expenditure 2016-17		
	£	£
Supported Lodgings Team		124,103
Supported Lodgings Allowances U18	37,381	
Supported Lodgings Allowances 18+	182,953	
Total Supported Lodgings Allowances		220,334
Total Supported Lodgings Service Costs		344,436

9.3 Residential Placements

	2016	2017
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Residential								
In-house	£	2,743	£	143,020	£	3,046	£	158,818
Independent	£	3,697	£	192,762	£	3,757	£	195,890

9.4 Semi-Independent Placements

For the financial year 16/17 average weekly cost is £941.74 this is within the Target of £800 to £1000 for the LOT 1 provision which represents the majority of current placements. The total spend on Semi Independent provision for 2016/17 was £3,354,693

The spend for 2017/18 is currently predicted as £3,184,000 HCC, High Town and YMCA – East Herts have developed 2 new block contacted provisions for UASC a total of 17 beds. These provisions offer good value for money and are able to meet the unique needs of this group and represent good value for money as they have lower unit costs than the private semi-independent providers.

Section 10: Fostering and Support - New Framework

10.1 Fostering (IFA) and Intensive Family Support Framework

In 2016/2017 an outcome-based framework was advertised on our e-portal to stimulate a Hertfordshire market and enable us to commission local provision and where we have identified gaps.

The process was co-produced with providers, Young Commissioners and in-house staff to ensure that it complimented existing work streams and looked to provide much needed local provision.

Contracts will be awarded for 9 fostering and 4 support agencies in June 2017 with a specific focus on providing local provision for young people with behaviours that challenge.

Regional residential arrangements are currently being explored to increase capacity locally, and will look to be in place by April 2018, plus a review of in house residential services and their links to fostering.

10.2 Regional Commissioning

Hertfordshire County Council are part of a block contract arrangement with the Cross Regional Partnership and currently purchases 5 beds. The average cost per week of placement across the partnership is £3500 compared to £4300 for a spot purchase arrangement in order to match the needs of children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour. This contract is currently being recommissioned, with a view to the new service being mobilised by 2019.

Section 11: Department of Education Innovation Bids

11.1 Introduction

Hertfordshire Commissioners have been working alongside regional colleagues on innovative models in order to attract DfE funding. As of July 2017 HCC were notified that both applications were successful.

11.2 Essex, Herts and Norfolk Intervention Model

Essex CC asked us to partner a bid that Hertfordshire co-wrote for the Innovation Fund. This bid was written in response to the Narey Report (2016) regarding to his findings of the residential market, and looked to address some of the wider issues that contribute to placement breakdown and poor outcomes for children/young people. A cohort of Hertfordshire young people will be supported during the second wave of this project with the aim to step down from residential to fostering or family back into Hertfordshire.

11.3 Credo Care Bid

This bid is between Credo Care (a specialist foster care service for disabled children), Staffordshire LA and ourselves. The concept was to effectively recruit and then train individual foster carers in the needs of a particular young person with a view to them being looked after by someone who was able to meet all of their needs. The bid has the benefits of potentially stepping down young people from residential care into foster care, and also for those who have just come into care and can be welcomed into a family home.

Section 12: Diversion from Care

12.1 Externally Commissioned Edge of Care Contracts

Two contracts with Herts Practical Parenting Programme (child to parent violence) and Wrixon Care (intensive family support) have been highly successful in terms of positive outcomes. Wrixon Care have been working to date with 53 children, and HPPP with 48 children (38 of which are still open). They continue to support and prevent 101 children and young people coming into care who were at risk, or were already S20. New support contracts are currently being mobilised to provide a greater range and choice of providers.

Section 13: 0 – 25 Integrated Commissioning Service

The 0-25 SEND Commissioning team undertake a wide variety of activity to establish integrated commissioning arrangements and processes around children and young people with additional needs. The team works with partners in the CCGs to improve co-ordinated packages of support, promote co-production, align processes, reduce duplication, but above all, improve outcomes for those children and young people.

The vision in supporting children and young people with additional needs is set within the overall vision for all children and young people in Hertfordshire, as part of both Children's and Adult Services across education, social care and health strategic planning

13.1 Introduction

Short breaks form part of a continuum of services which support disabled children and their families in universal and specialist services. In response to feedback from parents and disabled young people, Hertfordshire's Children's Services commissioned community based services resulting in a wider variety of community based services providing increased individual choice for children, young people and their families. Each family will be entitled to 40 hours per year of short break activities without the need to have an assessment carried out by a social worker.

As of today we have in 115 children in young people in 57 special schools. We are currently processing 5 Provider Quality Assurance forms that are currently being processed to enable us to spot purchase new provision.

Herts Valleys CCG will be withdrawing funding from Nascot Lawn in Watford from 31st October 2017. All parents using the Nascot Lawn service have been contacted by the Council's 0 – 25 Together Service and both CCGs have committed to undertaking joint assessments, wherever possible, during July. The purpose of the assessments is to develop plans as to how the child and family will be supported going forwards. Each plan will be personalised for the individual child and their unique situation.

The local authority funded overnight short breaks units are able to meet the needs of a number of children with complex health needs. A working group is being established including the Parent Carer Forum, Hertfordshire Parent Carer Involvement, parents who use Nascot Lawn and relevant practitioners to consider future plans.

The council also has a Shared Care service comprising both paid and volunteer carers who support over 100 children and young people with disabilities, providing support and breaks to their family.

13.2 In-house Residential

There are currently 21 beds (15 mainstream and 6 for disabled children) available within the in-house residential units and no current plans to change that number for longer term placements. In terms of managing needs/demand, early discussions have indicated a need to consider whether homes should be more specialised. In addition the arc provide 3 beds for their programme to work with families and maintain children within their family home. The current provision is all currently rated "Good" by Ofsted. Given the current cohort of teenagers coming into care we will consider if any change is needed to the type of service delivered from each of the mainstream provisions

13.3 Commissioning Intentions 0-25

13.3.1 Overnight Short Breaks (OSB)

Utilisation of HCC OSB has fallen significantly over the last four years with 380 children and young people using these services in 2011-12 to only 103 children and young people currently using these services at the end of March 2017.

This is also reflected in a reduction in hours used in the same period, from 122,809 to 103,745.

HCC providers are reporting through their contract review meetings that there is an increase in the complexity of health / challenging behaviour needs of children and young people being referred to the service and is reflected in the percentage of hours that are used through bed blocking.

13.3.2 Complex Needs Residential Resource

The service will provide a children's residential facility for those with complex needs including autism and behaviour that challenges, so that children and young people can continue their education in local special schools in Hertfordshire and not be placed out of area. There is an opportunity to use an existing Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Children's Services property in Wynchlands Crescent, St Albans to provide a dedicated local

residential resource for children and young people with complex needs aged between 13 and 19 years. There will be four permanent beds, with a fifth bed available for emergency admissions.

13.3.3 Divot Place

A service is being developed to provide supported living for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities to have year round accommodation in conjunction with attendance at a local Hertfordshire college and engagement with an extended curriculum to help develop independent living skills. The provision, based in Hertford, will provide accommodation for up to 8 young people.

Section 14: Specialist Provision

14.1 Secure Accommodation

Criminal secure placements are a consequence of offending behaviours. Welfare secure placements are used for the most vulnerable teenagers who without a period in secure would be at risk of serious harm. There is currently no secure provision nor a demand to develop it in Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire County Council sources placements through a national 'bed bank'. Throughout 2015-16 there were 5 Welfare secure placements and 1 of these straddled the financial year, the same is for 2016-17 there were 5 with the 1 straddling the financial year cross over.

14.2 Youth Offending

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) introduced a change to the legal status of young offenders who are remanded into custody and such young people are now children in care. If they remain in custody for 13 weeks or more they are entitled to leaving care services. The policy direction is for young offenders to be managed in the community unless there is a serious concern for public safety.

There is currently one designated foster carer for remands and transfer from police custody. The bed is used as a bail bed and we also commission bail beds where necessary. We are looking to increase capacity for emergency beds as part of our review of in house services, which will offer further choice of beds in Hertfordshire or neighbouring authorities.

Section 15: Young Person's Voice

15.1 Introduction

Young commissioners have worked alongside the commissioning team (CLA and Safeguarding) on multiple project works, inputting within all elements of the commissioning cycle. Young Commissioners are actively involved in scrutinising reports for the Hertfordshire Shadow Board, and the quality and amount of input they have been enabled to provide is reflective of their active involvement in project work. There are clarity of roles between commissioners and YC Hertfordshire to actively support young people to shape service delivery.

15.2 Key Outcomes Achieved by Young Commissioners

- Commissioning of return home interviews (including interviewing staff)
- Co-design and delivery of the Fostering and Support framework

- Input into CSE workshops (boys and men) with specific project on sharing knowledge of social media to CLA providers
- The first child and young people's sufficiency report for Herts
- Inception and delivery of practice flats

The Cross Regional Partnership will be utilising the skills and expertise of the Young Commissioners in their recommissioning of regional residential beds. Young Commissioners are also working alongside CCRAAG to input into regional projects and to provide opportunities for young people to learn key business skills to support their own personal development.

Conclusion

Section 16: Key Findings

- Intensive support packages into families have reduced the looked after population
- A broader range of services and increased joint working with district councils has reduced the number of 16 plus requiring care
- Cross regional residential commissioning is a good model
- The need for more specialist fostering provision for children with complex needs
- The need for an increased number of teenage foster placements
- There is a shortage of local emergency provision
- Short break provision at ARC has been successful in the prevention of care
- The families together programme at ARC requires review
- Practice in semi-independent provision has improved due to increased scrutiny and provider workshops.
- Teenagers with complex needs require a joint health and social care approach
- The need for increased specialist residential provision local to Hertfordshire.
- The need for access to emergency support to prevent care or placement breakdown
- The need for local provision for children with Autism and challenging behaviours
- Providers and in house services need to work to a standardised set of outcomes to ensure value for money and good quality care
- Ongoing work to embed 0-25 services and ensure smooth transition for disabled children into adulthood

Section 17: Key Priorities in 2017/18

Mobilise the Fostering and Support Framework to improve sufficiency of local provision and choice

Consolidation of support agencies from existing contracts to new framework

Delivery of the Prevention from Homelessness Hub to continue to reduce the number of 16 year olds coming into care for the first time

Increase emergency provision locally by 2-3 beds mainly for use by out of hours service.

A regional residential commission to improve sufficiency for independent residential care locally

Review of the exceptional fee process with a specific focus on the relationship between cost, need and desired outcomes

Review and implement a new commissioning process for overnight short break services.

To develop and stimulate the home care provider market to increase the number of homecare providers to effectively meet the need of children and young people and their families as part of a wider package of care and support.

Development of local residential provision for children with Autism/challenging behaviour.

Continue to develop the 0-25 pathway for disabled children to enhance and improve transition arrangements.