

Children Looked After Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy

A Strategic Approach to the Commissioning of Children Looked After Placements

2017 - 2019



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1. Purpose of this document

All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Children Looked After. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty should be undertaken within the context of the planning and co-operation duties which the 2004 Act places on partners to improve the wellbeing of the children in the local area.

This Strategy responds to the duty by formalising the approach in which Warwickshire County Council (WCC) commissions Children Looked After placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the Council's ambitious vision and commitment to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the commissioning plans, commissioning intentions and sufficiency duty strategy.

The Strategy for 2017-2019 details key developments and market changes and drivers, including current market gaps and opportunities. Recommendations for work streams and the implementation plan will be led by the Council's Strategic Commissioning part of the People Group Directorate – Children's commissioning, but owned by Council partners via the Children's Joint Commissioning Board. This documents forms part of the Children's Commissioning Strategy.

2. Background

Warwickshire is a landlocked county in the West Midlands of England. It is a vibrant area with a diverse population in a few busy towns within the district and borough councils of North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick & Rugby. The county town is Warwick, although the largest town is Nuneaton. The county is famous for being the birthplace of William Shakespeare.

Like other local authorities, one of the greatest challenges for Warwickshire, is improving the outcomes for the small cohort of the most highly complex children and young people, who often have multiple needs and display highly challenging behaviours which lead to placement instability and escalating needs. Radically rethinking the way in which these young people are placed and cared for, to achieve stability and improved outcomes, is a priority for Warwickshire.

Changes in the volume and type of placement demand, combined with financial pressures, legislative changes and learning from serious case reviews, have all impacted upon local sufficiency requirements. Warwickshire has remained agile in its response to these challenges.

- Increasing costs
- Increasing volume of need
- Cost effectiveness - making every pound count

This new model of care will provide care & support that is proportionate to the complex needs of these children whilst building into the system an outcomes objective that will enable the children who use the service to become adults who are as self-sufficient, independent and in control as possible thereby removing long term dependency on the system.

4. Commissioning Services for Warwickshire Children & Young People

Approach

To ensure choice and diversity and value for money, WCC will continue to operate within a mixed economy of internal and external provision for fostering, external provision for residential commissioned through framework, spot and block purchasing arrangements, some of which will be sub-regional and issues based. At the heart of all commissioning work is hearing the voice of the child and then ensuring that we commission quality services, which deliver long term outcomes, that are evidence based, and are provided at a fair price via a stable regional market.



All commissioning will be strategic needs-led and **evidence based** with robust procurement and contracting functions embedded. Collaboration between partners, commissioners, the market and children and young people, will ensure a market which is truly fit for purpose.

Stable market / fair price

Significant work has been undertaken to **demonstrate value for money**. Whilst this will continue to be a focus, the priority remains to drive up quality and ensure early intervention leading to de-escalation of need and greater placement stability for better outcomes for our children and young people.

We work with Independent Reviewing Officers and Social Workers to understand the **individual needs, wishes and feelings of children** and young people. We aim to work directly with the Children In Care Council when undertaking commissioning or development activity to ensure their views inform decision making.

Quality assurance continues to be a key focus where we have been refreshing our approach so that we work proactively with the market when there are indicators of cause for concern rather than being reactive when there are significant issues.

Collaboration

WCC will continue to build upon strategic relationships with regional local authorities to achieve greater regional and sub-regional collaboration and identify future areas for

tactical based commissioning.

Work to further integrate Health, Public Health, Education and Social Care through joint planning and funding will sustain shared accountability and inter-agency cooperation, drive efficiencies and prevent duplication.

Through established West Midlands regional forums, WCC are encouraging creative discussion around radical approaches to meeting the placement needs of the most complex children and young people. Across the region, all local authorities deploy significant resources on placements for a small number of the most complex children and young people. WCC will support the development of new, radical approaches to redesign solutions to better meet needs and improve outcomes for this cohort and implement the plan for Bright Residential for Children (BR4C).

Warwickshire will lead the bid for regional innovation funds to support the delivery of recommendations for the Narey Report in the Children's Residential Care Market.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england>

5. Working with the Marketplace

Market Development Approach

To effectively shape the market, WCC will maintain a strong visible presence and consult directly with the market, articulating a clear direction for what is required internally and externally to best meet the needs of our children and young people. The market must be;

- ✓ Composed of the optimum number, sector and size of providers. A mix of small, medium and large organisations from the public, private, voluntary and not for profit sectors, to achieve variety, sustainability and avoid monopolies
- ✓ Dynamic, flexible and responsive - proactively adapting to changing demand and need
- ✓ Person-centred and outcomes-focused
- ✓ Efficient, effective and value for money

Procurement Framework's

Warwickshire uses both regional and sub-regional multi-provider frameworks for the provision of children's residential care and fostering placements. The frameworks enable the Placements Team to quickly source suitable places for children with providers who have already passed financial, regulatory and compliance checks and are working under Warwickshire CC terms and conditions of contract with agreed pricing. The frameworks allow Warwickshire County Council to quickly and safely place children in the most suitable placement that meets their needs, at the most cost effective price. The next version will ensure that providers are signed up to a West Midlands Corporate parenting strategy and philosophy.

Spot Purchasing

Spot purchased provision will be commissioned for services that are not available through internal provision or external regional and local contracted arrangements and where there has been no previous or predicted demand e.g. parent and child assessments, rare/specific disability/health need.

Contract Management

An Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) will be issued for all commissioned placements and these form a contractual agreement between the local authority and the provider. The IPA provides detail on specific aspects of the placement, fees and consenting signatures from the local authority and the provider.

Meetings are held with all providers of commissioned placements a minimum of once every six months and consider the following areas: contract & compliance monitoring, performance management, business development; individual placements, feedback from social care, health, education, young people, opportunities for improvement/increased value for money and negotiations on the level of support being provided.

6. Key Sufficiency Messages

Strengths and Opportunities

- ✓ Strong internal foster care provision at the heart of placement provision
- ✓ Commitment to local placement options and improving placement stability
- ✓ Specialist fostering placement provision
- ✓ Implementation of Bright residential for children
- ✓ Regional opportunities for additional innovation.
- ✓ New West Mids Regional Residential Care Framework by end of 2018
- ✓ Implementation and use of a current West Midlands Regional Foster Care Framework (2016 – 2020)
- ✓ Assured quality and consistency in the support provision for young people in external semi-independent accommodation through the implementation of the Housing Related Support for young People block contract.
- ✓ Comprehensive quality assurance processes which work alongside the Ofsted processes.
- ✓ Robust contract management processes.
- ✓ Working with partners to ensure that for those most complex children and young people that are co-dependent that joint funding is achieved under an agreed process.
- ✓ Further integration of commissioning from the NHS, Public Health, Education and Social Care
- ✓ Development of comprehensive services for children on the edge of care

Areas for Development

- ✓ Increased availability across placement provision to ensure choice and matching
- ✓ Improving placement stability for all children looked after in accordance with their care plans
- ✓ Actively supporting the regional market management to achieve market stability and sufficiency.
- ✓ Meeting and effectively de-escalating the needs of the most complex children and young people.
- ✓ Further developing systems within fostering and residential to ensure that the investment in these children reduces the likelihood for long term social dependency.
- ✓ Developing expert knowledge and experience of what does and does not work (e.g. most appropriate placement model for victims/perpetrators of sexual abuse, challenging behaviours)
- ✓ Continued development of innovative solutions to ensure the WCC sufficiently meets demands within the context of local authority financial pressures.
- ✓ Enhancing our ability to influence pricing. This is currently being led by providers not LA, particularly with spot purchasing on supported accommodation.

7. Did we meet historical demand?

Current provision

To meet our sufficiency duty WCC uses the following provision;

- Internal fostering service
- Independent Fostering Agencies mainly commissioned via a regional framework
- Residential Children Homes commissioned either via the regional framework or spot contracts.
- We currently have a block contract for Housing Related Support for 16-25 years old. We spot purchase for supported accommodation but are in the process of joining a regional framework.

On 31.03.2016 Warwickshire's Children in Care (CLA) population remains higher than the national average, but is below the average of regional neighbours. During 2016 CLA numbers have steadily decreased as a result of the work and impact of the Children's Transformation Plan. It is a WCC objective to reduce the need for CLA placements by 25% by 2020.

Appendix 1 data shows that Warwickshire's rate of Children Looked After continues to be characterised by a high proportion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC), but has been decreasing during 2016/17, and now stands at 62.2 per 10,000

Our % of CLA population in foster care / residential placements on March 31st, 2016 showed that compared to the England average we had a higher % placed within internal fostering, a lower % placed within external fostering and a lower % placed in residential provision (5.2% placed compared to a 12.4% average in England).

Short placement stability is still higher than seen nationally and by our statistical neighbours. Long term placement stability is below average against our comparators.

17% of placements were outside of county.

The CLA JSNA 2016 research shows that to support our Children's Transformation Plan goals that we need to;

- Prevent children from entering care in the first place
- Have effective care plans for those who do come into care so that their time in care is either short or progressing towards the best possible outcome
- Have effective pathway plans for those leaving care, so that they continue to thrive when they leave the system and do not need to re-enter care or other institutionalised care ('step down')

Our key sufficiency targets support these aims and aim to maintain our performance in placing children & young people within appropriate placements.

Specifically, we need to address the following;

- Increase the number of placements within 20 miles of Warwickshire
- Continue to improve placement stability

8. Our range of provision

Internal Fostering Provision

WCC are committed to maximising the effectiveness of internal provision and securing the best possible placement for every child and young person.

At 31.03.2016, 50.5% of fostered young people were placed with internal foster carers. WCC have pledged to increase this proportion over the next three years. It is anticipated that this will enable more children to be placed locally, reduce external spend and achieve improved placement management throughout a child's journey through care, ultimately leading to overall improved outcomes. It is acknowledged that achieving the target will be challenging and will take time. Interim external commissioning arrangements will therefore continue to be used to secure local foster placements.

The internal fostering service has set out the future strategic direction to modernise the service as informed by research and best practice. The Foster Care Review undertaken in 2016 has captured the child's experience and aims to increase the visibility and importance of the service.

The range of placements provided includes;

- ✓ Emergency Duty Team (EDT) carers,
- ✓ Short term and respite care,
- ✓ Family and friends approved households,
- ✓ Supported lodgings for those over 16 both internal and external through Barnardo's.
- ✓ Long term care
- ✓ Parent and baby placements including specialist assessment provision.
- ✓ Staying Put placements with existing foster carers
- ✓ Solo placement scheme for young people returning from residential care
- ✓ Short term emergency placements (STEPS).

The internal fostering service has two key priority targets:

Improving outcomes for children looked after by investing in placement maintenance

- ✓ Improving levels of support to foster carers.

This will build on the success of its solo (specialist) scheme, and the STEPS (Short-term emergency placements) service. Underpinning this will be a drive to recruit more carers across the fostering service and seek robust and cost effective arrangements to strengthen carer support services.

In doing so, the LA will consider the need for such family support and intervention services across the group business and commission for aggregated need where possible.

Internal Residential Provision

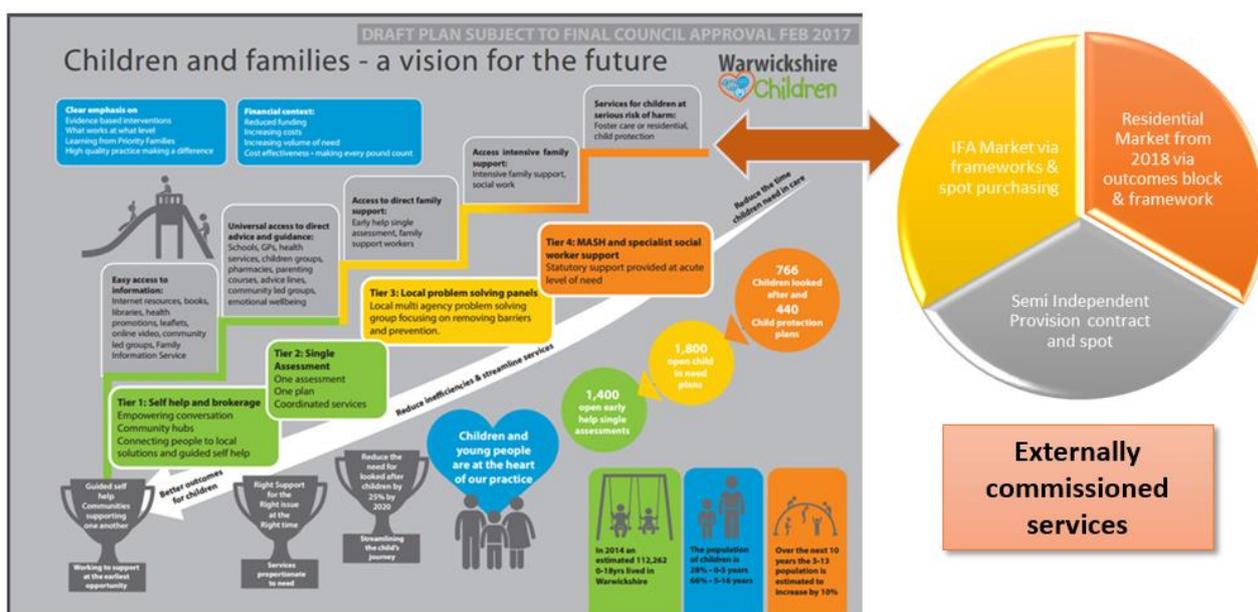
Since 1986 Warwickshire County Council has commissioned all of its residential placements from the market. It has been successful in keeping its % of CLA within residential to 5.2% on March 31st, 2016 against a national average of 12%.

There are no intentions to change this position.

External Provision

Position

The external market meets a significant proportion of the CLA placement needs, through framework, block contracting and spot purchasing arrangements. Despite the intention to maximise internal provision, it is acknowledged that there is an ongoing need to commission from the external market.



Fostering

The percentage of external foster placements has increased steadily, at 31 March 2012 Warwickshire placed 14.8% of its CLA in external fostering provisions, in 2015 this figure had risen to 19% and in 2016 Warwickshire's figure reached 21.9% compared to the England average of 24.3%. Simultaneous to this the % of CLA in internal fostering provisions has decreased with 65.9% in 2012 to 50.5% at year-end 2016.

On 28th February WCC commissioned 81% of its external provision through one of two frameworks, West Midlands Regional and a Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire sub-regional framework. The remaining 19% of CLA external placements are spot purchase

(off framework) arrangements. These placements are amongst WCC's most expensive because they accommodate our most difficult to place CLA who have a varying high level of priority and challenging needs. Both frameworks are due for renewal in 2018 and Warwickshire is in a good position to influence and shape the new frameworks. Commissioning are supporting a sub-regional review (with Coventry and Solihull) of need to inform the reshaping of this framework.

As with all other LAs the IFA market potentially poses a challenge to the development and sustainability of WCC's internal fostering provisions. It is essential to balance and efficiently manage the provisions available in order to best meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable children in Warwickshire. Commissioning will need to develop a strategy which supports the development activity of the market whilst not disadvantaging the opportunity to develop the internal provision.

Short and long term placement stability remains an area of improvement for both internal and external provisions. Placing children in local placements is one key factor in improving placement stability supported by robust assessments and matching processes across both provisions. Developing better relationships between the local authority and providers will serve to improve the quality of referrals, information sharing and communication enabling a better understanding of need and a hopeful subsequent shift in stability.

Warwickshire is cited on the current national review of fostering and having completed its own review of internal and external provisions is well positioned to respond to the Government's report and proceeding actions upon publication. Warwickshire is committed to securing greater numbers local placements for those children whose needs are not best met through the core provisions of internal and current framework placements. It aims to utilise the platform a Government review provides to stimulate the market and shape a framework which can meet both Warwickshire's expectations for CLA and value for money.

Residential

Since 1986 Warwickshire has commissioned all its residential placements from the market. It has been successful in keeping its % of CLA within residential to 5.2% on March 31st, 2016 against a national average of 12%. However, for a very small group a residential placement is the most appropriate option. Often this will be a young person with extreme chaotic and / or risk taking behaviours who cannot cope within a family. WCC has a plan to commission a small sub-regional block of residential placements to secure local based placements for Warwickshire children and young people.

Bright Residential for Children (BR4C) which will be tendered through competitive dialogue in the summer of this year will provide residential services for CLA that support them if possible to return to a family setting, whether that be returning to their own family or a foster care placement. For older young people this will give them the tools so that by the age of 18 they can live semi-independently and have a daily purpose. For most CLA who require residential care, placements in smaller residential homes offer considerable

benefits to the quality of services that can be delivered to them, and a calmer more family like environment enabling them to address significant issues. Small homes are in small clusters within local communities and therefore allow the residents to live a more normalised life and learn to responsibly live with neighbours.

In addition to providing smaller homes, we want to incentivise providers to undertake more intervention work with these children to increase the likelihood that they might leave residential care and return to a family setting. Under our current model, there is no incentive for providers to do this. It is therefore recommended that WCC uses a contract model that pays providers a basic fee for the residential care services but then offers them performance payments to be paid at various stages for meeting the child's "SMART" outcomes.

The remainder of our residential placements will be purchased via the West Midlands Regional framework and minimal use of spot contracts.

Semi Independent Provision

Warwickshire tendered for a block contract for Housing Related Support in 2016 moving to an outcome based specification and increased emotional support for care leavers. Both the accommodation and floating support providers provide an accredited independence training programme to ensure young people are ready to transition onto to their own accommodation. Due to the unregulated nature of these places we have put in place robust quality assurance processes and are working closely with the Children in Care Council to develop peer reviewers for contract monitoring.

We are due to join a regional framework of supported accommodation – led by Staffordshire. The focus of this contract is for providers to increase the independence skills of young people and unaccompanied asylum seeking young people to enable them to successfully transition to their own accommodation.

9. Meeting our two key objectives

Later in this report, we will review the whole approach that Warwickshire takes to commissioning, however here we will address the two key objectives.

Local Placements for Local Children

Warwickshire defines a 'local' placement as anywhere within a 20-mile radius of the county boundaries. Where appropriate, the priority for children and young people is to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining a young person's educational, health, social and cultural connections and access to resources. The ambition is for all CLA to be placed locally. As at 31 January 2017, 277 children (39.5%) of our CLA population were placed out of county. However, 207 of the 277 were placed with one of our regional neighbours

WCC continues to work collaboratively with the provider market and with regional local authorities to ensure that the use of local placements for local children and young people is maximised.

Market development will improve coordination and advanced placement planning. Where it is not possible to secure a local placement, the remaining matching criteria for a young person will be prioritised and the Local Authority will evidence through its Placement Hub that it has done all that is reasonably practicable to secure a suitable placement.

We are committed to commissioning a block contract for 14 outcomes based residential placements. This contract will go live in April 2018. The focus will be short homes across Warwickshire with access to local schools and health services thereby improving outcomes. Each placement will be having a SMART outcome which providers will work to deliver. The outcomes are focused on ensuring that we enable children and young people to either return to family based living or live independently as an adult with a daily purpose. By focusing the placements in this way, we aim to reduce the long term social cost of supporting these complex placements.

Short Term Placement stability

By having a wider range of placement options available to us, we aim to meet the criteria of right place, first time. However, matching will continue our area of focus and we will work hard with providers to evolve better ways of ensuring best possible matches.

We will be working with providers to obtain feedback to inform us on how to improve processes, format of referrals and ensuring that providers have the correct information for decision making.

10. Children's Commissioning Intentions for Children Looked After from overall Children's Commissioning Intentions

Priority Area	Outcome / Objective
1. Sufficiency Duty	Legal duty to set a statement about current needs and plans to ensure sufficient placement in fostering, residential and supported living
2. Lead Regional Residential Project Bid following on from the Narey report and recommendations	Improved the range of placements within residential children's homes and develop outcomes based commissioning
3. Residential Children's Homes in Warwickshire	Transform the ways in which we commission residential children's homes to ensure best value and outcomes focus.
4. Housing Options for Care Leavers and homeless 16/17 years' olds	Pathways, prevention and housing options in place to ensure where appropriate YP access safe, secure and reasonably priced accommodation which meets need.
7. Early Intervention Framework	Commissioned framework provides additional effective value for money options for social workers in building families resilience
8. MHISC Framework for children's Social Care	SW have access to MHISC Framework for Early Intervention
9. Independent Psychological Assessments	Improve psychological parenting assessments
11. Independent fostering Agencies	Improve and maintain quality of provision and stability for young people in IFA placements.
12. Children's Rights and Independent Advocacy Contract.	Review and retender Advocacy services for April 2018
15. OT Joint Commissioning	Clarity with regards to split of spends for children's OT equipment costs through agreed protocol. Finalising redesign of OT services.
16. Speech Language Communication Needs	Clarity regarding contracting arrangements for Health and education.
20. Integrated Children's Commissioning	Establish an integrated children's commissioning unit with the agreed partner's parameters
21. Parenting Programmes Framework	Establish a parenting programmes framework
22. CAMHS Procurement	Complete CAMHS competitive dialogue procurement process
23. Transitions funding	Increased early intervention for cyp with mental health concerns

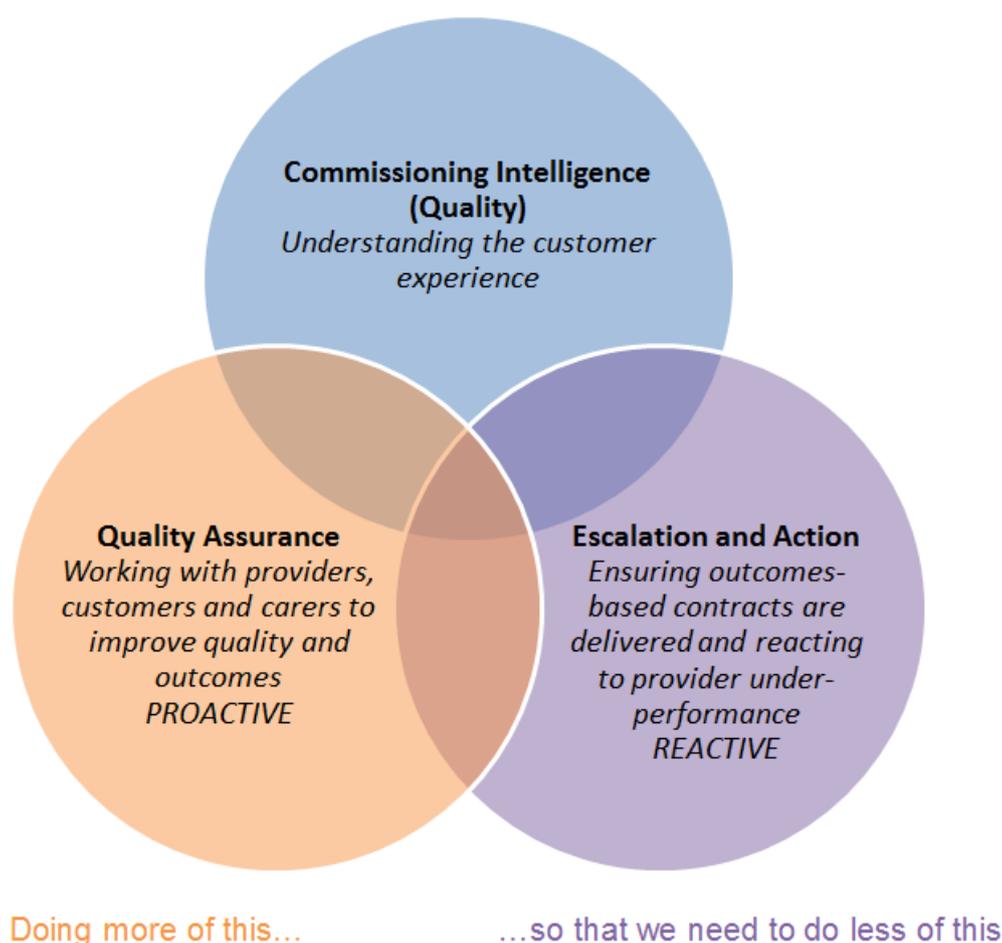
11. Sufficiency Duty Strategy - Recommendations

No	Recommendations
1.	Radical Redesign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement Bright Residential for Children bringing dedicated provision for Warwickshire in Warwickshire and using a social impact bond to deliver creative smart outcomes that have a long term social impact ✓ Lead regional innovation collaboration to redesign solutions to meet the placement needs of the most complex children and young people across the West Midlands, linking to the DfE Innovation Fund & Social Investment Platform.
2.	Market Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to develop a broader understanding of placement stability across residential and foster care placements to inform requirements within the market ✓ Work with local Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) to ensure sufficient, quality local care to supplement in-house provision and to offer choice and value for money ✓ Implement any suitable recommendations from the current government review of the foster care market
3.	Semi Independent Support and Accommodation Contracts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of the Staffordshire Framework for supported accommodation for 16/17 year olds. ✓ Working with providers on the framework to increase accommodation close to or in Warwickshire. ✓ Working with housing related support provider to increase number of units of accommodation within the County including emergency beds
4.	Residential Block Contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement Bright Residential for Children and ensure that it provides 14 beds
5.	Develop Warwickshire County Council provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase the number of WCC foster carers and number of internal placements ✓ Supporting complex and challenging children to remain in family settings, through the development of specialist foster placements, including the support of a multi-agency team to support foster carers ✓ To develop a more joined up and sophisticated dataset that fully explains internal placement activity/outcomes and areas for service development and that can compare this with outcomes achieved through commissioned placement options
6.	Support children with complex health needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to work with partners in health and education to commission and fund appropriate placements for children in care who have complex health needs
7.	Ensure value for money through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular review of high cost placements ✓ Consideration of creative packages of care as an alternative to residential placements ✓ Block contract with social impact bond for residential placements ✓ Creating a market that encourages new entrants to the market

12. Quality Assurance

Through robust commissioning and quality assurance process, WCC ensures that all CLA are accessing well matched, high quality and value for money care placements.

A system for monitoring providers, which takes into consideration performance, business viability, inspection judgements, history and complexity of current placements, determines the level and frequency of quality assurance visits. During 2016 Strategic Commissioning Business Unit, People Group, initiated a refresh of its Quality Assurance function and produced the See, Hear and Act Strategy which describes how the Council will assure itself of the quality of Council commissioned services. This Strategy can be summarised in the following diagram:



Placement feedback from Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and children and young people is gathered and this is considered along with a wide range of other data. This includes, for example, provider collated quality data, OFSTED inspection report and associated Providers Report and Action Plan, Regulation 44 monthly reports and

Regulation 45 six monthly analysis. This data is presented in a bespoke Quality Dashboard, allowing Quality Assurance and Improvement Team members to actively monitor providers and plan quality improvement activity – including the frequency and nature of provider visits.

Providers receive these regular proactive visits from a member of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Team, or selected social care professionals, to ensure they are providing services at the required quality, as defined in the relevant service specification. Minimum standards detailing what constitutes a good quality placement are incorporated into service specifications and lay a benchmark for providers applying to care for children and young people. It is Warwickshire County Council's ambition to place with Ofsted judged 'Good' and 'Outstanding' providers. Where required, clear service protocols determine the required actions to be undertaken by WCC where quality concerns are identified.

13. Governance

Internal

In addition to the Children Looked After planning and review process, WCC have several decision-making forums which review the quality and appropriateness of placements, and ultimately impact upon placement demand.

Prior to placements a Case Decision Meeting is chaired by the locality service manager, who, together with the operations manager, is responsible for the plan and has several functions in relation to the child/young person. The panel's membership is multi agency, and should include the following;

- Health professional for CLA;
- Fostering team manager (Placement Hub);
- Adoption manager;
- An early intervention manager,
- A primary mental health practitioner;
- A representative from Targeted Youth Support;
- Representative from education.
- IRO Service.

Panel outcomes may agree:

- a) the child/young person should be looked after;
- b) initial endorsement of the proposed care plan which may include twin tracking, and or additional comments from panel members;
- c) Public Law Outline to be initiated;
- d) that the child does not need to be looked after and advise other pathways are followed to include early help, child in need, child protection plan or advise that a Family Group Conference should be arranged;
- e) that more information or more work is needed before a panel can reach a decision

The placement hub has now been established and has a set of procedures and inter-business unit protocols which create a single process to:

- receive and respond to all CLA placement requests;
- to ensure that placement requests provide an accurate assessment of the child's needs, placement requirements, potential risks and placement support needs;
- identify placement options (including support services) to meet CLA needs;
- carry out recording of new placements
- establish contracts for new placements within the independent sector
- to clarify and resolve contractual issues arising from external placements
- arrange for the loading of all placement onto MOSAIC

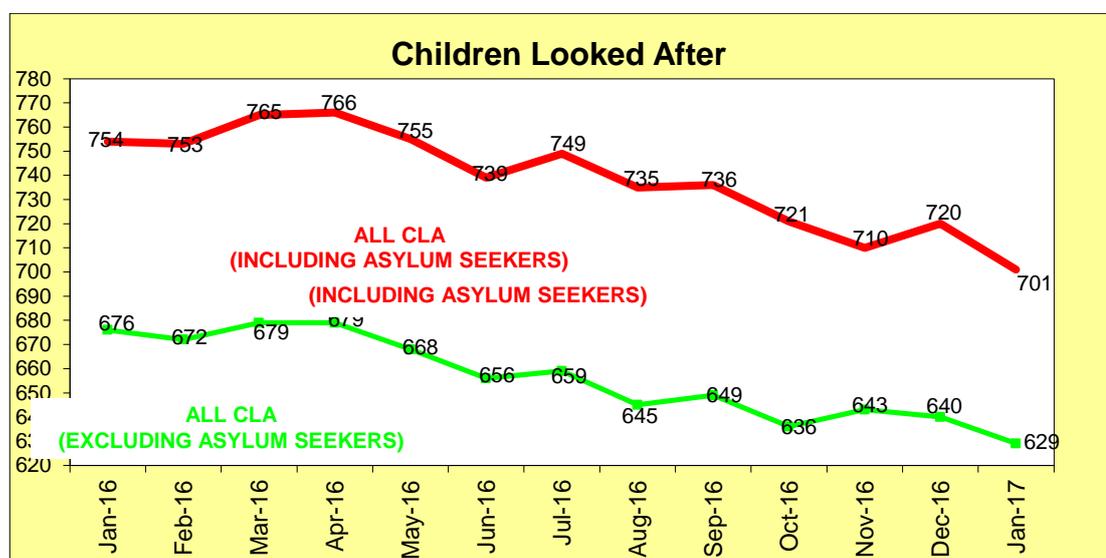
Appendix One

Overall Numbers of Looked After Children at Year End

Warwickshire had seen year on year increases in the number of looked after children at 31 March since 2008. At the end of 2014/15 Warwickshire finished the year with the same number of children in care as the previous year end and by the end of 2015/16 there was a 10.7% increase in the number of looked after children, up by 74 children.

	31/3/12	31/3/13	31/3/14	31/3/15	31/3/16
Warwickshire	681	698	690	690	764

Data March 2016 – Jan 2017



During 2016/17, the number of looked after children has been decreasing and reached 701 at 28 January 2017, whilst the number of looked after children excluding asylum seekers decreased to 629.

Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the 0-17 population

Warwickshire's rate of looked after children per 10,000 increased during 2015/16 and widening the gap between the published rates seen nationally and by our statistical neighbours in the previous year. As a result of the reduction in numbers of looked after children during 2016/17, Warwickshire's rate of looked after children per 10,000 of the 0-17 child population has seen a reduction and as at 31 January 2017 had reduced to 62.2 per 10,000.

	31/3/12	31/3/13	31/3/14	31/3/15	31/3/16
Warwickshire	61.2	62.4	61.7	61.7	68.1

Statistical Neighbours	48.3	48.8	48.9	52.4	53.2
West Midlands	68.0	72.0	73.0	75.0	73.0
England	59.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0

% of Looked After Population placed in Foster Care/Residential Placements at 31 March

The proportion of children placed in Internal Foster Care as at 31 March 2016 saw a decrease on the previous year end moving is more in line with the national average as at year end. Agency foster care saw an increase compared to the previous year end as did our usage of residential placements which was also higher than last year. Please note we still rely less on agency foster care and residential placements than is seen nationally.

	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-16	31 Mar-16 England Average
% of LAC placed in Internal provision foster care at year/quarter end	65.9%	63.3%	60.3%	57.2%	50.5%	48.9%%
% of LAC placed in External provision foster care at year/quarter end	14.8%	16.0%	19.9%	19.0%	21.9%	24.3%
% of LAC placed in Residential provision at year/quarter end	2.9%	3.3%	4.3%	4.6%	5.2%	12.4%

Short Term/Long Term Placement Stability of Looked After Children Data from Warwickshire County Council, Insight Service, Performance Business Unit

	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
Long term stability of CLA (% CLA for 2.5 yrs in same placement for 2 years or more)			59.0%		57.5%	57.4%
Short term stability of CLA (% with 3+ placements in last 12 months)			16.0%		15.4%	15.3%

Please note that we have decided to monitor placement stability on a monthly basis. As at 31 March 2017:

- Long term stability is still relatively low at 57.4% when compared to the 2016 national average of 68%.

- Short term stability has seen a slight reduction since 31 December 2016, with less children having experienced 3 placements or more. This is still relatively high when compared to the 2016 national average of 10%.